



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of May, 2 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** April 23, 2019
From: Kerri Moore, Head of Business and Community Relations
Subject: Festival Investment Grant 2019 Allocations

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the Festival Investment Grant allocations as recommended in Appendix 1 and 2 for total cash grants of \$276,828 and in-kind City services grants of up to \$128,700.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Festivals and celebrations add to Victoria's vitality, vibrancy and diversity. The City's annual grant and in-kind support nurtures the development of high quality accessible events and creates significant economic activity in the city.

The Festival Investment Program (FIG) was established in 1999. Over the 21 year history of the program the City has allocated \$2,877,408 in cash and \$1,955,821 in in-kind City services to FIG recipients.

The federal "Building Communities through Arts and Heritage" (BCAH) grant program requires applicants to confirm local support (cash and/or in-kind) for their festivals or celebrations to qualify for federal funding, therefore this report is presented as far in advance of the 2019 festival season as possible.

There were 37 applications received prior to the FIG submission deadline with a total request for funding of \$370,720. City funding budgeted for this grant program is \$276,828. A record number (35) of the applicants met the criteria and are recommended for approval. Two applications cancelled their 2019 festivals after submitting. Both events hope to make a return in 2020. 22 of the recommended festivals have applied for federal funding.

All applications are reviewed based on the approved FIG policy, which includes:

- Program criteria, including a free component
- Artistic and cultural merit of the event
- Economic impact
- Community support
- Organizational effectiveness

A comprehensive list of requests and recommendations is detailed in Appendix I.

The economic impact of these events can be measured by spending activity generated by festival goers in local restaurants and businesses, overnight stays in hotels by visitors and visiting performers, festival employment, and increased tourism for popular annual festivals.

The five largest events are estimated to generate a total economic impact of over \$7 million with attendance for all recommended events estimated to exceed 500,000. The total operating budgets of the recommended events is projected to be over \$5.2 million in direct cash spending. This reflects a positive impact through employment (210 full and part-time positions), event production sales and rentals, and the purchase of goods and services. Corporate investment by local, regional and national corporations total more than \$2.3 million (\$1 million cash and \$1.3 million in-kind).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval on the Festival Investment Grants recommendations for 2019.

BACKGROUND

The Festival investment Grant program was established to create and sustain a healthy community, vibrant downtown core and enhance economic development. Over the past twenty years, the City has supported festivals through the Festival Investment Grant Program. Additional in-kind support is provided based on need and the availability of departmental resources.

In-kind support can include City services such as policing, traffic control equipment, festival equipment labour, venue fees waived, sound operator and security in Centennial Square and displaced parking revenue. See appendix 2 for a detailed breakdown of recommended in-kind grants.

The Festival Investment Grant program was created to meet the following objectives:

- Increase the quality of life for our citizens
- Enable a vibrant downtown core
- Support economic development
- Offer exposure to new art forms

To qualify for funding, festivals and celebrations must meet the criteria outlined in the 2011 Council approved Festival Investment Grant Policy and Guidelines. See appendix 3 attached.

The federal "Building Communities through Arts and Heritage" (BCAH) grant program has expanded to include 3 separate intake periods. The department of Heritage no longer requires municipalities to confirm municipal support by year end. Council is now be able to consider requests within the context of the budget process and review allocations following budget approval.

Grant applications, policy, guidelines and reporting documentation can be found on the City website. The grant program is showcased online as well as through the City Vibe web application and print versions made available throughout the year. Moving forward the City will continue to enhance content available on the City website and through City social media. Three to four weeks prior to the Festival Investment Grant deadline reminders are sent to previous recipients outlining the timeline for reporting. Additionally, staff conducted a festival grant workshop in October 2018 showcasing more than a dozen grant programs from local and senior government granting agencies. The event was hosted at City hall and was attended by more than 100 local event and

festival organizers. Final reporting must be received before the annual application deadline of October 31st in order to be considered.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Festival organizers are increasingly faced with funding and sponsorship challenges. Most organizations have experienced reductions in corporate sponsorship, decreases in provincial gaming grants and increased production costs making it difficult for organizers to successfully sustain and grow their events.

Event organizers leverage their municipal support through provincial and federal funding bodies and secure credibility with corporate and community sponsors.

