COMPARATIVE RESEARCH REPORT FOR A CULTURAL FESTIVALS GRANT PROGRAM

Prepared for the City of Toronto

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This Comparative Research Report is one of three distinct but interconnected research undertakings that will help to inform the design of a Cultural Festivals Grant Program at the City of Toronto.   The other two research components are:
- External stakeholder consultation, led by Process; and
- Internal stakeholder consultation, led by the City's Event Support Team.

The development of the Cultural Festivals Grant Program was approved by City Council in October 2019[1] with the intention of implementation in 2020. This timeline was delayed as a result of COVID-19 and the program is now scheduled for approval in 2021 for the awarding of grants starting in 2022.

Throughout this report, text in *italics* is drawn directly from the relevant report, program guidelines or other research documents.

INTERNAL ALIGNMENT

Many relevant City reports were reviewed in preparation for the comparative research. Thought not exhaustive, the following documents helped to frame the scope of work:

THE CITY'S CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN
- One of the four pillars of Toronto's values, is: *Toronto invests in quality of life – socially, economically, culturally and environmentally – to make Toronto a desirable place to live, prosper and visit.*
- The Plan establishes four strategic priorities, including: *Invest in people and neighbourhoods. We are committed to a city that protects and improves quality of life for all, including safety, health, social and economic wellbeing and inclusion.*
- The Plan takes a strong position on equity: *We recognize the barriers presented by discrimination and the disadvantages faced by equity-seeking groups and vulnerable populations. The City strives to create and sustain equity in government, including how we measure our impact, our financial decisions, and deliver services. In everything we do, we work towards realizing equitable outcomes for our residents.*

TORR REPORT[2]
- This report conveyed feedback from external consultations that: *Stakeholders also encouraged the City to take even more concrete, demonstrable and measurable steps to prioritize equity and inclusion in all engagements, programs, funding, procurement and hiring. Regarding City funding for cultural industries, investment decisions were questioned for their lack of transparency and limited support for equity-seeking groups and creative.*

---

[1] City Report: Realignment of Two Cultural Grant Programs, October 2, 2019
[2] COVID-19 Impacts and Opportunities, 2020: Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild: Pages 207/208

- The report recommended that funding be used as an agent of change: *To build capacity for equity-seeking groups, more funding will need to be allocated toward them and to artists from these communities. This will require either more funding or a recalibration of the balance of current funding to established incumbents versus to equity-seeking groups.*

BUILDING BACK STRONGER[3]

- This report included several relevant recommendations including: *Pursue a program of specific community investments to promote the encouragement, scaling and sustainability of business and cultural enterprises led by Black, Indigenous and equity-deserving groups.* And;
- *Continue to advance opportunities for cultural engagement in all parts of the city, year-round. Historically, Toronto's cultural sector has been concentrated in the downtown core. Recent efforts by the City and cultural organizations have helped to expand the sector's footprint city-wide, allowing for more residents to engage with the arts closer to home. These efforts must continue as recovery advances, with additional focus on new opportunities for cultural programming in the winter months.*

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

- Kelly Wilhelm prepared a briefing note to lay out:…*a set of recommendations from which to further develop a transparent, coherent and accountable approach to the City of Toronto's support for arts and culture festivals[4].*
- Susan Brown researched and presented a report that recommended the key objectives of a new program. It also outlined existing funding programs and best practices in a number of national and international jurisdictions[5].

---

[3] Report of the City of Toronto Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group, December 7, 2020.
[4] Kelly Wilhelm, City of Toronto Approach to Festivals, July 11, 2019
[5] Susan Brown, Proposal for a New Festivals Grant Program at the City of Toronto, August 9, 2019

THE FUNDING LANDSCAPE

Research has been structured around finding the answers to two overarching questions:
- What are the funding gaps for festivals in the context of the City's above-noted priorities? Specifically other levels of government and the Toronto Arts Council; and
- What can we learn from best practices at festival funding programs in other municipal jurisdictions?

To answer these questions, research was undertaken into festival funding programs at:
- Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH)
- Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI)
- Toronto Arts Council (TAC)
- City of Montreal
- City of Ottawa
- City of Vancouver
- New York City
- City of Sydney (Australia)

Research commenced with an online review of all available material related to festival programs in these jurisdictions. This was followed by interviews with the program managers to understand more about the program, its place within the sector, and how impact is measured. In addition, the program managers were asked to share their application forms, report forms and evaluation frameworks if such existed.

In general, this report contains information about program components that are somewhat unique, or that are particularly relevant to the Toronto situation. For example, for the most part, eligibility criteria are relatively standard across all programs and thus only selected criteria are covered in this report. Likewise, each program has assessment criteria that relate to that program's stated objectives. Once Toronto's Cultural Festivals Funding Program objectives are finalized, the assessment criteria used by other funders will provide a useful reference point.

The following section of this report includes a high level summary of some of the most interesting aspects of festival funding programs. This summary is followed by more detailed information about the relevant programs offered in each jurisdiction.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

FUNDING GAPS

A review of program criteria at the Building Communities through Arts and Heritage (DCH), Celebrate Ontario (MHSTCI) and the TAC identified some high level aspects of applicant, project and expense eligibility. In reviewing the following chart, please note that festivals can apply to the TAC through many discipline-based and strategic programs, each of which has specific eligibility requirements. As such, only eligibility that appears to cross all programs is captured in Chart 1. The three consistencies found are:

- Only non profit (incorporated or not) organizations, or collectives in the case of the TAC, are eligible;
- Events with a "sales" focus, for example a food festival or art fair, are not eligible at BCAH or Celebrate;
- Ongoing operating costs (including staff, administration) are ineligible at BCAH and Celebrate, and ineligible for project grants at the TAC.

