Festivals and Events Grant Policy

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Department: Clerk's Department
Staff Report: 2025-77
By-Law No.: 068-2025

Policy Statement

The Festivals and Events Grant is a municipal fund used to support the efforts of non-profit groups and organizations in their planning and implementation of festivals and events throughout the City as a way of accomplishing Strategic Priorities related to bolstering tourism, cultural preservation and sustainment of community connections.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the criteria and guidelines for the City's Festivals and Events Grant ...

Through this policy, the City will:

a) Provide a fair, equitable and transparent process for the issuance of grants;
b) Provide clear eligibility criteria for applicants;
c) Confer delegated authority to issue grants within the terms and conditions set out in this policy; and
d) Establish standards and guidelines for the management and accounting of the funding received by recipients.

Application

This policy shall govern the actions of the applicable staff, the Grant Review Committee, and Council regarding the administration of the Festivals and Events grant and will serve as a resource for those seeking information about the program.

Definitions

"**Applicant"** means the Not-for-Profit Organization requesting grant funding.

"Grant Review Committee" means the Committee established by Council tasked with reviewing and awarding grants according to set criteria and shall include staff and Council representation.

"Festival or Event" means a time-limited, organized gathering open to the public that provides entertainment, cultural, recreational, educational or community building experiences. Festivals and events may vary in size, scope and audience and may be recurring or one-time activities.

"Memorandum of Understanding" means the mutual statement of commitment between a recipient and the city to assist in the implementation of a grant.

"Not-for-Profit Organization" means an organization that:

a) Is a registered corporation formed for the purpose of providing services, activities, programs and opportunities that improve or benefit one or more communities; or
b) Is an ad hoc organization, or community group that operates on a not-for-profit basis and is not incorporated but has their own separate bank account or has partnered with a not-for-profit organization; and
c) Does not generate revenue to be distributed amongst its members, directors, officers or trustees for their financial gain; and
d) Reinvests revenue remaining after expenditures into the organization to further future festivals and events.

"Recipient" means the successful applicant that has been awarded a grant.

Procedures

Council's Allocation of Funds

Through the adoption of this policy, Council has directed that 15% of the City's share of the Municipal Accommodation Tax collected in the previous year be used to fund this grant program.

The total amount of funding available for grants will be determined annually by March 31st and will vary from year to year.

50% of the funds will be available for Intake One and the remaining 50% will be available for Intake Two. If funds remain, they will be added to the funds available in the following intake.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must:

a) Be a registered not-for-profit organization as defined in this policy;
b) Be located primarily within the City or offer festivals or events within the City;
c) Have members with a good track record of successfully completing, implementing, and planning festivals or events;
d) Demonstrate strong financial responsibility and capability in carrying out the funded festival or event event and continued growth and sustainability into the future;
e) Be in good financial standing with the City, including fulfilling all obligations of previous grants, donations, or programs of the City, including mandatory reporting;
f) Ensure adequate levels of property and general liability insurance naming the Corporation of the City of Brockville as an additional insured, where appropriate.

Grants will not be considered for the following:

a) Commercial or for profit purposes;
b) Political purposes;
c) Religious purposes;
d) for festivals or events taking place on private property, which is not accessible to the public or used for community activities, unless the project or program is available to the community at large; and/or
e) funding the cost of alcohol or cannabis-related products.

Festival or Event Eligibility

To be eligible, proposed festivals or events must:

a) Be located primarily within the City;
b) Be open to the public; and
c) Demonstrate a clear benefit to the community through tourism, economic impact, inclusion, or cultural or recreational enrichment

Both large scale and small or emerging festivals and events are eligible for consideration, recognizing their unique value in contributing to a vibrant community.

Application Process

Festivals and Events Grant applications will be considered in two intakes in the months of April and November.

Application deadlines will be established and promoted by staff each year following the annual budget process and determination of available funding.

All applications must be submitted on or before the application deadline determined for each intake. Applications that are incomplete or not submitted by the due date will not be considered.

Applications that do not relate to the use of municipal property or property owned by the applicant shall include letters of permission from the property owner.

Festivals and Events Grant application forms shall be designed to capture sufficient information about the festival or event and applicant to assist in the eligibility review and evaluation.

Depending on the nature and value of the requested grant, additional information may be requested.

