

City of Mississauga Corporate Report



7.1

Date: January 12, 2021	Originator's files:
To: Chair and Members of General Committee - Corporate Grants	
From: Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of Community Services	Meeting date: February 10, 2021

Subject

2021 Culture and Community Grant Programs

Recommendation

1. That the Corporate Report dated January 12, 2021 from the Commissioner of Community Services entitled "2021 Culture and Community Grant Programs" be approved.
2. That \$125,000 from the Culture grant residual balance of \$457,337 be used for a one-time stabilization fund in 2021 of \$100,000 to support groups that were not able to access City funding and whose operations have been impacted during the pandemic; and to fund the 2021 Small Project Matching Grant Program in the amount of \$25,000.

Report Highlights

- 63 eligible grant applications are recommended for funding across four grant streams
- Four organizations are being recommended for multi-year grants
- 12 multi-year grants will be entering their next year of funding as approved by Council
- A total budget allocation of \$2,803,923 is being recommended by the Peer Assessment Committee for the Culture Grant Programs
- A total budget allocation of \$1,202,266 is being recommended by the Grants Review Committee for the Community Grant Program
- The assessment panel recommends three grant recipients be placed on support with conditions status
- To provide additional support to groups undergoing a significant financial impact as a result of COVID-19, staff recommends the development of a sustainability fund for implementation in 2021.

Background

The City of Mississauga provided funding through four streams of funding:

1. Arts & Culture
2. Cultural Festivals & Celebrations
3. Culture Projects
4. Community Grants

Arts & Culture

The Arts and Culture grant program supports emerging and established not-for-profit professional and community-based arts, culture, and heritage organizations in Mississauga. The stated goals of the grant program are:

- To help eligible organizations develop exemplary programs and services for art, culture and heritage; and
- To advance knowledge, understanding and the appreciation of arts, culture, and heritage for the citizens of Mississauga.

Cultural Festivals & Celebrations

The Cultural Festivals and Celebrations (CFC) Grant program provides funding to offset expenses associated with providing a clean and safe venue for the presentation of arts, heritage and cultural festivals and celebrations to Mississauga residents and visitors. CFC supports a range of events that reflect the City's many cultural traditions and practices.

Culture Projects

The Culture Projects Grant Program provides project-based grants, which fund cultural organizations to:

- Expose more individuals, communities and areas of the City to culture
- Develop strong creative collaborations
- Encourage more cultural practitioners to create a wider variety of cultural experiences for the City of Mississauga

Community Grants

The Community Grant Program assists Mississauga-based, not-for-profit community groups by providing multi-year, annual operating and project grants to improve the quality of life for its residents. The program aligns with Strategic Priorities of the Recreation Division, Parks & Forestry Division and Environment Division.

Grant Application Process

The City's grant process is consistent with other municipalities and granting bodies throughout North America, including the provincial and federal government. This process can be broken down into three steps:

1. Application Intake

The 2021 application period opened on August 24, 2020. As in previous years, information about the grant program was distributed through the City's promotional channels to ensure broad community awareness including: the City web site, email, Mississauga Arts Council, e-newsletter, news release and social media (Facebook and Twitter).

Five grant information sessions were held virtually from August 26, 2020 to September 3, 2020. This service provides an opportunity for staff to share the application process and answer questions about the grant program. Sessions were open to the public and all organizations that had previously submitted applications were invited. All first-time applicants are required to attend one of the information sessions to be eligible for funding. Staff also encouraged grant applicants to book a one-on-one pre-application consultation.

2. Staff Review

City staff review the applications for completeness and clarity. If questions or the need for clarification arises, applicants are contacted. This step is designed to ensure all applications are complete, meet eligibility criteria and can be fairly assessed.