	BCAH	Celebrate	TAC
Ineligible applicants			
For profit entities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unions		Yes	
Organizations with legal status for less than 1 year		Yes	
Eligible projcts			
Projects that do not take place annually or biennially		Yes	
Artists must be paid	Preferred	No	Yes
Ineligible projects			
Events such as food sales, art and craft sales, book fairs	Yes	Yes	
Celebration of historical events of other countries	Yes		
Activities that are (in whole or in part) an extension of regular or permanent programming			
Eligible expenses			
Programming fees, production and presentation		Yes	
Costs related to improvements to comply with AODA		Yes	
Media buys (beyond 40 km of event)		Yes	
Ineligible expenses			
Ongoing operating costs (TAC yes for operating programs and no for project grants)	Yes	Yes	Yes/No
Creation and production	Yes		
Staffing and admin (permanent or project staff, translation, legal etc.)		Yes	
Site services		Yes	
Marketing creative, website, promotions, media buys within 40 km of event		Yes	
Security services, ambulance services	Yes		

Chart 1: Eligibility and gaps

In addition to the eligibility criteria, staff at these funding bodies identified five gaps in the funding landscape from their perspectives:
- Mechanisms to support festivals that are both in-person and online (DCH)
- A means of outreach to and support of culturally diverse programming (DCH)
- Operating funding (MHSTCI).
- Financial support for the additional expense of PPE (MHSTCI)
- Accessible infrastructure for events in the public realm where there might be physical barriers, poor quality sound amplification etc. (TAC)

BEST PRACTICES/INTERESTING APPROACHES
There are multiple festival funding programs in most jurisdictions and no one program has emerged as a clear and direct model for Toronto's Cultural Festivals Grant Program. There are, however, many interesting approaches taken in these other jurisdictions.

Chart 2 provides an overview of some of the key information related to these programs. This is followed by a summary of definitions, eligibility criteria, requirements for free or ticketed events, etc.

	Program	Annual/Multi-year	# intakes/yr	Grant/Contribution	Artist Payment	Assessment	Appeal process
Canada	BCAH	Annual	3	Grants below $50k; Contribution 90%/10% over $50k.	Prefer the majority are paid, showcasing is acceptable	Staff	No
Ontario	Celebrate Ontario	Annual	1	Contribution agreement 70%/30%	Not required	Staff	No
	Reconnect	Annual	1	Contribution agreement 70%/30%	Not required	Staff	No
Montreal	Diversity of Cultural Expressions	Annual	1	Contribution agreement 90%/10%	Required	Staff and external	No
Ottawa	Major Arts	Annual + multi-year	1	Grant	Required	External panel	No
	Arts Festivals	Annual	1	Grant	Not required	External panel	No
	Diversity	Annual	1	Grant	Not required	External panel	No
Vancouver	Communities and Artists Shifting Culture	Annual	2	Grant	Required	Staff and external	Yes
NYC	Cultural Development Fund	Annual	1	Contribution agreement: 80%/20%	Required	External panel	Yes
Sydney	Village and Community	Annual + multi-year	2	Grant	Not required	Staff	No

Chart 2: Summary program information

DEFINITIONS

Few programs provide a glossary of terms or definitions. Exceptions are:
- DCH has a clear definition of a festival;
- TAC has a clear definition of an artist;
- MHSCI has a definition of Indigenous event (Reconnect program); and
- Vancouver has a comprehensive definition of equity-seeking groups.

ELIGIBILITY

Many of the jurisdictions fund festivals across a number of programs, or as part of a funding program that supports a broad range of artistic activity. The information provided suggests that:
- Artistic activity has to be the core component of the festival (DCH)
- Festivals that are "BIA events with a couple of performers" are not eligible (NYC)
- Applicants must have successfully organized two editions of the festival before they are eligible (DCH and NYC)
- The eligibility of food festivals varies across programs, for example: Yes if it is ancillary to live performance (DCH); Yes as long as there is some entertainment (MHSTCI); the arts component has to be stronger than the food component (Montreal); generally food festivals are not getting funded (NYC)
- No ticketed festival activity can take place in the public domain, for example a cordoned-off area of a street (Montreal)
- Applicants must demonstrate that they have insurance to cover the organization as well as their festival (MHSTCI).

- Some funders require that all artists are paid scale (TAC) and others encourage this but it is not a requirement (Vancouver). These funders also provide links to industry pay standards.
- Applicants have to state how they will comply with the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (MHSTCI).

FREE AND TICKETED FESTIVALS

Because most of the programs offer funding to a range of festivals and events, many of which are part of broader year-round programming, in most jurisdictions it is irrelevant whether the festival is free or ticketed. That said:
- At DCH, the bulk of activity has to be free;
- In some jurisdictions, a festival without a free component will receive a lower score (Ottawa); at others ticketed events have to provide an accessibility plan (Vancouver) or provide an explanation of how they are attempting to make the ticket price affordable (NYC)

APPLICATION PROCESS

In some jurisdictions first time applicants must meet with a grants officer, or attend a webinar, before applying (NYC). In others, applicants are offered grant-writing support (Ottawa).

Deaf, hard of hearing and applicants with Disabilities who need support to complete the grant can apply for up to $500 to cover the cost of assistance from service providers (Vancouver). At the TAC, projects involving Deaf artists and artists with disabilities can apply for up to an additional $5,000 towards accessibility costs such as ASL interpretation, communications assistants, attendant care and equipment rental.

In order to reduce barriers, a verbal application process has been introduced on a trial basis for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander applicants, people with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse applicants (Sydney).

FUNDING LEVELS

Applicants can request a grant of 100% of eligible expenses (DCH) to 75% (Montreal) and 50% (MHSTCI).

In NYC, the department recently received additional funding, and in order to encourage activity in underserved neighbourhoods, applicants could request additional funding based upon the geographic location of their program.

