



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Investment Funding Programs – 2016 Allocation Recommendations Review

<b>Date:</b>	March 29, 2016
<b>To:</b>	City Council
<b>From:</b>	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	AFS #22915

#### SUMMARY

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Results of further review as requested by the Community Development and Recreation Committee of two allocations recommendations from the 2016 Community Festivals and Special Events Investment Funding program are provided in this report.

Grants help the City of Toronto achieve its social, economic and cultural goals for its residents. The City's goals are better achieved by supporting the work of organizations that are closer to the communities they serve.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends:**

1. City Council approve allocations as originally recommended in the Investment Funding Programs – 2016 Allocation Recommendation for Community Festivals and Special Events for applications No. 9, Progress Place.
2. City Council direct that the applicant organization for Application No. 53, Mount Dennis Community Association complete the Appeals process to ensure transparency, accountability and fairness and that Staff report to Council, through the Community Development and Recreation Committee, on the status of Applicant No. 53 once the Appeals process is completed in April, 2016.

## **Financial Impact**

The recommendations in this report will have no impact beyond what has already been included in the 2016 Approved Operating Budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

On March 7, 2016 Community Development and Recreation Committee recommended approval of the two Investment Funding programs, as recommended in Appendices A, B and C to the report (February 22, 2016), with the exception of Progress Place (Community Festivals and Special Events Programs) in the amount of \$8,500 for total of \$615,500.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.CD10.4>

On March 7, 2016 the Community Development and Recreation Committee referred two allocation recommendations from the 2016 Allocations Report for the Community Festivals and Special Events Investment Funding program for review: Application No. 9 and 53, with a view to potential reallocation of the funds.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.CD10.4>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

Results of the review of two allocations recommendations from the 2016 Community Festivals and Special Events Investment Funding program (Community Festival) are provided in this report: Progress Place (application No. 9), and Mount Dennis Community Association (application No. 23), as requested and approved by the Community Development and Recreation Committee on March 7, 2016.

### *Community Festivals & Special Events Investment Funding Program - \$125,500*

The Community Festivals & Special Events Investment Program (Community Festivals) is an annual program that provides start-up or early-stage funding for small not-for-profit festivals and community events held in the City of Toronto. These events encourage residents to have fun, participate in their community, connect with each other, and contribute to a community's strength. The investment supports community-based groups to undertake community-building activities that showcase local achievements, heritage, culture, and/or neighbourhoods.

## **COMMENTS**

The 2016 Investment Funding Allocations report recommends Application No. 9 (Progress Place) for funding of \$8,500 and Application No. 53 (Mount Dennis Community Association) for decline.

Staff have conducted an additional review of Application No. 9, results of which follow and confirms the original staff recommendation contained in the 2016 Allocations Report.

The Community Festivals grant program provides applicant groups who have been declined funding to appeal funding recommendations. Staff will report back to Council on the status of Application No. 53 once the appeals process is completed by April 12, 2016.

Application No. 9 (Progress Place) was recommended for two-year funding of \$8,500 for a festival to be held in Ward 11 York South-Weston, in the Neighbourhood Improvement Area (NIA) of Weston. The organization requested \$9,999 for a festival that included children's activities, local entrepreneurs and artists selling their food, a pop-up bike clinic, a community-curated demonstrations of skills, performances by local musicians and dancers, youth talent show, and a community mural with an emphasis on community engagement and planning. A total of 550 people are expected to attend the festival on September 23, 2016 on the community lawn between two high rise buildings located at 1765 Weston Rd, leveraging the work of the City's Tower Renewal initiative and many and diverse partners supporting the event.

## Initial Application Assessment

For the Community Festivals grant program, the allocations recommendations are based on the extent to which proposed events will:

- help build cohesion and inclusion across a community,
- encourage new partnerships,
- strengthen volunteerism, as well as
- contribute to a community's economic vitality.

Festivals and events for residents living in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas were considered one of the priorities for funding.

Assessments of the 105 Community Festivals applications submitted went through a four-stage process before they were recommended for funding or for decline by City staff:



1. *Basic Organization Eligibility*: If an organization is eligible for funding (not-for-profit organization based in the City of Toronto with activities serving Torontonians), the application goes to the second assessment stage: project eligibility.
2. *Basic Project eligibility*: the proposal must a fit with the program goals and assessment criteria, described in the program guidelines<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2016 grant program guidelines can be found at [Community Festivals](#) and [Community Recreation](#)

3. *Project Assessment:* staff consider the following areas for each proposal - project impact, project need, project readiness, and organizational capacity. The assessment process includes a review of the following information: project/event description and rationale, work plan, project/event budget, organization's documents (financial statements, budget), and the applicant's capacity to carry out the proposed project/event. If a proposed project demonstrate a strong fit with the grant program goals, staff conduct research (including other funders and City staff) and assess organizational financial health and risk.

Projects that are 'fundable' generally score well in the following additional areas of assessment: strong community partners; community development experience engaging residents, participants and/or volunteers in the planning and implementation of the initiative; and, organizational capacity in running similar projects or events in the past.

The majority of applications were eligible, however given the limited pool of available funding, priority is given to applications that can demonstrate a strong contribution to the purpose of the program and fit with program criteria. The approval rate for 2016 Community Festival application was 15%.

4. *Final Allocation Recommendations:* once all strong proposals are identified, the following criteria are used to identify the number of applications recommendations to fit the grant budget total available: geographic spread across Toronto, diversity of equity-seeking populations served, activities taking place in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, variety of activities, representation of the not-for-profit ecosystem (small, medium and large groups), new groups to the Community Investment portfolio, and, alignment with City strategies.

Of all of the 105 applications received, a total of four were for festivals taking place in Ward 11. The demand for festivals in the Mount Dennis and Weston Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA), compared to others, was high.

From among the strong proposals, staff recommended a new festival for funding in Ward 11: application No. 9 (Progress Place). It was rated especially strong as the organization was able to reach a high-needs equity-seeking group living in Weston and Mount Dennis (specifically those with mental health issues).

## **Review Results and Allocation Recommendations**

As directed by Community Development and Recreation Committee, staff undertook a secondary review of the proposal submitted under reconsideration (Application No. 9).

Staff recommend the initial allocation recommendation of two-year funding of \$8,500 for Application No. 9 be upheld for the following reasons:

- Six organizations as project partners, strong community development model, activities for all ages, targeting high-needs equity-seeking groups, and strong project impact;
- All budget items are eligible including \$2,700 in in-kind support;
- Work plan provided sufficient detail, timelines and measurable outputs;
- Outreach and engagement model was exemplary: 10 trained activity ambassadors (Mount Dennis residents) and staff from the Weston Mount Dennis Service Provider Network of 17 agencies to conduct outreach to five NIAs, including developing youth leadership.

Applicants who are not recommended for funding are provided with an option to appeal the allocations recommendation to an Appeals Panel, to be held on April 12, 2016. Staff recommend applicant organization for Application No. 53 complete the Appeals process to ensure transparency, accountability and fairness. Staff will report to Council on the status of the Appeals process for Applicant No. 53.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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