Each applicant's financial information is then forwarded for review and comment by the City's Finance Division. Finance provides comments on the following financial questions:

- Does the organization have adequate financial liquidity;
- Is the organization carrying a sufficient surplus;
- Is the organization carrying an unacceptable deficit;
- Are the organization's finances consistent year over year;
- Does the organization have a sustainable funding base (including funding from multiple sources); and
- Are there significant variances between the organizations budgeted finances and actuals.

In 2019, Culture and Finance staff undertook a review of the process and criteria by which grants are reviewed by the Finance Division and how funds are allocated. As part of this review, a grading system was developed based on the above questions to illustrate the financial risk of an organization. Each application is now graded as having a low, medium or high financial risk. This grade and the associated comments are provided to the assessment committees along with the grant applications.

3. Peer Assessment and Grant Review Committee Recommendations

The role of each assessor is to review the grant applications independently and then attend a series of group sessions to review the applications and recommend grant allocations.

A panel of four peer assessors (Culture Grant Programs) and three grant reviewers (Community Grant Program) were approved by Council on November 6, 2019 for a four-year term (see Appendix 1).

The committee reviewed and scored each eligible application against the published criteria for the grant programs (see Appendix 2). Each organization was then assigned a grade from 1-5 based on the numerical score.

Beginning with the 2018 grant cycle, organizations that meet the eligibility criteria (Appendix 2) have been able to apply for a three-year funding agreement.

Today, there are 12 organizations entering their final year of their multi-year agreements (see Appendix 3) and four are being recommended for a second three-year funding agreement.

Comments

This funding cycle saw an additional 13 applications and 11 more funded groups than in previous years. A total of 71 grant applications were received from the four grant programs by the October 16, 2020 deadline. Three (3) applications were deemed ineligible and 68 were advanced to the formal assessment stage. Of the 68 applications assessed, 63 applications are being recommended for funding. Appendix 4 provides a breakdown of the recommended grant allocations for each organization by grant program. As per Council's request, summaries of each application have been provided (see Appendix 5) which include: the organization's purpose, programming plans and the impact of funding on the City.

2021 Culture Grants Recommended Funding

The City of Mississauga's grant program decisions are based on the merit of the applications with detailed criteria for how funding is to be allocated. The Peer Assessment Committee is recommending \$2,803,923 in funding be awarded against the Culture Division's Culture Grant budget of \$3,261,300; leaving a balance of \$457,377 in unallocated funding.

The grants policy anticipates that not all funding may be allocated in a given year. The policy calls for any balance of funds from the Culture Grant programs to be transferred to the Arts Reserve and/or Municipal Accommodation Fund (MAT) for use in future years.

For 2021, staff recommends using a portion of the unallocated funding to support groups impacted by the pandemic and that may not have been able to access existing grant programs (see Stabilization Funding section for more details).

2021 Community Grants Recommended Funding

The Grants Review Committee is recommending \$1,202,266 in funding to those applying to the Community Grant program against the Community Grant budget of \$1,207,670; leaving a balance of \$5,404 in unallocated funding.

Unallocated funding from the Community Grant program is used to fund the Small Project Matching Grant Program, which is \$5,404. In order to provide adequate funding for the program in 2021, an additional \$25,000 is being requested from the Culture grants residual balance. This program was launched in March 2017 and provides funds to Affiliated and Recognized Community Groups to strengthen neighbourhoods, increase resident engagement and enhance

opportunities for Mississauga residents to participate in events and activities at the neighbourhood level. Due to COVID-19, the program was not able to proceed in 2020 but is planned to continue in 2021.

Stabilization Funding Staff recommends the development and implementation of a stabilization grant for 2021 to support groups that may not have been able to access City funding and whose operations have been impacted during the pandemic. Stabilization funding would be used to offset costs related to providing programs and services during the pandemic. Types of costs covered under this funding will include:

- Rentals
- Insurance
- Utilities
- Communications with members/audiences

Stabilization funding would only be available for 2021 and be allocated by staff based on groups' ability to demonstrate a significant financial impact as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff are recommending \$100,000 be allocated to this program from the Culture Grant residual balance.