IN-KIND SUPPORT

In some jurisdictions in-kind is not an eligible budget item (MHSTCI, NYC) although it has to be recorded in the application. However, in Ottawa, smaller community festivals can include in-kind as it might represent a significant portion of the budget (it is not an eligible expense for larger festivals). And in Vancouver, the City in-kind has to be indicated in the application but not on the budget form, and the community in-kind is an eligible budget item.

In Montreal, applicants are not charged for the city's in-kind services. In some cases the value of the city's in-kind exceeds that of the grant (Montreal).

ASSESSMENT

Some funders make decisions internally and others use external panels (see Chart 2). In addition:

- Applicants with a good track record and low risk have an abridged assessment (DCH).
- An evaluation committee comprised of municipal staff and representatives of the cultural and artistic communities reviews applications and particular attention is placed on diversity among members of this committee (Montreal).
- Ottawa has adopted a policy to exceed 50% representation of people from underrepresented communities in all of its assessment bodies for grants and awards and Vancouver has made a commitment to diverse representation on all assessment committees.

EQUITY SEEKING GROUPS

Most funders are taking concrete actions to reduce barriers by equity-seeking groups. These include:

- Equity seeking groups are clearly defined and are a funding priority in Vancouver and TAC. In Ottawa, the Diversity Arts Fund is only open to communities that have historically faced barriers to accessing support.
- Non-Indigenous groups proposing to work with Indigenous artists and content are asked to consider four themes in their application: Cultural protocols; consent, credit, leadership and compensation; cultural safety; and sites of cultural significance (Ottawa).
- In Montreal, staff are developing an Equity and Inclusion Grid to capture applicant data on the number of full time, contract, technical staff and volunteers in categories such as gender, disability, language, racialized and Indigenous.
- NYC has been undertaking an audit with a racial equity lens and is finding that applications written by professional grantwriters are getting funded more than those who "struggle to tell their story".

EVALUATION/DATA COLLECTION

Some funders undertake program evaluation on a regular basis (e.g. DCH evaluates all programs every five years), others such as Sydney do this on an ad hoc basis (they are undertaking their first evaluation in eight years) and others (such as MHSTCI) rarely evaluate. The TAC is developing a robust evaluation framework.

Both Ottawa and the TAC observe that is it difficult to measure the impact of their equity initiatives.

Applicants in Sydney have to provide quantitative and qualitative indicators of how their project met a series of outcomes, such as increased participation in community and civic life; strengthened social cohesion and diverse communities; and increased community awareness of environmental issues and solutions.

PROGRAM SUMMARY BY JURISDICTION

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

PROGRAM: BUILDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ARTS AND HERITAGE (BCAH) – LOCAL FESTIVALS COMPONENT

Local Festivals is one of three streams within the BCAH program.

Objective
The Local Festivals component provides funding to local groups that organize recurring festivals and display local arts and heritage.

Definition
The application package includes a complete Glossary in which a festival is defined as:
A period of artistic or performance celebrations in the same location during a limited time. Festivals help the general public to become familiar with experiences and customs on various themes or forms of expression from cultural or artistic fields (music, dance, and theatre).

Within the eligibility criteria, the duration of the festival is clarified as:....*eligible activities for more than 24 hours and less than 29 consecutive days.*

Eligibility Guidelines
In addition to the expected eligibility criteria, the festival has to:
> Have a history of at least two years: *Applicants must have successfully organized a prior edition of the festival, within the past two years, that met all eligibility requirements of this component.*
> - Present local performing artists, cultural carriers, the work of local creators, or aspects of local heritage as a primary component;

Ineligible activities/applicants include:
- Any events of a primarily religious, political or commercial nature (including food sales, art and craft sales, or book fairs);
- Celebration of historical events of other countries;
- Activities that are (in whole or in part) an extension of regular or permanent programming of performances or exhibitions;
- Projects funded under another DCH program.

In conversations with program staff, it was noted that:
- Free vs. ticketed: DCH preference is for the bulk of the events to be free to the public but there is an understanding that some activities might be ticketed – increasingly as sponsorship revenue has decline - but this has to be a minority of programming.
- Food: BCAH is for live performance festivals where food is ancillary, so food "art" is still not an eligible cost although food sales are likely to take place.

Funding Levels
Program Guidelines state that: *We can fund up to 100% of eligible expenses or $50,000 per project in the case of grants and 100% of eligible expenses or $200,000 per project in the case of contributions. The total amount requested cannot exceed $200,000.* However, program

staff indicate that the highest level of support is between 30% to 55% of the requested amount. The percentage might be higher for smaller organizations receiving under $10,000.

Treatment of in-kind
Applicants have to show some level of municipal support – which is often in-kind. The Glossary defines in-kind*: In-kind is considered to be a real contribution to the total planned expenses, but is not reimbursable. Donated goods or services may be eligible if they*
- *are essential to the festival's success;*
- *are eligible expenses and would otherwise be purchased by the recipient;*
- *are assessed at fair market value (in relation to the purchase of similar materials and services); and*
- *are recorded in the budget at fair market value such that total in-kind expenses equal total in-kind revenue.*

Assessment process
An internal team reviews applications. The staff triage so those with a good track record and low risk are treated as "basic" files, which allows for an abridged assessment. Newer applicants or those showing a substantial change in the budget or programming are fully assessed.

