



Festivals and Events Subsidy Program Innovation Microgrant Guidelines

City Of Calgary Arts & Culture Division

Core Principles

The City of Calgary's Arts & Culture Division administers several grant programs and services for the community which:

- encourage active and healthy lifestyles
- build strong neighbourhoods
- enhance cultural vibrancy
- facilitate the development of activities
- enhance social sustainability

Organizations seeking funding support from The City of Calgary through any of the grant programs administered by the Arts & Culture Division should be aware of and aligned with one or more of these core principles.

Values

Any organization supported by The City of Calgary Festivals and Events Subsidy Program Innovation Microgrant will commit to the following values:

- **Accessibility, diversity, and inclusion:** we welcome everyone to engage in quality experiences that showcase our community's unique identity.
- **Accountability and fiscal responsibility:** we use resources effectively to leverage opportunities that optimize value and create impact.
- **Innovation:** we support forward-thinking solutions that anticipate needs and bring together a range of experiences to see the future in a unique way.
- **Partnerships and collaborations:** we achieve more through meaningful relationships based on mutual respect and understanding.

Program Objectives

The City of Calgary Festivals and Events Subsidy Program Innovation Microgrant (FESPIM) empowers the Festivals and Events Subsidy Program's recipients to bring innovative ideas to life by providing the necessary startup funding. This incubator fund aims to spark creativity, inspire change, and contribute to the vibrant growth of our city. With grant funding up to \$20,000 per initiative, these initiatives approved by the Festivals and Events Team must focus on:

- **Programming Diversification**
Diversify our city's cultural and programming landscape with new forms of entertainment, art, and cultural experiences.
- **Value-Added Innovation**
Introduce components that the event has not previously explored, such as increased accessibility, transportation alternatives, cost saving measures or any other innovation that will enrich the overall experience for participants.
- **Community Strengthening**
Foster collaboration, inclusivity, and connections among community members and organizations through positive engagements are highly encouraged.
- **Environmental Stewardship**
Align with environmental sustainability, address environmental challenges, promote green practices, minimize the environmental footprint, and greening enhancements.

Eligibility Requirements

The Festivals and Events Subsidy Program Innovation Microgrant can be used as pilot funding to grow vibrant and impactful local events. To encourage a broader distribution of support and a wider reach of innovative ideas, applicants are encouraged to focus on unique initiatives; Events are limited to one FESPIM application per year.

Any registered non-profit, charitable organization, Community Association, or Business Improvement Area can apply if they:

- Are in good standing with The City of Calgary with no outstanding invoices.
- Demonstrate the experience, financial resiliency, and skills needed to produce the initiative.
- Are hosting a festival or event in Calgary.

The Proposing Initiative must be included in:

- An event that is reviewed and approved through the 2026 Interdepartmental Event Team process.
- An event that is publicly accessible.
- An event that is/was a 2025 Festival and Event Subsidy Program recipient.

Ineligible Initiatives

- Activities that are an integral part of another entity's project.
- Commercial ventures.
- Capital initiatives aiming to establish or sustain permanent assets or infrastructure.
- Activities such as rallies or protests that hold political or religious affiliations.
- Initiatives that promote hate speech or marginalize ethnic, cultural, or individual groups.
- Initiatives that receive funding through the Arts and Culture Microgrant and Downtown In Motion Grant.

Program Structure

To support local and publicly accessible initiatives, the Festivals and Events Subsidy Program Innovation Microgrant consists of one funding opportunity with the intake period between September 15th and October 9th, 2025. The total grant size will fluctuate year over year depending on available funds.

FESPIM Microgrant Funding up to \$20,000

This microgrant supports initiatives with up to 100 percent of eligible expenses, to a maximum of \$20,000.

Eligible Expenses

This fund is designed to provide targeted financial assistance for the direct costs associated with implementing the proposed innovation, distinct from those related to your existing festival or event. Eligible expenses may include, but are not restricted to:

- Honorariums and compensation for artists, contractors, technicians, and workers who are not already employed as staff.
- Expenditures linked to the production and technical aspects of the initiative.
- Marketing and communication expenditures.
- Initiative-specific administrative and overhead costs, such as rentals, communication services, hardware and software, utilities, and insurance.
- Development and implementation of health, safety, and accessibility plans, specific to the initiative.
- Other expenses and supplies that the Arts and Culture Division deems reasonable and necessary.

Ineligible Expenses

This fund will not cover capital expenses, or any foundational operational costs associated with the organization's day-to-day functions. These excluded expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenses incurred prior to the application approval.
- Expenses that are not directly relevant to the initiative being applied for.
- 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.
- Expenses that are already covered by other funding sources, including Festivals and Events Subsidy Program.

