



# Community Recreation and Culture Grant Program

Council Policy

C-317

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Policy Owner:	Recreation, Parks & Community Support
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## Purpose

- 1 This policy establishes the Community Recreation Funding Grant Program (the Grant Program) by outlining funding sources, eligibility criteria, application requirements/processes, and evaluation guidelines.



## Policy Statement

- 2 Council values the volunteers and resources that non-profit community organizations provide for County residents.
- 3 Council provides limited operational and capital assistance to non-profit organizations whose facilities, programs, or services benefit County residents.
- 4 The County encourages and supports partnership opportunities that enhance quality of life for County residents.



## Policy

### Part A: General Regulations

#### Grant Program Funding

- 5 Funding from the County's recreation tax levy is allocated to the Grant Program by Council through the annual operational budget.

- 6 The Recreation Governance Committee (RGC) allocates the funding from the annual operational budget. Funding is available to non-profit organizations through the Grant Program.
- 7 At the end of the calendar year, any unused funds from the recreation tax levy that were allocated to grant funding and left in the annual operational budget are transferred to the public reserve account.
- 8 Non-profit organizations and the County may access recreation tax levy funds held in the public reserve for future recreation capital projects, life cycle enhancement, or service costs for debts incurred to fund a recreation capital project or life cycle enhancement.
- 9 Proceeds obtained through cash-in-lieu and the disposal (sale, lease, or other disposition) of reserve lands are allocated in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.
- 10 Grant funding decisions made by the RGC are final and appeals are not considered.
- 11 Voluntary recreation contribution funds can be acquired from developers or individuals.
- 12 Voluntary recreation contribution funds are allocated to the electoral division in which the subdivision is located.
  - (1) Voluntary recreation contribution funds are available only for new recreation capital projects or expansion of recreation capital projects as directed and approved by the RGC.
  - (2) Non-profit organizations may use voluntary recreation contributions as matching funds for Capital projects that meet the eligibility of this policy.

### The Public Reserve

- 13 Interest earned on funds in the public reserve is allocated by Council for maintenance and operation of reserve lands and public parks, owned or controlled by the County.
- 14 Cash-in-lieu funds are apportioned in accordance with the uses identified in the *Municipal Government Act*.

### Conflict of Interest

- 15 At the discretion of the CAO, if the County determines that an organization's board or any of its directors, officers, or employees have a conflict of interest, and it is not corrected to the satisfaction of the County, the County may withhold or withdraw approved funding without notice.



- 16 A conflict of interest arises when a conflict between an individual's personal interests (what they could gain financially or otherwise) and their duty to administer the grant funds in an accountable and transparent manner are in question.
- 17 Members of an organization applying for a grant must not act or appear to act in order to benefit, financially or otherwise, themselves or their family, friends, associates, or businesses.

## Gift in Kind

- 18 For capital projects under \$1,000,000, eligible organizations may contribute a portion or all of their 50% matching funds by allocating approved donated labour, equipment, or materials that support the project, as outlined in administrative procedure.



## Part B: Grant Funding Streams

### Capital Assistance Grant Program

- 19 The Capital Assistance Grant Program provides funding to eligible organizations for capital projects to improve or create recreational and cultural opportunities throughout the County.
- 20 Eligible organizations are required to raise a minimum of 15% of the total project costs for large capital project requests over \$1,000,000, 30% for medium projects \$500,001 - \$1,000,000 and 50% for small projects \$500,000 or less.
- 21 The Capital Assistance Grant Program has two application submission deadlines; applications are due March 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:30PM annually.
  - (1) For deadlines that fall on a weekend or statutory holiday applications will be accepted until the end of the next business day.
- 22 The following organizations are eligible for a capital assistance grant:
  - (1) Non-profit organizations, or the County acting as an agent on behalf of residents, that offer programs and services that are fully accessible to County residents.
  - (2) Neighboring municipalities are eligible to apply for capital projects within the terms and conditions of their current cost sharing agreement, if applicable.
  - (3) School boards operating under the Joint Use and Planning School Reserves Agreement are eligible for capital infrastructure that serve County residents and are accessible to the public.