Reporting/data collection
The BCAH post-festival report form is very extensive and requires both quantitative and qualitative data.   In particular, the form states that: *We encourage you to discuss your challenges as well as your successes. Lessons learned are also valuable.*

Program Evaluation
DCH undertakes an evaluation of every program every 5 years. The most recent BCAH evaluation was completed in 2016 and took approximately 12 months to complete. Evaluation methods included a literature review or similar programs in other jurisdictions; a review of program documents and administrative databases; 44 key informant interviews; seven case studies and an online survey of applicants – both those funded and unfunded. The full evaluation report is publicly available at https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/evaluations/building-communities-through-arts-heritage-period-2016.html#a5a

Potential gaps
BCAH has been operating for over 15 years and there have been few changes to the program over the years.   Specifically, it was noted that:
- They have not adapted the program criteria to support festivals and events that are both in-person and online.
- The program does not respond to "…cultural imperatives such as equity, diversity and inclusion". It supports structure rather than a cultural expression.   There is no requirement to account for outreach to or engagement with equity-seeking communities or cultural diversity in the report form.

GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

PROGRAM: CELEBRATE ONTARIO/RECONNECT FESTIVAL AND EVENT PROGRAM

Objectives
Celebrate Ontario supports programming improvements at new and existing festivals and events that attract tourists for longer stays, create great experiences for visitors and support communities across Ontario.

In 2020, the Province introduced Reconnect to replace Celebrate Ontario as the latter's tourism focus was no longer relevant.   The objectives of Reconnect are:
The 2021 Reconnect Festival and Event Program supports innovative programming and marketing for festivals and events, to help create great Ontario staycation experiences for visitors and to stimulate local community economic development and recovery.

It is assumed that Celebrate will be reintroduced, and Reconnect discontinued, once public festivals are allowed.

DEFINITIONS
The terms "festival" and "event" are interchangeable for Celebrate and Reconnect. There is also no timeframe (e.g. minimum number of hours of maximum number of days) for a festival and event.

For Celebrate, an existing event is defined as:... *an annual or biennial event, festival or series of public activities that takes place within a set period of time, with specific programming developed for, marketed to, and attracting tourists that has occurred in Ontario at last once in the last two years.*

For Reconnect Ontario, there is a different definition:
A festival or event is a public celebration (in person and/or virtual/broadcast) that reconnects Ontarians to their communities, supports local businesses, performers and artists and has a broader economic impact involving local sponsors, suppliers and services.

Reconnect also has a definition of an Indigenous event:
An Indigenous event is an event that delivers programming celebrating Indigenous culture at the local, regional or provincial level. The applicant organization must be a band council established under the Indian Act, or an Indigenous organization that is incorporated.

Eligibility Guidelines
- Projects have to be open to the public at large
- Canada Day events are eligible if they feature at least 3 hours of multicultural programming.
- For Celebrate, there must be:.. *programming improvements that enhance the tourist experience. A Celebrate Ontario project is designed to increase tourism attendance, tourist expenditures, overnight stays and community economic development.*

Ineligible events include those ...*of a primarily commercial nature, where the main intent of the event is to sell or promote one or multiple products, services or sponsorships.*

Projects can be free or ticketed. With Celebrate, program staff found it easier to track and quantify attendance at ticketed events than at open gate events.

Celebrate applicants had to identify the event's main programming focus from the following list: Music, culinary, arts, cultural, sport, Indigenous, Francophone, LGBTQ. In Reconnect different language is used: Francophone and Indigenous applicant organizations are given a priority (in the form of five extra points); priority is also assigned to projects that serve LGBTQ, rural and northern populations.

Food festivals are eligible as long as there is some animation or entertainment.

Funding levels
For Celebrate, existing events are eligible for the lesser of 50% of cash operating expenses or 15% of the cash operating expenses of the most recently held event. Eligible costs include programming, marketing buys and accessibility. Event staffing (including permanent and project staff) and administrative costs are ineligible.

Applicants used to receive 90% of the grant on approval and signed transfer payment, with a 10% hold-back pending final report. The province has changed this to a 30% holdback as staff found this a better incentive for final reports. It also helped reduced the number of times they had to claw back funds.

Treatment of in-kind
In-kind contributions are not eligible.

Application/Assessment
Applicants to Celebrate are asked to …*identify at least three risk factors for your event. Detail risk management and mitigation plans for each risk factor. Consider financial, logistic, HR, operational, environmental, legal issues, security etc.*

The program guidelines clearly identify the scoring weight the application could receive for each of the six assessment criteria.

Reporting/data collection/Performance measures/Program evaluation
For Celebrate, the performance measures are quantifiable (eg. number of tourists, amount spend) and captured on both the application form and the report form.   Annually, staff remove any reporting anomalies (especially for free events, when the numbers look unlikely) then roll up and analyze the data. There is no evaluation framework beyond that.

For Reconnect, clients have to provide their own metrics, for example website hits, sponsorship revenue etc.

OTHER
Applicants have to state what efforts the event has made and/or will make to comply with the AODA. Eligible costs include those related to accessibility improvements to comply with the AODA as long as they are directly associated with the project.

Funding gaps

Staff are told by clients that the main need is for operational funding. They also anticipate PPE is going to be a major expense going forward. Clients often don't read the program criteria carefully and think the insurance requirement is for the event, whereas the Province is looking for insurance to cover the organization as well as the event (regardless of whether the event is in-person or virtual).

TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL

PROGRAM: MULTIPLE OPERATING, PROJECT AND STRATEGIC PROGRAMS

The Toronto Arts Council, an arms-length agency of the City of Toronto, provides funding to festivals through many programs.

Operating clients and those requesting project funding apply through the most appropriate discipline office. For some applicants, a festival is one part of their professional activity (e.g. they might have a specific, branded festival as well as year-round programming). For others it might represent the core of their annual activity. Regardless, the TAC panels will expect to see:

- That artistic activity is fundamental to the organization's mission;
- A high level of artistic quality;
- Artists are paid to scale;
- Events can be ticketed and/or free;

Smaller, community-based festivals and events, including those supported by Business Improvement Areas, often do not score well in juries where artistic quality and artist fees are required.

