

FAIR GOVERNMENT GRANT FUNDING CHATHAM-KENT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Issue:

Municipalities of various populations, land mass and infrastructure requirements are offered provincial funding through grants. Improved allocation and qualification criteria is required to better meet the needs of all municipalities.

Background:

Many provincial government grant applications are awarded through a competitive process. Some criteria limit the number and types of projects applied for while others are allocated on the basis of measures such as population base and transit ridership. Such guidelines create an uneven playing field for local governments that have multiple projects or do not meet necessary measures.

At times provincial grants are announced on short notice whereby prompting a reactionary and time constrained procedure for local governments to administer the submission of an application with no reassurance of monetary outcome. This process can cost constituents as a result by bearing the cost of lost time and wages of local government administration.

In most cases, key projects of municipalities, such as infrastructure, still necessitate the need for completion whether or not they will receive grant funding, thus bearing the cost of such projects on local taxpayers and businesses.

An ad-hoc approach to grant applications does not promote long term strategic planning or sustainability. The competitive nature does not provide equal provisions or allow for local planning through a balanced, methodical business plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

Revisit the criteria and qualifications required for local governments to submit grant applications in order to provide a more equitable and sustained distribution to local jurisdictions. Attention should be applied to implementing a sustainable funding model based on long range asset management plans. In reviewing such criteria consideration should be given, but not limited to, measures such as population served, the number or value of bridges, kilometres of roads, water mains and sewers, etc. and be based on proven asset management plans.