

# Downtown In Motion Grant Program Guidelines and Expression of Interest

A thriving arts and culture scene makes Calgary a more livable city by strengthening the local economy, enriching cultural diversity, supporting well-being and fostering social connection for all Calgarians.

Greater Downtown is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary. The City of Calgary's Downtown In Motion grant program [*Downtown In Motion*] aims to empower organizations to host financially sustainable, publicly accessible arts, culture and sports initiatives that create long-lasting community impact in the greater downtown area. This initiative will strengthen Calgary's cultural landscape, increase access to inclusive programming, and enhance public safety by activating public spaces with engaging events and installations.



## What are we looking to support?

This funding's main goal is to support publicly accessible arts, culture and sports programming, temporary installations, creative placekeeping, workshops and events in the Greater Downtown Calgary. The program endeavors to support initiatives that:

- Develop financially sustainable arts, culture and sports programs
- Occur between September 2025 and September 2026.
- Promote community engagement and contribute to economic revitalization.
- Enhance public safety by activating spaces and increasing foot traffic.
- Build valuable collaborations between organizations, businesses and community groups.

Some ideas for initiatives include pop-up cultural pavilions, performance stage series, night market hub, multi-site interactive programming, weekly physical wellness sessions, sports league, shared maker space, reimagine parking space, and many more.

*Downtown In Motion* supports initiatives that promote respect and dignity of all people regardless of race, culture, national or ethnic origin, religion, education, age, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or socio-economic status. We do not support political initiatives, faith-based activities, rallies, protests, fundraising, annual general meetings, illegal activities, or banquets.

## Who can apply?

Registered non-profits, charities, Community Associations and Business Improvement Areas that:

- Are in good standing with The City of Calgary with no outstanding reports and/or payments.
- Take an active role in hosting the initiative.
- Obtain the required insurance, permits, permissions and approvals.
- Do not receive The City's Arts and Culture Microgrant for the same project.

## What is the funding model?

With total funding of \$1,000,000, this grant supports medium- and large-scale initiatives.

- Maximum of \$50,000 per initiative
- The City contributes up to 75 percent of eligible project costs, excluding in-kind contributions.
- Applicant must contribute at least 25 percent in cash or sponsorship.
- Your organization may receive only one *Downtown In Motion* grant per intake.

## What can I use the grant for?

*Downtown In Motion* supports direct costs associated with implementing the local initiative. Eligible expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- Initiative-specific venue costs, such as venue rental fees and event insurance.
- Permitting fees and other expenses for City services (i.e., parks permit, road closure permit).
- Production and technical costs related to the programming.
- Initiative-specific equipment, materials, and supplies (including transportation of these items).
- Wages for contractors, technicians, and workers who are not already employed as staff.
- Honorariums and fees for artists and performers.

**Note:** The City of Calgary *Downtown In Motion* grant supports the [CARFAC-RAAV Minimum Recommended Fee Schedule](#) and the [Dance · Opera · Theatre Policy \(caea.com\)](#), which provides guidelines on what artists should be paid for their copyright and other professional services.

- Marketing and communication costs associated with promoting the initiative.
- Tobacco products and accessories used for Elder offerings and Truth and Reconciliation activities.
- Training and support for volunteers.
- Other expenses and supplies that the Arts and Culture Division deems reasonable and necessary.

## What cannot be covered by the grant?

*Downtown In Motion* does not cover capital expenses or operational costs associated with your organization's day-to-day functions. Ineligible expenses include:

- Expenses incurred prior to the application approval.
- Expenses that are not directly relevant to the initiative being applied for.
- Expenses that are already covered by other funding sources.
- Office and administration fees, including office supplies, bookkeeping, postage, etc.
- Overhead costs such as utilities, rent, mortgage, etc.
- Travel, accommodation and meal allowance costs.
- Compensation for existing staff, grant writers or reporters.
- Capital investments (i.e. building permanent infrastructure, construction, renovations, repairs, or significant equipment for other projects such as computers, video recorders, power tools, etc.)
- Prize monies, trophies, or medals.
- Fundraising activities, donations, contingency funds, or repayment of deficits or debts.
- Alcohol or cannabis.
- Expenses and supplies deemed unreasonable and unnecessary by the Arts and Culture Division.

## How to apply?

### Step 1: Expression of Interest

We would love to learn about your idea, community impact, budget range, and alignment with program priorities. Share your idea through an online expression of interest form or a virtual meeting with City Staff **by June 11, 2025**.

### Step 2: Full application [invited only]

City Staff will provide the full application form to selected applicants by June 20, 2025, for a more detailed programming plan, goals, logistics, budget, project sustainability strategy, partnerships, and support. The application needs to be submitted by July 9, 2025.

## How are the applications reviewed?

A review group of City staff will select the expression of interest that best aligns with the grant program's core goals in activation, creativity, uniqueness, public accessibility, and contributions to the Greater Downtown Calgary. Only selected applicants will be invited to step 2, with a review committee formed by internal city staff and key partners in the greater downtown, evaluating the level of community benefit, engagement, impact, inclusion, equity, partnerships, feasibility, marketing plan, risk mitigation, proposed use of grant, financial sustainability and budget. The result will be announced by the end of July 2025. The decision of the Review Committee is final.

## How to provide updates and report back?

*Downtown In Motion* recipients will be asked to provide project updates, the frequency depends on the project length. A **final report** is required within 30 days of completing the initiative or by October 8, 2026, whichever comes first. The reporting template will be provided upon grant approval. We may visit your initiative and provide feedback for future funding eligibility.

We ask that recipients acknowledge the City of Calgary as a funder in any related digital or print advertising, promotional materials and public communication. The City of Calgary will publish a list of Arts and Culture Microgrant recipients and the funding amount awarded.

## Questions?

Email [microgrants@calgary.ca](mailto:microgrants@calgary.ca) or view our Frequently Asked Questions section on our website.