Geography/Under-served neighbourhoods

The TAC tracks applications for activity taking place outside the downtown area, in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas etc. yet these applications are not given any priority ranking. However, the TAC has strategic funding programs that prioritize activity outside the downtown core, such as Artists in the Library, Animating Historic Sites and Animating Toronto Parks.

Equity Framework

TAC released its Equity Framework in 2017. It identified Persons of Colour, Deaf Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Persons Living with Mental Illness, Indigenous Artists and 2SLGBTQIAP Artists as equity priority groups.

There is a Voluntary Self-Identification Form for all applications. Applications from equity priority groups are prioritized in situations where... *there are multiple well-assessed applications of equal merit but insufficient funds in the grants budget to support all deserving candidates.*

Program Evaluation

The program evaluation framework at the TAC is extensive, albeit still in development.

Staff advises that one of the hardest things to measure is the impact of their equity initiatives. Some clients might have programming that supports equity seeking groups, but not be an equity seeking organization themselves. The TAC recommends the workshops run by We All Count and also recommends the *Anti-Black Racism Analysis Tool for a Radically Equitable COVID-19 Response*, developed by the City's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, as a useful template.

Program Gaps
The TAC notes that accessibility is a concern for clients, especially for activities in the public realm. Historic sites and parks, for example, often do not have the infrastructure needed to be fully accessible (physical infrastructure, sound systems, etc.) and this requires capital investment. The TAC has introduced the Accessibility Grant (see below) for all artists who self-identify. While this helps, it does not address the larger issues of capital upgrades required in public spaces.

Accessibility
Projects involving Deaf artists and artists with disabilities can apply for up to an additional $5,000 towards accessibility costs such as ASL interpretation, communications assistants, attendant care, equipment rental etc.

CITY OF MONTREAL

PROGRAM: DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS – FESTIVALS AND EVENTS
The Festivals and Events Division in Montreal offers a "one stop shop" for festivals that fit criteria including:
- Festival is largely free and accessible – no ticketed event can take place in the public domain. For example, no cordoned-off area of a street or park for a ticketed activity.
- Festival has to be run by a not-for-profit organization.

Any applicant, requiring funding and/or in-kind event support, comes to the Festivals and Events Division and one staff person is assigned to help the applicant with funding, installation, permits, variances etc.

Montreal has four programs that support different clientele. These are summarized as:
- Diversity of Cultural Expressions: For festivals that *encourage the sharing and exchange of expressions of Montreal's cultural diversity in order to promote intercultural relationships;*
- Festivals and Cultural Events: For festivals that *consolidate organizational efforts involving festivals and events that promote cultural expressions in Montréal as well as community participation, to encourage interculturalism;*
- Development of markets: Business to business, for events such as CINARS; and
- The Large Festivals: For everything that does not fit in the above three programs.

The City is contemplating merging the first two of these programs, as there is overlap. The following report covers the Diversity of Cultural Expressions program.

Objectives
Among the stated program objectives, are to:
- *Increase Montreal's excellence as a city that fosters diversity of cultural expressions and interculturalism;*
- *Encourage new events: particular attention will be paid to the study of new files and/or projects incorporating youth or Indigenous culture;*
- *Encourage projects that promote and encourage dialogue, the forging of links and the blending of expressions among various cultural communities through cultural events or festivals which bring people together; and*
- *Encourage environmentally responsible events.*

Definition
There is no formal definition of a festival provided. Program guidelines note that…. *Festivals and events are time-limited activities that are held over a period of one to thirty days (a maximum of 10 days in public spaces).* Program staff indicates that the majority of festivals are taking place over three days, even if not consecutive.

Eligibility Guidelines
Festivals that are focused on food are not funded – the arts component has to be stronger than the food component.   That said, the City recognizes that gastronomy is of growing importance.

Applicants are ineligible if they receive support from other City departments in excess of $150,000.

Projects related to *National Holidays* are also ineligible.

Funding levels
- Budget of $300,001 or more: Maximum contribution $25,000
- Budget of $300,000 or less: Maximum contribution $10,000

The maximum funding for first time events regardless of budget is $5,000.

Municipal In-Kind
Clients and applicants are not charged for in-kind city services. Staff keep track internally of the value so that they can include this in their annual budgeting. For some clients, the value of the in-kind is significantly higher than the value of the grant.

The jury does not consider the value of in-kind or the budget when they recommend a grant - they only look at the quality of festival.   Funding levels are made internally.

Evaluation Criteria
The evaluation criteria include the quality of the application and the budget as well as the organizational capacity and expertise. In addition, projects are evaluated on:
- *The quality of the programming and manner in which is enhances the mixture of cultural expressions as well as sharing among cultural communities;*
- *Communications plan to reach out to the target clientele and promote the participation of cultural communities; and*
- *The involvement of partner organizations in the project - is an asset.*

Assessment Process

An evaluation committee comprised of municipal staff and representatives of the cultural and artistic communities reviews applications. Note that: *Particular attention will be placed on diversity among members of this committee.*

As noted in "in kind" above, the evaluation committee only looks at the quality of the application and staff makes the funding recommendations.

Reporting/data collection

Reporting is done through Google Forms within 90 days of the completion of the festival. Staff report that while they have the report data should it be required by the auditor, in general staff do not analyze what comes in on the reports.

Other

- Diversity has become a higher priority, and staff is drafting an Equity and Inclusion Grid which applicants must complete as part of their final report. The grid captures data on the number of full time, contract, technical staff and volunteers in categories such as gender, disability, language, racialized and Indigenous.
- Applicants receiving over $100,000 in a year from the City of Montreal, regardless of program source(s) have to include audited financial statements with their application.

CITY OF OTTAWA

PROGRAMS

Ottawa has a strong festival sector and clients are funded through three programs.