To be eligible for funding, groups must be registered with the City in order to access this funding (through the CORA program) and provide documentation of costs, which are not eligible under other government grant programs.

A maximum grant of \$10,000 would be available to each eligible group.

The administration of this grant is in line with other programs including the Small Project Matching Grant and the Designated Heritage Property Grant program.

Staff have already engaged with several groups that normally would not meet grant eligibility criteria to determine City support. Details regarding proposed funding amounts are to be determined based on submitted documentation and approved by the Director of Culture and/or Director of Recreation as needed.

Support with Conditions Status

The City has adopted "support with conditions status" as a means to signal to Council where particular organizations may benefit from additional advice and coaching from City staff. An organization placed on "support with conditions" status must participate in a minimum of two mandatory meetings with staff and demonstrate progress, in specifically identified areas, as a condition of their funding approval. For 2021, the assessment committees recommend the following three organizations be placed on "support with conditions status".

Culture Grants

Art Gallery of Mississauga (AGM)

The Peer Assessment Committee recommended this organization for an Arts & Culture grant of \$160,000 and to continue with *Support with Conditions* status. The assessors felt the AGM would benefit from working more closely with the Culture Division to develop and implement equity and inclusion initiatives (for more details, see AGM evaluation summary sheet in Appendix 5 Pg.1). The AGM will work with the Culture Division over the next year on the following:

- Bringing in a 3rd party to conduct an equity and inclusion audit and provide recommendations
- Using recommendations to develop and implement an equity and inclusion plan
- Providing anti-oppression training for staff and Board members
- Ensuring policies and procedures reflect direction outlined in the above plan
- Expanding Board membership to include contemporary visual arts representation

Youth Troopers for Global Awareness

The Peer Assessment Committee recommended this organization for an Arts & Culture grant of \$19,999 and continue with *Support with Conditions* status. The assessors recognized the organization's efforts to improve their financial position and appreciated their commitment to diversifying the audience and communities they serve. The assessment committee felt it would be beneficial for the organization to continue to be on support with conditions status to further develop their financial management plan and demonstrate stability within their organization.

Community Grants

Boys and Girls Club of Peel

The Community Grant Review Committee recommended this organization for a Community Grant of \$10,000 and be placed on *Support with Conditions* status. The assessors recognize the organization's commitment to Mississauga youth but due to the organization's financial discrepancies, the Committee felt Boys and Girls Club of Peel would benefit from working with City staff to develop an updated strategic plan and improved financial reporting.

Financial Impact

This report recommends a total Culture Grant allocation of \$2,803,923 from the proposed 2021 Culture grants budget of \$3,261,300 pending Council approval.

Furthermore, staff recommends that \$125,000 of the Culture grant residual balance of \$457,337 be used for the one-time stabilization fund in 2021 while the remainder be transferred to the Arts Reserve (Account 30195) to address grant funding needs in future years (\$100,000); and for the Small Project Matching Grants program (\$25,000).

This report also recommends a total Community Grant allocation of \$1,202,266 from the proposed 2021 Community grants budget of \$1,207,670, pending Council approval, and that the \$5,404 unallocated funding from the Community Grant program be used to fund the Small Project Matching Grant Program (supplemented by the \$20,000 noted above).

Conclusion

In 2021, 63 groups are being recommended for funding through four grant programs. In total, 75 groups, including the 12 organizations that have already been approved for multi-year funding, are recommended to receive funding in 2021.

Attachments

Appendix 1: 2021 Grant Assessment Committees

Appendix 2: Grant Eligibility Criteria

Appendix 3: Multi-year Funding Recipients

Appendix 4: 2021 Recommended Grant Allocations

Appendix 5: Grant Evaluation Summary Sheets



Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of Community Services

Prepared by: Andrew Douglas, Grants Coordinator