- (4) First Nations and Métis Settlements neighboring the County.

23 The following organizations are ineligible for a capital assistance grant:

- (1) Organizations that are not fully accessible to the public, including but not limited to condo boards, private clubs, private school boards.
- (2) For-profit organizations or initiatives that serve with the purpose of profit.
- (3) Religious-based or affiliated organizations or societies registered under the *Religious Societies' Land Act*.
- (4) Organizations that have overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting relating to any grant previously awarded by the County.
- (5) Organizations who have received capital funding within the calendar year.

24 The following expenditures or projects are eligible for a capital assistance grant:

- (1) Major projects that involve purchasing, construction, upgrading or significant renovation of recreational and cultural facilities within the County.
- (2) Project costs including but not limited to preliminary studies, project management, supplies and materials toward the project, contingency, and labour.

25 The following expenditures or projects are ineligible for a capital assistance grant:

- (1) Projects that are fully funded through other external funding sources.
- (2) Projects on private property, private memberships or that do not provide services or access to the public.
- (3) Retroactive expenses incurred prior to application funding approval letter being received.
- (4) Operational and existing staffing costs.
- (5) Projects funded through other County funding.
- (6) Costs associated with corporate signage or sponsorship.
- (7) Honoraria volunteers or board members involved with the planning of the project.

- (8) Donations or grant funding for other organizations.
  - (9) Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- 26 The cost sharing formula for eligible organizations within the County for small capital projects \$500,000 or less is as follows:
- (1) Up to 50% contribution from the County; and
  - (2) A minimum of 50% funding provided from the organization.
- 27 The cost sharing formula for eligible organizations within the County for medium capital projects \$500,001-\$1,000,000 requires a minimum of 30% provided from the organization.
- 28 The cost sharing formula for eligible organizations within the County for large capital projects over \$1,000,000 requires a minimum of 15% provided from the organization.
- 29 The cost sharing formula for eligible organizations outside the County in neighboring municipalities for capital projects over \$1,000,000 is as follows:
- (1) Up to 25% contribution from the County; and
  - (2) A minimum of 75% funding provided from the organization. The entirety or a portion of the organization's contribution may be obtained from the neighboring municipality.
- 30 The cost sharing requirements for eligible organizations outside the County in neighboring municipalities for capital projects under \$1,000,000 is as follows:
- (1) Up to 25% contribution from the County; and
  - (2) A minimum of 75% funding provided from the organization with contribution from the neighboring municipality.
- 31 Capital projects under \$1,000,000 will be evaluated by the following criteria:
- (1) Alignment of County plans and relevant guiding documents;
  - (2) Organizations capacity for project and asset management;
  - (3) Project viability; and
  - (4) Financial need.

- 32 Capital projects over \$1,000,000 will be evaluated by the following criteria:
- (1) Alignment of County plans and relevant guiding documents;
  - (2) Organizations capacity for project and asset management;
  - (3) Project viability; and
  - (4) Financial need.
- 33 A detailed overview of the evaluation criteria and process are as outlined in administrative procedure.

#### Operational Assistance Grant Program

- 34 The Operational Assistance Grant program provides operating funding to organizations that provide recreational and cultural programming to County residents. This funding is applicable to operating costs for the most recent fiscal year.
- 35 The Operational Assistance Grant Program has two application submission deadlines; applications are due March 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:30 PM annually.
- (1) Organizations can apply for operational funding once per year.
  - (2) For deadlines that fall on a weekend or statutory holiday applications will be accepted until the end of the next business day.
- 36 The following organizations are eligible for an operational assistance grant:
- (1) Non-profit organizations, or the County acting as an agent on behalf of residents, that offer programs and services that are fully accessible to County residents.
- 37 The following organizations are ineligible for an operational assistance grant:
- (1) Organizations that are not accessible to the public, including but not limited to condo boards, and private clubs.
  - (2) Organizations that offer donations or grant funding to other organizations.
  - (3) For-profit organizations.
  - (4) Libraries.