Major Arts and Cultural Festivals Program

- Offers operating funding for recurring festivals with budgets in excess of $100,000 (for Arts Festivals) and $50,000 (for Cultural Festivals). The program supports:
  - *Arts Festivals that showcase artwork from one or more artistic disciplines (dance, music, theatre, literary arts, media and/or visual art)*
  - *Cultural Festivals that showcase the artistic and creative expression of local cultural communities (including culturally diverse or Indigenous communities)*

Arts Events and Arts Festivals Program

- Offers project and operating funding to smaller and emerging festivals. This program is one of seven programs within a larger Arts Funding Program. It supports…*arts organizations in the production and presentation of artistic programming for local festivals and/or events that celebrate and highlight artistic disciplines including literary, performing, media and visual arts, or independent film and video.*

Diversity in the Arts Fund

- Offers project and operating funding to culturally specific applicants. Some festivals apply to this if they feel they will do better than in the Arts Events Program.

Objectives

There are different objectives for each program and again for each of the project and operating streams. There is not one set of objectives that are specifically relevant to Toronto's intentions, however some elements align.

The objectives for the Major Arts Festivals, Cultural component includes:
- *Has a program of events that showcase the artistic and creative expression of local cultural communities (including culturally diverse communities)*
- *Has the majority of festival's programs and activities delivered by individuals from the community the festival represents*
- *Demonstrates significant community involvement, participation and interaction*

The objectives for the Arts Events program includes:
- *To support community-based artistic activities that develop local arts audiences and communities.*

The objectives for the Diversity Fund operating stream include:
- *Spark and support the creation, production, presentation, exhibition, and dissemination of the arts by Ottawa's bilingual and culturally diverse community*
- *Promote the visibility and cultural arts practices of equity seeking communities*
- *Support local artists of all disciplines and backgrounds*
- *Support community-based artistic activities that celebrate equity and inclusion, and address the Cultural Funding Support Unit's funding priorities for equity seeking communities*

Definitions

There is no stated definition of a festival for any of these programs. For the Major Festivals program, the festival must …*run a minimum of two consecutive days and no longer than a month.*

Eligibility Guidelines

Applicants to the Diversity Fund must …*identify with the following designated communities that have historically faced barriers to accessing support.*
- *Algonquin Anishinabe Host Nation*
- *First Nations*
- *Inuit*
- *Métis*
- *Francophones*
- *2SLGBTQIA*
- *Immigrants/Newcomers*
- *People Living in Poverty*
- *People of Colour*
- *People with Visible and Invisible Disabilities*
- *Deaf People*
- *Rural Residents*
- *Seniors/Older Adults*
- *Women+*
- *Youth*

These designated communities are given priority within the Arts Funding and the Major Festival programs.

Applicants can self-determine the program to which they apply. If it is artform based they might apply to Arts Events, if it is showcasing cultural expression they might apply to Diversity Fund.

Festivals can be ticketed or free. However, if there is no free component it might lower the overall assessment of the application. If the festival is entirely free, the panel will want to see healthy fundraising capacity.

Large festivals are expected to pay artists fees at scale. For smaller festivals the panel looks at the applicant's capacity and while fees are preferred, they are not required.

Funding levels
No information is provided about funding levels, with the exception of the Diversity Fund project grant with a maximum of $10,000.

Treatment of in-kind
The cultural grants team and the City's events team "work in silos". Clients are charged back for city services and express frustration that they receive a grant from the City and then pay the City for services.

In the Diversity program, in-kind revenue/expenses are eligible (excluding City in-kind), in recognition that their support is largely at the community level and in-kind can represent a significant portion of the budget. In-kind is not an eligible budget item for the other two programs.

Performance measures/data collection
Staff notes that each applicant has a different way of measuring success based upon the type of festival and the community they serve. Staff find the qualitative performance indicators very hard to measure and note that this is where good grant writing comes in - applications that articulate how successful the festival has been in engaging with community and other qualitative impacts are viewed favourably by the assessment panel.

Staff views the Diversity Fund as a way to provide access to new groups and to help clients build capacity. They hope to see: Increases in the number of new applicants; increases in the number of returning applicants each year; and that clients build capacity as evidenced through strengthened governance, expanded staff and diversifying revenue.

The City collects very basic statistics, such as volunteer hours and attendance, although note that the latter is unreliable for free public events.

Program evaluation
There is no established program evaluation process in place.
The City is undertaking a cultural renewal plan for the next five years and is reviewing granting as part of that process.

Other
- Applicants do use the grant writing support offered by the City.

- Unless applicants are "red flagged", the City has a policy that no operating client's funding can be cut more than 20%.
- An Inclusion Committee was established two years ago to help staff to refine the Diversity Fund and remove barriers.

CITY OF VANCOUVER

PROGRAM: COMMUNITIES AND ARTISTS SHIFTING CULTURE (CASC)

Objectives
CASC operates under the Guiding Principles outlined in the City's 10-year culture plan: *Culture Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture, calls for us to address historical inequities, create new frameworks and set directions for more equitable distribution of support so that all can participate in the cultures and creative stories of this place.*

There are four types of projects outlined in the CASC program, one of which is "Festivals, celebrations and parades". Within this, eligible activities include free public festivals, arts festivals, and large-scale parades.

Definitions
There is no definition of a festival. The CASC program funds both festivals (typically lasting at least one day) and events (which are shorter).

A "large scale parade" is one that can demonstrate the ability to attract a city-wide audience of over 10,000.

Vancouver has a comprehensive definition of equity-seeking groups: *Equity-seeking individuals and groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation. They include but are not limited to: people who identify as Indigenous; Black people and people of African descent; people of colour and racialized people; people with disabilities, disabled people and people who live with mental health challenges; Deaf and hard of hearing people; LGBTQ2+ and gender diverse people; low-income people; refugees; newcomers and undocumented people; minority language communities; women and girls; and youth and seniors.*

Eligibility Guidelines
This program prioritizes applicants who, through their mandate, programs and services, support artists and cultural organizations of equity-seeking communities.

