

Village of Saranac Lake Cannabis Sales Taxation Funds Grant Program

Grant Program

Program Overview:

The Village of Saranac Lake is establishing the Cannabis Sales Taxation Funds Grant Program to allocate local cannabis sales tax revenues toward community betterment. This program is designed to ensure that funds derived from cannabis sales directly benefit Village residents and enhance the overall well-being and vitality of the community. The program emphasizes transparency, accessibility, and local benefit in all aspects of funding distribution.

Funding Priorities:

The Village is committed to using cannabis sales tax revenue to support projects in three key areas:

- Youth Programs: Activities and programs that serve children and teenagers, particularly supporting educational enrichment or assisting economically disadvantaged youth.
- Support for Seniors: Programs that promote socialization, health, wellness, and independent living for the aging population in the Village.
- Recreational Opportunities: Projects that expand or improve recreational facilities, parks, trails, or community sports and wellness programs for residents.

Eligibility Criteria:

Eligible applicants are local non-profit organizations or organizations with an eligible non-profit as a fiscal sponsor. Projects must align with at least one of the funding priority areas listed above. All funded activities should primarily benefit residents of the Village of Saranac Lake. Additional eligibility conditions include:

- Projects or programs must be new or ongoing (funds will not be awarded retroactively for projects already completed).
- No grant funding may be used for salaries or wages of staff. The intent is to fund programmatic expenses, materials, equipment, events, or other direct costs that benefit the community.
- Applicants must ensure compliance with all relevant local, state, and federal laws in the implementation of their projects. Non-compliance can result in disqualification or required reimbursement of funds.

Funding Limits:

Grant awards are capped at a maximum of \$5,000 per project, unless the applicant provides matching funds from other sources. Proposals requesting larger amounts may be considered if they include significant matching funds, demonstrating additional support and commitment from the applicant or other funders. This matching-fund exception is to encourage leveraging of the Village's grant to attract other investments. By default, no single grant will exceed \$5,000 in Village funds. The program aims to distribute funds to multiple worthy projects rather than deplete the fund on one initiative, ensuring broader community impact.

Application Process:

Grant applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, allowing applicants to apply at any time throughout the year. The process consists of the following steps:

1. **Submission:** Interested organizations must complete the official Village of Saranac Lake Cannabis Tax Fund Grant Application Form (see next section). Applications should include details on the project objectives, target audience, expected outcomes, and a budget breakdown. All applications should be submitted to the Village Clerk's Office. The Village Clerk will serve as the program administrator, managing the intake of applications and the initial review for completeness. Only applications from eligible non-profit organizations (or those with a non-profit sponsor) will be considered, and all required information and documentation (e.g. proof of non-profit status or sponsorship) must be provided upon submission.
2. **Review:** Upon receiving an application, the Village Clerk will review it for completeness and verify that it aligns with the program's funding priorities. During this review, the Clerk may reach out to the applicant for any needed clarifications or additional information. Each application will then be evaluated on its impact, feasibility, and sustainability – in other words, how well the project addresses community needs, the soundness of the project plan and budget, and the likelihood that the project's benefits will persist. The Clerk will prepare a summary of each application's merits relative to the priorities for the Village Board.
3. **Approval:** Completed applications that pass initial review will be presented to the Village Board of Trustees for consideration. All grant awards must be approved by a majority vote of the Village Board at a regular or special board meeting. The Board will review the Clerk's recommendations and may discuss the application with Village staff or the applicant if needed. Approval is based on the project's alignment with priorities, community benefit, and available funds. The decision of the Board will be documented in meeting minutes. Once approved, the Village Clerk's Office will notify the applicant of the award decision. (If an application is not approved, the Clerk may provide feedback and the applicant could revise and resubmit in the future since applications are rolling.)
4. **Disbursement:** For approved grants, funds will be disbursed to the grantee according to the budget and timeline outlined in the application. The Village Clerk and Treasurer will coordinate with the grantee to issue the funds. Funds are typically provided upfront or in stages as appropriate for the project, subject to any conditions the Village Board sets. Grantees must use the funds only for the purposes described in the approved application budget. Any major changes to the project scope or budget after approval must be requested in writing and approved by the Village in advance.

Monitoring and Reporting:

Grant recipients are required to report on their progress and the use of funds.

- **Periodic Progress Reports:** For projects lasting more than a few months, recipients may be asked to submit brief progress reports during the project. These reports should outline how much of the grant has been spent to date, describe activities completed, and highlight progress toward the project objectives. The schedule for any interim reporting will be communicated in the grant award letter (for example, a project might need to report quarterly or mid-way through the project).
- **Final Report:** At project completion, a final report is required from the grantee. This report must detail the outcomes achieved by the project, including the community impact and how it met the stated

objectives. The final report also needs to include a financial summary showing how grant funds (and any matching funds) were used, and note any unspent grant funds. (Unspent funds must be returned to the Village unless otherwise authorized.)

- Documentation: The Village may request receipts, invoices, or other documentation as part of the reporting to verify that funds were used appropriately. Photographs or testimony of project results are encouraged to help demonstrate the impact to the community.
- Non-Compliance: Failure to submit required reports or to use funds as agreed can result in the organization being deemed ineligible for future funding. In cases of serious non-compliance or misuse of funds, the Village may require the grantee to reimburse the grant monies and may pursue other legal remedies.

Compliance and Accountability:

All projects funded through this program must adhere to all applicable local ordinances, New York State laws (including cannabis regulations), and federal laws. The Village reserves the right to audit the use of grant funds and to review project records to ensure compliance. If any expenditure is found to be outside the approved scope or in violation of the terms, the grantee will be required to refund that portion of the money to the Village. By accepting a grant, organizations agree to cooperate with any Village oversight or auditing procedures. This accountability helps maintain the integrity of the program and public trust.

Transparency and Public Reporting:

The Village of Saranac Lake is committed to transparency in how cannabis tax funds are used. An annual report on the Cannabis Sales Taxation Funds Grant Program will be prepared by the Village Clerk's Office summarizing all grants awarded, the amounts, and the general purposes funded. This summary will be presented to the Village Board (e.g. during budget review or a designated annual meeting) and made available to the public on the Village's website or office. In addition, all approved grant awards and their purpose may be published in Village Board meeting minutes (since they are approved via Board resolution) which are public records. The application process itself is designed to be accessible: application materials will be available at the Village offices and on the official Village website, and Village staff will be available to answer questions. Ensuring openness at every step will help the community understand how these funds are benefiting Saranac Lake.

Program Review and Amendment:

This policy and program will be reviewed regularly (at least annually) by the Village Board or a designated committee to assess its effectiveness and demand. The Village Board may amend the grant program's terms or procedures by majority vote as needed to better serve the community. Any significant changes (such as altering funding priorities or limits) will also be made public. The Board intends for this program to adapt over time, in line with community needs and feedback, while maintaining the core goal of responsibly reinvesting cannabis tax revenue into the community.