- (5) Religious-based or affiliated organizations or societies registered under the *Religious Societies' Land Act*.
- (6) School boards and school activities or teams.
- (7) Organizations that have overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting relating to any grant previously awarded by the County.
- (8) Organizations who have received Community Enhancement funding within the same calendar year.
- (9) Organizations operating under a three-year operational funding agreement with the County.
- (10) Recreation Centres operating at a surplus greater than 10% without funding assistance provided; or
- (11) Community Facilities operating at a surplus greater than 20% without funding assistance provided.

38 The following expenditures are eligible for an operational assistance grant:

- (1) Costs of an organization or facility, such as but not limited to:
  - (a) Operational costs.
  - (b) Utilities.
  - (c) Maintenance.
  - (d) Insurance.
  - (e) Salaries and wages.
  - (f) Promotional and marketing materials and expenses.
  - (g) Programming costs.
- (2) Maintenance, lifecycle, new or replacement of items \$10,000 or less.

39 The following expenditures are ineligible for an operational assistance grant:

- (1) Purchase of small or large capital items.

- (2) Honoraria volunteers or board members involved with the organization.
  - (3) Items that are discretionary consumables that do not impact the day-to-day operations of an organization.
  - (4) Donations or grant funding for other organizations.
  - (5) Amortization and depreciation expenses.
  - (6) Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- 40 Organizations located outside the County are eligible for operational funding with:
- (1) Up to 50% contribution from the County; and
  - (2) A minimum of 50% funding provided from the organization including a contribution from the neighbouring municipality in which the organization resides in.
- 41 Operational funding for eligible organizations within the County is non-matching.
- 42 Operational assistance grant applications will be evaluated by the following criteria:
- (1) Alignment of County plans and relevant guiding documents;
  - (2) Impact on recreational and cultural opportunities for County residents;
  - (3) Organization capacity and asset management; and
  - (4) Financial need, as defined in the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, where:
    - (a) Recreation centres must demonstrate need for operational funding assistance (operating up to a 10% surplus without funding assistance provided);
    - (b) Community facilities must demonstrate need for operational funding assistance (operating up to a 20% surplus without funding assistance provided); and
    - (c) Facility operators of recreation centres and community facilities must demonstrate that initiatives are being undertaken to access funding from other unearned revenue sources such as fundraising, external grants, advertising, sponsorship, etc.
- 43 Funding maximums for recreation centres are outlined in Schedule A of this policy.



- 44 A detailed overview of the evaluation criteria and process are as outlined in administrative procedure.

### Community Enhancement Grant Program

- 45 The Community Enhancement Grant Program provides funding to organizations for initiatives that offer enriching cultural experiences and strengthen the sense of community for County residents.
- (1) Applications are considered for a maximum funding amount of \$7,500 annually.
- 46 The Community Enhancement Grant Program applications are accepted once annually; the application deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:30 pm.
- (1) For deadlines that fall on a weekend or statutory holiday applications will be accepted until the end of the next business day.
- 47 The following organizations are eligible under the Community Enhancement Grant Program:
- (1) Non-profit organizations, or the County acting as an agent on behalf of residents, that offer programs and services that are fully accessible to County residents.
- 48 The following organizations are ineligible under the Community Enhancement Grant Program:
- (1) Organizations that are not accessible to the public, including but not limited to condo boards, and private clubs.
- (2) For-profit organizations.
- (3) Libraries.
- (4) Religious-based or affiliated organizations or societies registered under the *Religious Societies' Land Act*.
- (5) School boards and school activities or teams.
- (6) Organizations that have overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting relating to any grant previously awarded by the County.
- (7) Organizations who have received operational funding or Community Enhancement funding within the same calendar year.