Culture Shift, expands the definition of arts and culture. Food as a form of cultural expression can be considered as part of a larger project with the priority being on how artists are provided with both opportunities to work and appropriate compensation. CASC will support ticketed or free events. Ticketed events have to provide an accessibility plan that includes sensitivity to ticket prices.

Applicants are advised to include artists' fees in their budgets, otherwise the project is unlikely to be funded or would only receive a small grant.

Funding levels

The program budget is $1 million.   Grants range from $1,000 to $20,000.
Projects with cash budgets up to $10,000 (excluding in-kind) can request 75% of their cash budget. Projects with cash budgets over $10,000 (excluding in-kind) can request up to $50% of their budget, to a maximum of $20,000.

Treatment of in-kind

Non-City in-kind financial support is an eligible budget item. City in-kind has to be indicated in the application but not on the budget form.

Culture staff requires evidence of permits, or that the request has been submitted to the Parks Board or the Events Office. In addition, culture staff have a scheduled check-in twice a year with Events and Parks staff.

Reporting/data collection

Applicants enter financial and statistical data into CADAC.

Performance measures/Program evaluation

The City is just starting to develop a process for equity benchmarking so that they can record increased access to programs from underserved communities.

Other

- The focus of Culture Shift is on underrepresented/underserved communities so as the City moves towards equity there might be a disproportionate amount of funding going to those traditionally underfunded.
- The arts component of Pride is funded through this program
- The challenge going forward is how festivals' business models will shift to incorporate digital.
- Non-Indigenous groups proposing to work with Indigenous artists and content are asked to consider four themes in their application: Cultural protocols; consent, credit, leadership and compensation; cultural safety; and sites of cultural significance.
- *Applicants who are Deaf, hard of hearing or live with a disability and need support to complete their grant application can apply for up to $500 to cover the costs of assistance from service providers*
- *Cultural services has adopted a policy to exceed 50% representation of people from underrepresented communities in all of its assessment bodies for grants and awards.*

NEW YORK CITY

PROGRAM: CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (CDF)

Objectives

While there is no clearly stated objective for the CDF, the program guidelines do state that the City:....*will consider proposals in every cultural discipline and from every area of New York City* and also states that: *The fundamental requirement for all proposals is that they represent a cultural activity of recognized quality that is accessible to the public.* Note that "accessible to the public" does not imply free – it means that support cannot be for rehearsals.

Definitions

CDF has no definition for "culture" or "festival". The assessment panel (of peers) has to determine whether a festival is "cultural" if it falls within a grey area.

Eligibility Guidelines

CDF receives 1200 applications a year so the eligibility guidelines are extremely broad. When it comes to festivals, they do not fund "street fairs selling socks" or "BIA events with a couple of performers".

Organizations with a primary mission other than arts and culture are not eligible (e.g. BIA, social sector organizations etc.) unless they have a 2-year track record of producing arts and cultural events as part of their organizational mandate.

Staff and panels are split on whether food is "culture" and generally food-based festivals are not getting funded.

Applicants must have a 2-year history to apply.

Every funded organization is expected to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. There is no special support or treatment for equity-seeking organizations.

Funding levels

The current program guidelines indicate applicants can request up to 75% of eligible costs – however this is because of COVID. In the past, the maximum request was 50% of eligible costs and typically the grant level was much lower. Staff is reviewing how to make funding decisions more transparent and the grant levels more predictable for ongoing clients.

Cultural activity is not spread evenly across the City's boroughs. CDF recently received additional funding, and in order to encourage activity in underserved neighbourhoods, applicants could request additional funding based upon the geographic location of their program.

Applicants have to apply on an annual basis, however larger organizations are assured of three-year funding support. CDF intends to extend this three-year commitment to all organizations in the future.

CDF takes an interesting approach to supporting core operations: *The project you propose should serve the public or your constituency, not the applicant organization (do not request support for expenses that are essentially general support or internal capacity building). However, if awarded funding, as long as the public services are delivered as described, the organization can use its CDF funding to cover any operating costs (such as staff salaries, space rental, etc.) other than capital expenditures, fundraising, or government advocacy efforts.*

Treatment of in-kind

In-kind support from the government, corporate or other sources is excluded from the budget forms. Applicants are asked to write about this in a separate section of the application.

Assessment

The CDF has been undertaking an audit with a racial equity lens and are finding that applications written by professional grantwriters are getting funded more than those who "struggle to tell their story". This is something they intend to address internally as some of the festivals should not have been funded (based on quality of the festival).

While festivals do not have to be free, "strong" applications are those where the applicants explain how they are attempting to make the ticket price affordable.

The assessment panels are typically peers, but this year staff is making the decisions. There is an appeal process for applicants who were rejected, not to those who received less than they wanted. The Commissioner reviews the appeal and their decision is final.

Performance measures/Program evaluation

CDF does not undertake program evaluation on a regular basis and there is no budget for this internally. They have just completed a review of their internal grantmaking process, but did not review the impact of their program.