If an application is deemed ineligible, applicants may only resubmit for the same festival or event in future intakes if new information that could impact the grant decision becomes available that, for good reason, was not available at the time of the initial application or if a procedural error was made when assessing the grant application.

The maximum funding limit is $7,500.

Review Process

As there are many worthwhile festivals and events and limited funds annually, it is important that all applications be scored following a set rubric to ensure fairness and transparency. Staff will first review all applications received by the deadline for completeness. Completed applications will then be forwarded to the Grant Review Committee for consideration. The Grant Review Committee may decide to fund applications in full or in part, or to deny applications. Each application will be scored using the same criteria, based on the review process outlined below:

a) Demonstrated tourism, economic impact, inclusion, or cultural or recreational enrichment (50%)
    - Number of attendees attracted
    - Generates overnight stays and visitor spending
    - Impacts of cultural or recreational enrichment
b) Merit/ Reputation (15%)
    - Positive attendee experience
    - Qualified, experienced and professional leaders
    - Effective planning and evaluation
    - Ability to recruit and sustain volunteer support, where needed
    - Demonstrates community support for the festival or event
c) Visibility and Profile (15%)
    - Regional, national or international media exposure
    - Positively impacts the view of Brockville in the media
    - Highlights Brockville as a tourist destination
    - Promotes health and well being of residents and visitors, demonstrating that Brockville is an active and interesting place to visit
d) Financial Responsibility (20%)
    - Demonstration of a well thought out festival or event that has sufficient detail to ensure that the proposed festival or event will proceed as anticipated including:
        i. Identification of a clear plan for how funds will be allocated and used
        ii. Detailed and accurate budget for festival or event to be provided with explanation of any shortfalls or anomalies
        iii. Funds requested are reasonable to complete the festival or event and represent good value for money

<u>Conditions of Grants</u>

In approving grants, the City may impose conditions as it deems fit. Specific terms and conditions will be outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding upon award of funding.

Applicants and recipients must notify the City in writing of any significant changes to the supported festival or event. If the festival or event is not completed, or does not move forward, the City reserves the right to request the return of any funding provided.

Receipt of a grant in one year does not guarantee approval of a grant in the following or any subsequent year.

The City reserves the right to request acknowledgement on promotional materials related to the funding. .

All recipients are required to submit a final report to the City on the required template within 60 days of the completion of the funded initiative.

Nothing in this application or approval of any grant funding will constitute or be construed to be or create a partnership or joint venture between the City and the applicant or any of its employees, volunteers or contractors. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the parties acknowledge that neither will be considered to be an agent, representative, master or servant of any other party for any purpose; and no party has any authority to enter into any contract, to assume any obligations or give any warranties or representations on behalf of the other party.

Roles and Responsibilities

Council

Council will:

a) Approve this policy and any changes to this policy as needed; and
b) Establish a Grant Review Committee and authorize this Committee to review and approve applications as per this policy.

The Grant Review Committee will:

a) Meet at least twice per year to review complete applications submitted prior to the established deadline and issue decisions within 30 days;
b) Consider and evaluate applications based on this policy and established criteria; and
c) Approve or deny applications in full or in part as per this policy and established criteria and communicate these decisions to the Clerk's Office and Finance Department.

The Clerk or designate will:

a) Manage any administrative procedures including maintaining the application forms;
b) Providing notice of intakes, rules and procedures;
c) Promote the grant program and provide educational support to those wishing to apply;
d) Prepare communication for applicants concerning the status of their application and arranging for the execution of Memorandums of Understanding;
e) Support the Grant Review Committee;

f) Maintain all records pertaining to applications and the Grant Review Committee; and
g) Report annually on the status of issued grants.

The Treasurer or designate is responsible for:

a) Calculating the annual contributions available from the MAT as per this policy;
b) Where funding is not fully subscribed, roll the remaining dollars over into the following year's funding allocation; and
c) Issue cheques for distribution by the Clerk's Office in a timely manner.

References and Related Policies

Budgetary Control Policy
Ontario Regulation 435/17
Bylaw Number 020-2018 Being a Bylaw to Establish a Municipal Accommodation Tax, as amended

Consequences of Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with this policy may result in verbal or written warnings, suspension of grant funding and/or bans on future applications for funding.

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.