- 49 The following expenditures are eligible under the Community Enhancement Grant Program:
- (1) Costs associated with the program/event that is being applied for, such as but not limited to:
    - (a) Program supplies and materials.
    - (b) Facility rentals.
    - (c) Insurance covering the cost related to the event or project.
    - (d) Promotional and marketing material expenses.
- 50 The following expenditures are ineligible under the Community Enhancement Grant Program:
- (1) Operational costs.
  - (2) Utilities.
  - (3) Maintenance.
  - (4) Salaries.
  - (5) Retroactive expenses related to the event or program.
  - (6) Purchase of small or large capital items.
  - (7) Honoraria for volunteers or board members involved with the organization.
  - (8) Donations or grant funding for other organizations.
  - (9) Amortization and depreciation expenses.
  - (10) Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- 51 The evaluation process will begin immediately after the grant deadline has passed. The evaluation process will review the following:
- (1) Application is complete, and all required documents have been submitted.
  - (2) Alignment with one of the following categories included in the Community Enhancement Grant Program:



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- (a) Heritage Awareness Grants support tangible initiatives to promote and preserve the County's history. A Heritage Awareness Grant is considered for initiatives that:
  - (i) Document historical places or events in order to retain the information for future generations; or
  - (ii) Encourage public involvement in heritage preservation and promote knowledge about the County's history.
- (b) Volunteer Development Grants support investment back into the community through volunteerism. A Volunteer Development Grant is considered for:
  - (i) Organizations that want to improve their ability to support County volunteers through leadership development, board governance, succession planning, volunteer skills training and volunteer appreciation.
- (c) Arts & Cultural Grants support organizations in their efforts to provide quality arts and cultural programming and events.
- (d) Community Benefit Grants support organizations and projects that bring communities together to enhance quality of life and well-being of County residents, while promoting and creating healthy communities. A Community Benefit Grant is considered for:
  - (i) Supporting a non-profit organization's ability to improve the appearance of their community;
  - (ii) Initiatives to develop healthy communities; or
  - (iii) Animal services, and community safety enhancements or programs within the boundaries of the County.

## Emergency Funding Requests

- 52 RGC considers funding requests year-round during regularly scheduled meetings. Emergency funding requests are considered for unexpected expenses that are causing the eligible organization or facility to be unable to operate and provide their regular programming.
- 53 A special Recreation Governance Committee meeting can be arranged outside of the regularly scheduled meetings for emergency funding requests at the discretion of RGC.

- 54 If an emergency funding request is anticipated, the County must be notified prior to any expenses related to the project occurring.
- 55 Matching funding from the organization may be required.



### Part C: Letters of Support

- 56 Letters of support can be requested from eligible organizations under this policy for funding initiatives for projects, in accordance with administrative procedure.
- 57 Requests for letters of support must include the following information:
- (1) A brief description of the organization that is requesting the letter of support.
  - (2) The name and address of the external funding source or program, if applicable.
  - (3) The funding amount that is being requested, if applicable.
  - (4) The project description and total cost.
  - (5) The benefit to the organization and community that the project would offer.
  - (6) The number of County residents that would benefit from the project.
  - (7) Main contact from the organization that will receive the letter of support once authorized.



### References

#### Legal Authorities

#### Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, etc.

#### Related Procedures

- *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*, RSA 2000
- Rocky View County Recreation, Parks Master Plan - 2021
- Recreation Needs Assessment Study -2021
- [Rocky View County Parks & Open Space Master Plan](#)
- [Rocky View County Recreation and Parks Master Plan](#)
- [Rocky View County Active Transportation Plans](#)
- Intermunicipal Recreation Cost Sharing Agreements
- Joint Use School Planning Agreement
- PRO C-317 A, PRO C-317 B, PRO C-317 C, PRO C-317 D

Other

- N/A



## Policy History

Amendment Date(s) – Amendment  
Description

Review Date(s) – Review Outcome  
Description

- 2019 November 26 – Council amended to improve clarity, align with new County standards and processes.
- 2020 February 25 – Council amended to remove notwithstanding clause, moving FCSS and social services programs to discretionary, clarified wording, and added the Boards and Committees Bylaw’s “conflict of interest” Definition.
- 2021 February 23 – Council amended to include Community Enhancement Funds, consolidate Regional and Community Recreation Funding programs, change eligibility, application, and matching requirements, and give CAO permission to amend funding criteria in Schedule A.
- 2019 November 19 – Minor amendments recommended to clarify policy and align with new policy template and procedures.
- 2020 January 15 – Minor amendments recommended to clarify and update policy.
- 2021 February 18 – Major amendments recommended to include new funds, consolidate existing programs, change eligibility, application, and matching requirements, and give amending authority to CAO.
- 2023 August 23 – Major amendments recommended to align the policy with updated funding agreements for organizations in receipt of grant funding.
- 2023 October 31 – Council amended to change policy name to reflect inclusion of culture-focused organizations and initiatives, emphasize three different grant funding streams and criteria for each, clarify eligible expenses and organizations, create guidance for letters of support from the County, and specify operating funding maximums for Recreation Centres in accordance with the Recreation and Parks Master Plan.