Application Process

Complete the Festivals and Events Subsidy Program Innovation Microgrant application for your desired funding level. Email the completed form to microgrants@calgary.ca with the subject line “FESPIM – [Insert Your Initiative Title]” prior to the deadline, 11:59 PM October 9th, 2025.

Applications undergo a comprehensive review of the eligibility criteria, followed by the supporting documents, and the assessment criteria. The grant review team within City Administration will carefully assess all applications. Funding will be allocated to initiatives based on their scores, with priority given to those with higher scores until all available funds are distributed.

Applicants can expect to receive approval notifications mid-November, and funding disbursement will occur before December 31, 2025. All decisions made are considered final.

Final Report

Grant recipients are required to submit a final report in a designated format to the Arts & Culture Division within 60 days of successfully concluding their initiative. This submission is a prerequisite to remain eligible for participation in any future Arts & Culture funding support and grant initiatives.

Applicants may also be requested to provide high-quality images in conjunction with the final report.

To uphold transparency and accountability, The City will make all funding allocation amounts publicly accessible.

Conditions

The allocated funding is specifically intended for the purposes outlined in your application. By accepting the provided funding, you are committed to executing the project as detailed in your application.

Grant recipients are asked to acknowledge funding received from The City of Calgary Festivals and Events Innovation Microgrant in any related advertising or promotional materials that recognize sponsors and partners. The City of Calgary will provide a logo if required.

The City of Calgary reserves the right to reclaim approved funding in the following scenarios:

- The project is not completed within the designated timeframe.
- Alternations to the project, including changes to outcomes, location, or timeline, are implemented without prior approval from Arts & Culture.
- Evidence indicates that funds were diverted from the intended purpose of the approved project, misused for ineligible expenses, or if the grant recipient neglects to submit their required reporting.

Contact Information

All the documentation is provided in PDF format. Should you have any inquiries or need further assistance during the application process, please contact microgrants@calgary.ca.

Assessment Criteria

The criteria presented below outlines standard practices for applicant organizations. Evaluation will be based on information provided within the application and how well organizations align with these criteria. Given the unique nature and varying stages of organizations' lifecycles, it's important to note that exceptional performance in all areas is not an expectation for receiving funding support.

The assessment criteria are categorized as follows:

1. Strategic Investments

The local innovative initiative is clearly defined, demonstrating an understanding of the specific community needs it addresses. The project's impact and alignment with the objectives of this funding program, as well as the core principles and values of the Arts and Culture Division, are evident.

2. Capacity

The initiative has appropriate personnel assigned to its planning and execution. For initiatives emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion, there is meaningful involvement of representative groups. A practical and achievable timeline for completing the initiative is established. The budget reflects a realistic comprehension of the costs associated with delivering the proposed activities. If applicable, there is a commitment to enhance and sustain existing initiatives.

3. Connection

The initiative maximizes its human and financial resources through active collaboration with other organizations and local businesses. The applicant has devised strategies to generate awareness, foster appreciation for the initiative, encourage participation, and establish ongoing collaborative opportunities. Collaboration and transparent communication are integrated to ensure the event aligns with community values and needs.

By maintaining a balance between economic success, social responsibility, environmental awareness, and cultural appreciation, a sustainable festival or event aspires to create an enjoyable and memorable experience for attendees while leaving a positive and enduring impact on the community and environment.

FAQ

Q: If I have received the Arts & Culture Microgrant in the previous year, would I be eligible for the Festivals and Events Subsidy Program Innovation Microgrant?

If you received the Arts & Culture Microgrant in 2025, you are ineligible for the Festival and Events Subsidy Program Innovation Microgrant. Your event must have received 2025 Subsidy in order to be eligible for the FESPIM.

Q: Can I apply if my organization is on a payment plan for a festival/event?

You are welcome to apply and if your application is selected, you would need to pay the remaining balance of any outstanding invoices prior to receiving payment.

Q: Can I use this grant to cover the cost for guests including artists and speakers from outside Calgary?

If the artist or speaker has not been a component of your event in previous years, yes that is an eligible expense.

Q: Can I use the fund to cover expenses that overlap for both my innovation and the existing event?

Only expenses that are separate from your existing event can use the funding from this microgrant.

Q: Can I still receive the funding if I haven't been billed yet for 2025? Or haven't paid my bill yet?

If you have already been billed for your 2025 event, the invoice must be paid in full before you can receive this microgrant. If you have not yet been billed, you are still eligible to receive the funding.

Q: How is this different than FESP?

While the funding source is the same, FESP is a dedicated funding to cover a portion of City Services provided to events. FESPIM is one time funding for new, innovative initiatives aimed at encouraging the growth and enhancement of existing events.

Q: How many microgrants are available?

The potential number of individual grants will be dependent on the size of the available pot and the amount requested by each eligible initiative.