

Chapter 1

Agriculture; Communities, Culture and Heritage; Natural Resources: Grant Programs

Overall Conclusions:

- For the \$45 million in grants and contributions audited, the departments did not define how to measure if the spending was successful
- We found the departments did not assess whether they got the results they wanted for the money spent
- Grants were generally awarded and paid in line with department requirements

Design

Conclusion:

- Grant programs are not set up to achieve specific, measurable results
- No evaluation is completed on most grant programs to see what results were obtained

Examples:

- All programs had goals and objectives
- 17 of 18 programs did not have specific measures of success
- Risks to program success not identified for 17 of 18 programs
- No explanations on decisions for program design:
 - Major differences in the thoroughness of terms and conditions
 - Different inspection requirements for similar programs

Awarding and Payment

Conclusion:

- Most grants are awarded and paid according to rules with only minor exceptions

Examples:

- Most programs met eligibility criteria, with minor exceptions:
 - One-time Emerging Culture and Heritage grant awarded annually to one recipient
 - Recreation Facilities Development program did not have explanations documented for some decisions
- Approval process is not always clear as no checklists to support review
- Discretionary grants at CCH – while approvals existed, support was lacking for value of grants awarded
- Access Road Construction program – service agreement needed with third party administrator to address concerns

Recommendations:

- Department of Finance and Treasury Board should provide guidance for grant program design, administration, and monitoring
- Departments should measure performance and regularly evaluate programs
- Departments should develop comprehensive risk analysis to assess design of grant programs

Recommendations:

- Departments should develop assessment tools for each stage of the grant process
- Natural Resources should establish written agreements for third-party administration of grant programs
- Communities, Culture and Heritage should develop documentation and retention standards for discretionary grants