## Definitions

58 In this policy:

- (1) “access” means that all County residents shall receive equity through accessible, available, and affordable services, programs, and facilities;  
OR “access” means the ability to obtain and/or make use of sources of funding subject to eligibility and application processes outlined in this policy, as the context requires;
- (2) “business day” means 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding statutory holidays.
- (3) “business plan” means a strategic plan that places financial planning and financial performance at its core, charting the future course of an institution through a realistic projection of operations and capital and marketing projections;
- (4) “capital” means funding for an expenditure creating future benefits, a fixed asset, a tangible item (bricks and mortar), or a one-time facility rental and recreational programming software expense;
- (5) “cash-in-lieu” means money taken instead of land for municipal reserves, school reserve, or municipal and school reserve at the time of subdivision, pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*;
- (6) “Chief Administrative Officer” or “CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer of Rocky View County as defined in the *Municipal Government Act* or their authorized designate;
- (7) “conflict of interest” means a situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person’s self-interest, their professional interest, or the public interest;
- (8) “community” means an organization that operates and maintains a community facility, or the provision of community recreation programs;
- (9) “community facility” means a single amenity facility that is volunteer operated;
- (10) “component” means a portion of a facility used for a specific function or activity; i.e.: gymnasium or fitness centre;
- (11) “consumables” means items that are not essential for the core operations of the facility or program;
- (12) “cost sharing” means the proportioned amount of resources the applicant must provide in order to receive the approved funding from the County;

- (13) “Council” means the duly elected Council of Rocky View County;
- (14) “County” means Rocky View County;
- (15) “cultural” means a shared community identity as expressed by beliefs, values, traditions, and aspirations found in local events, arts, and heritage;
- (16) “electoral division” means the boundaries defined in the *Electoral Boundaries and Council Composition Bylaw C-8077-2020*, as amended or replaced from time to time;
- (17) “emergency funding” means resourcing provided for repairs to a facility that could not remain open or operate safely if the repairs are not completed;
- (18) “facility” means a location designed and equipped for the conduct of sports, leisure time activities, and other customary and usual recreational activities;
- (19) “funding stream” means one of the following grants listed in this policy: Operational Funding, Capital Funding, or Community enhancement;
- (20) “grant” means the Community Recreation and Culture Funding Grant;
- (21) “gift in kind” means a non-cash contribution toward a specific project and where the donor may receive a donation receipt;
- (22) “intermunicipal recreation cost sharing agreement” means an agreement between the County and the identified municipality that outlines detailed information on the planning, development, funding, maintenance, and operation of recreational and cultural amenities by both the County and the identified municipality;
- (23) “Joint Use and Planning School Agreement” means an agreement that establishes a formal partnership between the County and the school boards to enable the integrated and long-term planning and use of school sites on municipal reserve (MR), school reserve (SR) and municipal and school reserve (MSR) land;
- (24) “large capital project” means a project exceeding \$1,000,000. Typical projects include eligible new infrastructure or expansions. Projects under \$1,000,000 may be considered a medium capital project due to the scope;
- (25) “lifecycle plan” means the documentation and inventory of the facility’s assets, which includes a repair or replacement schedule and the costs associated with the scheduled repair or replacement;