OTHER

- All projects "can be offered in person or via a digital platform".
- All applicants, especially new applicants, are strongly urged to attend a webinar. These webinars are recorded and available for review on the CDF website.
- The application criteria state that artist fees must be consistent with a professional wage. That said, CDF does fund projects where artists are not being paid: They ask the applicant to explain why they are not paying fees as there might be a culturally-specific reason for this decision. In future, CDF is considering listing standard wages in the application package as an educational exercise and to ensure that expectations are clear.
- The application is extensive and there are detailed instructions on how to complete the online form.
- Applicants are specifically required to include:
  - *The demographics of the targeted audience(s) and/or participants;*
  - *Any efforts to make your programming accessible and inclusive for a variety of audiences, including specific efforts to reduce economic, social, communication, and physical barriers to inclusive participation;*
  - *Any strategies, initiatives, or other efforts to measurably increase the participation and inclusion of underrepresented or underserved communities or individuals;*
- A section requiring the ethnicity of the audience is for research purposes only and is optional for the application to complete.
- There is a requirement for the applicant to articulate how they "*inform the public about its access for individuals with disabilities*"

CITY OF SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

PROGRAM: FESTIVAL AND EVENTS SPONSORSHIP – VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY

This Festival and Events Sponsorship program is one of a suite of 17 programs offered by the City of Sydney under the umbrella of the Grants and Sponsorship Program. There are two streams, assessed by one panel:

- Village – applications that are economically based, for activities such as a BIA street festivals; and
- Community – applications that are culturally based.

Funding for the program is drawn from the economic and the social development departments and one person from each of these departments sits on the assessment panel. Sydney has no municipal arts council.

Objectives

There are no specific program objectives. This year, priority areas include projects that address:

- *Activating public spaces and precincts, to drive footfall and spend on our high streets*
- *Promoting community cohesion, connection and community resilience.*

Definitions

A festival or event is broadly defined as: *A public occasion for celebration and/or gathering in the community to commemorate a special occasion, local anniversary or an organized series of special events and performances, usually with a common theme and for set period of time. The celebration should be relevant to the City of Sydney and have a cultural, historical, economic, environmental and social context.*

The terms festival and event are treated interchangeably according to staff. Assessors respond to whatever the community puts forward, so if an applicant proposes a half-day event and calls it a festival, it is accepted as such. Applications can be for ticketed and/or free events.

Eligibility Guidelines

For profits are eligible. Individuals, unincorporated groups and sole traders are also eligible, but must have an "auspicing organization" that will administer the funding on behalf of the applicant.

Funding levels

New festivals can apply for up to $30,000 AU. Funding for established festivals are negotiated on consultation.

Multi-year funding is offered at the City's discretion based on ...*demonstrated audience attendances, ongoing demand, the applicant's organizational and financial performance and the quality of its programs. Multi-year funding applicants must attach a multi-year business plan to demonstrate long-term planning.*

Treatment of in-kind

In-kind contributions such as donated supplies, materials or services, as well as volunteer time, are eligible for matching by the City.

Note that each funding applicant is assigned to a "relationship manager" who advises the applicant on who to speak to about event support, permits, etc.

Reporting/data collection
Funded organizations have to provide quantitative and qualitative indicators of how their project met some of all of these outcomes:
- increased participation in community and civic life
- increased sense of identity, sense of belonging and connection to place
- strengthened social cohesion and diverse communities
- increased business patronage and economic benefit to the village or precinct
- strengthened local business and community connection
- increased community awareness of environmental issues and solutions.

Performance measures/Program evaluation
Staff has recently embarked upon the first evaluation of the program in eight years. This evaluation will take approximately 12 months and is being driven in-house with the support of external consultants. The intention is to understand the real impact of the programs and determine how they need to change to meet community needs. Staff note that program challenges are the low number of Indigenous-led projects and that they have the "same old applicants coming in year over year".

Other
The City of Sydney offers translation and interpretation services for anyone engaging with the City. There is also a National Relay Service for those who are Deaf, hard of hearing or have speech impairment. No cultural client has used these services to date.

The Festivals and Events department has introduced a… *verbal application process for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander applicants, people with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse applicants* on a trial basis in order to reduce barriers. Applicants complete the main section of the on-line form (with organizational information, event dates etc.) and then meet with a grants officer who completes the application as the applicant talks. This session is recorded for future use by the assessment panel.

Staff are guided by 11 "Grantmaking Principles and Ethics" when providing financial and in-kind-assistance, which include:
- *Providing outcomes that align with Sustainable Sydney 2030;*
- *Partnership;*
- *Diversity and access;*
- *Value for money and*
- *Transparency.*

Note that each of the principles and ethics are described in the program guide.

Applicants organizing outdoor events must complete and submit a "crowded places self-assessment tool" developed by the Government of Australia, designed to help event organizers to consider the risk of a terrorist attack.

Funded organizations have to provide quantitative and qualitative indicators of how their project met some of all of these outcomes:
- increased participation in community and civic life

- increased sense of identity, sense of belonging and connection to place
- strengthened social cohesion and diverse communities
- increased business patronage and economic benefit to the village or precinct
- strengthened local business and community connection
- increased community awareness of environmental issues and solutions.

NEXT STEPS

- Review this report in the context of the results of the External Consultation (undertaken by Process) and the Internal Consultation (undertaken by the City's Events Team).
- Draft Program Guidelines (to include Eligibility Criteria, Assessment Criteria, Budget and Reporting requirements) and program evaluation framework.
- Review draft Program Guidelines in the context of
    - City of Toronto Community Grants Policy
    - Alignment with City's priority funding areas
        - Enhanced public safety
        - NIA
        - Equity seeking groups
        - Vulnerable persons
        - Outside the downtown core
        - Opportunities for youth and community arts
        - Capacity for small and medium cultural festivals
        - Increased collaboration between cultural festival organizers and partners

The program should demonstrate:
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Effectiveness
- Equity and inclusion
- Service innovation
- Excellence

INTERVIEWEES

Cathy Brown, City of Sydney, Australia
Nathalie Da Silva, Department of Canadian Heritage
Kevin Donnelly, City of Montreal
Andrew Elgee, Department of Canadian Heritage
Ashley Firestone, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs
Katharine Kit, Department of Canadian Heritage
Cheryl Masters, City of Vancouver
Shawn Newman, Toronto Arts Council
Luanne Smith, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Andrew Suri, Toronto Arts Council
Marie-Claude Viau, City of Montreal