

## **Authority to Accept Federal Funding for a COVID-19 Recovery Celebration and Commemoration Program**

**Date:** June 27, 2022

**To:** Executive Committee

**From:** City Clerk and Interim General Manager, Economic, Development and Culture.

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

---

On June 20, 2022, the City of Toronto was confirmed as a successful recipient of Federal funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage as part of the Celebration and Commemoration Program - Reopening Fund. City staff applied for this grant funding to help support a program of commemorative and celebratory activities as Toronto recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council authority for applications that support COVID-19 business and culture recover initiatives was provided to City staff in June 2021. To that end, this report provides details about this successful application and the program to be funded, and seeks Council approval to develop and deliver celebration and commemoration programs funded by the successful grant application in the amount of \$1.44 million

The new COVID-19 Recovery Celebration and Commemoration Program (official program name to be confirmed) will be co-led by the City Clerk's Office and the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) division, and will provide an opportunity for Toronto residents to participate in various commemorative and celebratory activities as Toronto recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic; program beginning in November, 2022 running through March, 2023.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

The City Clerk and the Interim General Manager, Economic, Development and Culture recommend that:

1. City Council authorize the City Clerk and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to enter into and administer a funding agreement with the Department of Canadian Heritage to receive \$1,440,000 for the establishment of a COVID-19 Recovery Celebration and Commemoration Program.

2. City Council authorize the City Clerk and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to establish and execute commemoration and celebration activities as part of the COVID-19 Recovery Celebration and Commemoration Program, and as Toronto recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. City Council authorize the City Clerk and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to provide grants and/or enter into any agreements necessary to provide the funds to organizations or individuals to carry out commemoration and celebration activities consistent with the goals of the Celebration and Commemoration Program - Re-opening Fund.
4. City Council increase the 2022 Council Approved Operating Budget for Economic Development and Culture by \$991,325 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage grant to begin delivery of the COVID-19 Recovery Celebration and Commemoration Program.
5. City Council increase the 2022 Council Approved Operating Budget for City Clerk's Office by \$134,333 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage grant to begin delivery of the COVID-19 Recovery Celebration and Commemoration Program.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

---

The City of Toronto was awarded \$1.440 million in one-time funding from the Government of Canada Celebration & Commemoration Program, Re-opening Fund. This one-time funding will be allocated to Toronto for expenditures from April 2022 to March 2023 (federal fiscal year 2022-2023).

In the current year, approval is being sought to increase the 2022 Council Approved Operating Budgets for Economic Development and Culture by \$0.991 million gross and \$0 net and the 2022 Council Approved Operating Budget for City Clerk's Office by \$0.134 million gross and \$0 net, for a total of \$1.125 million gross and \$0 net. The remaining funds will be included in the 2023 Budget submissions for Economic Development and Culture and City Clerk's Office respectively.

Both EDC and the City Clerk's Office will administer federal funding to deliver the Recovery Program and will leverage existing staff resources and planned City-organized events funded within respective Council Approved Operating Budgets.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

---

At its meeting on October 27, 2020 City Council directed the City Manager to report regularly on progress towards achieving all of the recommendations in Attachment 1 to the report (October 6, 2020) from the City Manager entitled "COVID-19: Impacts and Opportunities", including a recommendation (#45) to "work with the federal and provincial governments to provide additional supports for business continuity throughout COVID-19. This includes support to key cultural institutions, creative businesses, arts and heritage organizations, and festivals and events."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX17.1>

At its meeting on December 16, 2020 City Council considered item EC18.15 Building Back Stronger: Report of the City of Toronto's Economic and Culture Recovery Advisory Group. The advisory group, convened by Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson was composed of 20 community leaders with subject matter expertise. Their report included 18 recommendations grouped into four key areas: economic recovery, anti-racism and inclusion, workforce and talent, and arts and culture. City Council voted to forward the report to the City Manager "for review and implementation as part of the City of Toronto's ongoing COVID-19 recovery efforts."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EC18.15>

At its meeting on Jun 8 2021, City Council authorized the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to apply for federal and provincial funding that supports COVID-19 recovery initiatives for business and culture, and report to City Council on successful applications. City Council also authorized the City Manager, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, to receive funds and to negotiate, enter into and execute any agreements, with other orders of government to support COVID-19 recovery initiatives for business and culture, for successful City applications, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM34.44>

## **COMMENTS**

---

On January 24, 2022 the City of Toronto submitted a grant application for funding that would support a COVID-19 Recovery Celebration and Commemoration Program with a goal of creating a collective and unified response to the COVID-19 pandemic on behalf of Toronto residents. The successful outcome allows the City of Toronto to establish a program that will provide Toronto residents an opportunity to participate in various commemorative and celebratory activities as the city recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government of Canada's Celebration & Commemoration Program - Reopening Fund provides funding to eligible recipients to support this type of initiative, which have a focus on increasing opportunities for residents of Canada to participate in various commemorative activities and celebrations. The funding is intended to build a sense of pride and belonging to Canada by supporting celebratory and commemorative activities that recognize people and achievements in the response to COVID-19 and / or support the revival of local economies through in-person events.

The City of Toronto program proposed by the City's Clerk's Office and the Economic Development and Culture division will provide relevant and meaningful ways for Toronto residents to: collectively celebrate the city's achievements throughout the pandemic; collectively recognize communities that have contributed to the health and solidarity of Toronto residents during the pandemic; collectively share and learn about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on residents, specifically how the pandemic has affected historically marginalized communities; and, collectively remember all the lives lost as a result of the pandemic.

The program's key focus areas will be recovery, recognition and reflection as the City celebrates the hope and resilience resiliency of its residents with a particular focus on those disproportionately affected during the pandemic. Indigenous and Black perspectives will be amplified as will acknowledgement that commemoration and celebration events are taking place on the traditional territory of Indigenous people(s).

Program components being considered by City staff include but are not limited to:

- Program Launch Event: An interactive lighting installation incorporating visual and/or performing arts will launch the commemoration and celebration program as part of Cavalcade of Lights.
- Celebration Ceremony: The annual City of Toronto New Year's Eve celebration will be relocated to a much larger 'destination site' to facilitate a celebratory event marking a substantial end to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Education and Reflection Program: Curated exhibition will focus on the story telling by those most affected by the pandemic.
- Recognition Program: A new award program will acknowledge the unsung communities who have made extraordinary contributions to the health and well-being of Toronto residents throughout the pandemic.
- Commemoration Ceremony(ies): In-person public gatherings will collectively reflect on the lives lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program is expected to launch in November 2022 and will run through March 31, 2023. Federal funding will provide the City of Toronto opportunities for programming that would not be possible in the absence of financial support. The City will administer federal funding to deliver the program and will leverage staff resources and City-organized events funded by the approved City operating budget.

Program components may include the receipt and review of applications from individuals and/or community groups; and such authority is also being requested to enter into such agreements.

The proposed program components, to be further developed, aligns with the City's ongoing commitments to reopen, rebuild and recover after the pandemic, assisting those Toronto sectors that were most heavily impacted. Through this program, the City

and event participants will showcase and celebrate organizations, individuals and businesses that have continued to support and sustain their communities.

## **CONTACT**

---

Aretha Phillip, Chief of Protocol, Strategic Protocol & External Relations, City Clerk's Office, 416.392.4273, [aretha.philip@toronto.ca](mailto:aretha.philip@toronto.ca)

Marilyn Nickel, Director Program Support, Economic Development and Culture, 416-395-7375, [marilyn.nickel@toronto.ca](mailto:marilyn.nickel@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

John D. Elvidge, City Clerk, City Clerk's Office

Cheryl Blackman, Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture