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REPORT TO GOVERNANCE AND FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2026

SUBJECT Regional Grants-in-Aid Policy (BRD13)

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide information on the board approved Regional Grants-in-Aid (GIA) Policy (BRD13).

BACKGROUND

On March 11, 2026, the Capital Regional District (CRD) resolved the following motion:

“That the Governance and First Nations Relations Committee review the Capital Regional District Boards’ Regional Grants-in-Aid Policy.”

This report provides information on the Board approved Regional GIA Policy, related history, a review of CRD services with granting programs and information on regional GIA from other jurisdictions in British Columbia.

Regional Grant-in-Aid Authority

Under the *Local Government Act* (LGA), a regional district board may provide assistance in the form of a grant-in-aid for the purpose of benefiting the community or any aspect of the community. However, the LGA prohibits a board from providing assistance to an industrial, commercial or business undertaking.

The CRD Regional GIA is a historical service under the authority and legislative powers of the LGA. Grants are funded by all thirteen municipalities and three electoral areas. It is separate from the electoral area GIA services, which are individual services originally established through letters patent and modernized through establishing bylaws.

No Regional Grants-in-Aid Board Policy

Since 1994 successive CRD Boards have adopted policy resolutions declining to issue regional GIA, preferring instead that individual municipalities determine whether to contribute to specific initiatives. The Board’s current position, adopted on June 8, 2022, is reflected in the Regional GIA Policy (BRD13) which states that the CRD shall not issue regional GIA. The approved staff report and policy are attached as Appendix A.

Capital Regional District Service Specific Grants versus Regional Grants-in-Aid

Many CRD services have granting authority enabled through their service establishment bylaw. The CRD currently administers several programs through these services that provide financial assistance to community organizations, individuals and local initiatives across the region. These programs are intended to advance the service mandate. Some examples are listed below:

Grant Program and Streams	CRD Service
Arts Grants	1.297 Arts & Culture Support Service
✓ Equity Grant	
✓ IDEA Grant	
✓ Grow Forward Grant	
✓ Project Grant	
✓ Operating Grant	
Rethink Waste Grants	1.521 Environment Resource Management
✓ Zero Waste Event Grant	
✓ Community Grant	
CRD Rural Housing Program	1.311 Regional Housing Trust Fund
✓ Accessory Dwelling Unit Incentive Program	
✓ Rural Housing Pre-Development Funding	

In addition to current active grant programs, several newly established CRD services also include granting authority within their establishing bylaws. These include the Regional Transportation Service, the Foodland Access Service and the Performing Arts Facility Service. These services could develop and administer grant programs within the service mandate in the future.

The regional GIA differs from these service specific programs in that it is a general permissive authority under the LGA rather than a program established to achieve a specific service mandate.

Other Regional Districts’ Grants-In-Aid Policies

Staff surveyed a selection of regional districts on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland to identify if and how neighbouring jurisdictions provide regional GIA support.

While many surveyed regional districts provide some form of GIA, there is no consistent approach to whether or how regional GIA is used. Most jurisdictions apply different eligibility, evaluation, adjudication and funding criteria, and many have controls in place to limit the expansion of GIA to organizations seeking support. A key control is that a grant should not be provided where the proposed activity falls within the scope of an already established service, as this helps avoid overlapping or duplication with existing service-specific grant authorities.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implication

While Board policy provides direction to guide decision-making, the Board retains the discretion to exercise its statutory service authority granted by LGA, notwithstanding previous policy positions. The Board has exercised the regional GIA authority only on a limited number of

occasions as exceptions. Previous grants and related Board decisions are summarized in Appendix B.

Financial Implications

Section 374(9) of the LGA limits expenditures for regional GIA to 10 cents per \$1,000 of the net taxable value of land and improvements within the regional district. Cost apportionment for a Regional GIA service would include all municipalities and electoral areas. Based on the 2026 assessment base, the maximum allowable requisition for a Regional GIA service is estimated at approximately \$18.8 million. The actual requisition would be determined annually through the Board-approved financial planning process within the legislated maximum.

Service Delivery Implications

The Board could consider rescinding the no Regional GIA Board Policy and establish a formal Regional GIA program.

Under this approach, staff would develop a defined service mandate, program framework and administrative guidelines. Implementation of such a program would require incremental administrative resources and operational capacity to manage intake, evaluation, reporting and financial administration.

Under this model, the Board would retain decision-making authority over funding allocations, including the approval of eligible projects and the determination of annual funding levels through the financial planning process.

This approach would align the Regional GIA service with established CRD grant administration models, providing a more structured and transparent framework for evaluating and distributing funding. However, it may also raise considerations regarding the scope of eligible applications and the potential for requests that fall outside the CRD's core service areas or established mandates. Careful program design and eligibility criteria would therefore be important to ensure alignment with Board priorities and statutory authority.

There is also potential for duplication or overlap between CRD Regional GIA and CRD service specific grant programs. There is a risk that similar types of projects could be considered under multiple funding streams, leading to inefficiencies. Impacts would depend on program design, including eligibility criteria, funding priorities and the extent of coordination with CRD services.

CONCLUSION

The CRD currently maintains a policy of not issuing regional GIA, while retaining the authority to do so under the LGA. Any future consideration of a Regional GIA program would require clear program design, administrative capacity and alignment with Board priorities and statutory limits.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: June 1, 2022 Staff Report, Regional Grants-In-Aid Board Policy, and Regional Grants-in-Aid Policy (BRD13) approved on June 8, 2022
- Appendix B: History of Past Regional Grants-in-Aid (GIA) Requests (since 1994)