- (26) “*Master Rates Bylaw*” means the Rocky View County bylaw known as the *Master Rates Bylaw*, as amended or replaced from time to time; a Council-approved regulation that includes a consolidation of rates charged to the public for various municipal services;
- (27) “medium capital project” means a project \$500,001-\$1,000,000 that typically includes a larger replacement or enhancement of an eligible facility, infrastructure component. Projects that are near \$1,000,000 may be considered a large capital project due to the scope;
- (28) “municipal reserve” or “MR” means land designated as a municipal reserve pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*;
- (29) “non-profit” means an organization that is a registered charity or is incorporated under the *Societies Act of Alberta*, the *Agricultural Societies Act*, or Part 9 of the *Companies Act* whose objectives reflect their interest in serving the needs of the public without realizing a profit to its members;
- (30) “operational” means the routine functioning and activities of a program, service, or facility, such as but not limited to operational costs, utilities, and insurance;
- (31) “organization” means non-profit groups that exist to serve the public benefit, are typically governed by a voluntary board of directors, and typically depends on volunteers to carry out essential parts of the groups’ or organizations’ work, though paid staff may fill certain positions;
- (32) “partnership” means two or more organizations working together towards a joint interest where there is a definition of authority and responsibility among partners; joint contribution of input costs (e.g.: time, funding, expertise, information); sharing of risk among partners; and mutual or complementary benefits;
- (33) “programs” means formal, planned, instructor-led opportunities for individuals to develop skill or understanding in a specific content area, whether through registering for, or dropping into, a scheduled activity. It does not refer to participant-led, unstructured activities that are accessed at public open spaces or through admission into a facility, nor the rental of parks, playgrounds, or facilities by individuals or groups;
- (34) “public reserve account” means the interest-bearing account maintained by the County for the Cash-in-Lieu provided in place of Reserve Land and proceeds from the sale of Reserve Land in accordance with the Act;



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- (35) “public use facilities” means any property or facility designated through an agreement with the County as available for use by individuals, groups, or other organizations that are not directly associated with the County;
- (36) “recreation” means an experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing;
- (37) “recreation facility” means a facility with two or fewer components that provides services according to community service boundaries, provides managed access, and the prime activity for which involves a paid or programmed recreational use. Facility services may be provided through an alternative municipal service provider with public access negotiated through an intermunicipal recreation cost sharing agreement;
- (38) “Recreation Governance Committee (RGC)” is a Council committee that acts as an approving body regarding matters pertaining to recreation and cultural services in the County, including grant applications, funding allocation, studies, and masterplans;
- (39) “recreation tax levy” means the application of annual tax to taxable properties to support recreation and culture and established according to the *Municipal Government Act*;
- (40) “reserve lands” means any lands that have been provided by a registered owner as municipal reserve (MR) or municipal and school reserve (MSR) (in each case, such terms shall not include lands held as environmental reserve) under the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*;
- (41) “retroactive expenses” means expenditures incurred prior to approval of a grant by the Recreation Governance Committee;
- (42) “Rocky View County” means Rocky View County as a municipal corporation and the geographical area within its jurisdictional boundaries, as the context requires;
- (43) “small capital project” means a project under \$500,000 that typically includes replacement or small enhancement of an eligible facility, infrastructure component. Projects that are near \$500,000 may be considered a medium capital project due to the scope. Life Cycle items over \$10,000 may be considered small capital projects;
- (44) “sustainability” means the relationship between an organization’s financial

sustainability and self-sufficiency in securing the resources required to maintain general operations without relying on public funds;

- (45) “voluntary recreation contribution” means a voluntary monetary donation by owners or developers, as per the *Master Rates Bylaw*, applied to each new unit for residential or non-residential development; and
- (46) “volunteer” means anyone who offers time, energy, and skills of his or her own free will for the mutual benefit of the volunteer and the organization. Volunteers work without financial compensation, or the expectation of financial compensation beyond an agreed-upon reimbursement for expenses.

## Schedule A: Operating Funding Maximums for Recreation Centres

As per the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, the following operating funding maximums are available for Recreation Centres:

Operating Expenses	Operating Funding Maximums Per Year (adjusted for estimated inflation)		
	2024	2025	2026
Up to \$600,000	\$120,000	\$123,600	\$127,308
Up to \$1.05 million	\$210,000	\$216,300	\$222,789
Over \$1.05 million	\$300,000	\$309,000	\$318,270