Last year, the City of Victoria awarded \$222,380 in grants and \$107,000 in in-kind support to 32 festivals and celebrations (up from 27 in 2017). This year there were 37 cash grant requests seeking a combined \$370,720 in FIG funding. Of these, 7 are new applicants and 2 are returning after an absence from the program, indicating both growth and vibrancy in the festival scene. Two applicants postponed their events to 2020 after making application to the program, resulting in recommendations to fund 35 festivals and celebrations for a total of \$276,828 cash and up to \$128,700 in in-kind support. The 35 recommended Festivals and celebrations include:

Seed Festival Grants - new festivals in first five years of operation (13)

- World Accordion and Tango Festival
- Victoria Festival of Authors
- Car Free Day YYJ
- Folkloria
- Electro-Acoustic Wonderment
- IMBY
- Khalsa Day
- Kindling Emerging Writers Festival
- Kizomba Festival
- Metal Festival
- Out Stages
- Peek Fest
- Philippine Independence Day

Established Festival Grants (19)

- Blues Bash
- Dragon Boat Festival
- FernFest
- Film Festival
- Flamenco Festival
- Free B Festival
- French Fest
- Fringe Fest
- Garden City Grooves
- 156th Victoria Highland Games and Celtic Festival/Tartan Parade
- Festival Mexicano
- JazzFest
- Kaleidoscope Theatre's Family Theatre Festival

- One Wave Festival
- Pacific Baroque Festival
- Pride Week
- Ska & ReggaeFest
- SKAMpede
- Uno Fest

Signature Festival Grants (3)

- Art Gallery Paint-In
- Victoria Day Parade/Island Farms Santa Parade
- Victoria Symphony in the Summer

Two applicants cancelled after making application to the program but hope to return for the 2020 festival season:

- Nowruz
- Integrate Arts Festival

With many requests for funds, staff recommendations consider evaluation criteria and support for as many eligible events as possible. Seven first time applicants are recommended for support including:

- Folkloria - Greater Victoria Folk Festival Society
- IMBY - Kindle Arts Society
- Khalsa Day Parade - Gurdwara Sing Sabha Society of Victoria
- Kindling Emerging Writers Festival - Open Space Arts Society
- Victoria International Kizomba Festival - Afro Latin Cultural Exchange (ALCE) Society
- Vancouver Island Metal Festival - Vancouver Island Metal Festival Society
- Philippine Independence Day - Victoria Philipino Canadian Association

Council directed staff to review the 2011 FIG policy in 2019. As part of this comprehensive review staff have noted a number key areas for review including but not limited to:

- opportunities for inclusion of programming already receiving limited celebration funding through neighbourhood base grant funding
- application intake process improvements and timeline adjustments
- signature event status recommendations
- shoulder season definition
- accommodations for art forms reliant on indoor venues

Staff are actively working with stakeholders and the newly appointed Music Advisory Committee on key areas for review. Recommendations will be presented to council in Q2 2019.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1 (Recommended)

That Council approve the Festival Investment Grant allocations as recommended in Appendix 1 and 2 for total cash grants of \$276,828 and in-kind grants of up to \$128,700.

Option 2

Council directs staff to revise the recommendations in Appendix 1 & 2 and bring back new recommendations for Council's consideration at a later date. Delaying or denying some or all of the recommended allocations may prevent applicants from leveraging grant funding from senior levels of government and/or sponsors.

2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan

Nurturing and supporting arts, culture and creativity has been identified by Council as an operational priority. The Festival Investment Grant Program is consistent with achieving the outcomes for the following objectives in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Objective #5: Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City of Victoria
- Strategic Objective #8: Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods

Impacts to Financial Plan

Council approved a \$50,000 increase in the Festival Investment Grant Budget for 2019. The current budget is \$276,828 and will be increased by inflation annually as directed by Council.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The recommendation aligns with the following objectives in the Official Community Plan:

Section 14: Economy

14 (f) That the function of the Urban Core as the primary regional centre of employment, learning, arts, culture, entertainment, recreation and specialty retail is maintained and enhanced with high quality facilities, services and events

Section 16: Arts and Culture

16.6 Encourage broad access to arts and culture facilities, events and activities for people of all ages, incomes, backgrounds and lifestyles.

16.7 Encourage education, training and informal learning opportunities in the arts, design and culture.

16.19 Establish and maintain partnerships with professional artists and arts and cultural organizations to program the use of public space.

16.20 Continue to permit festivals, celebrations and special events in public spaces, such as streets, parking lots, plazas, civic squares and other open space.

16.21 Increase the use of parks for festivals, celebrations and special events

16.22 Continue to support and enable local, non-profit groups to host festivals, celebrations and special events through services, incentives and regulations.

CONCLUSIONS

The Festival Investment Grant Program assists the creation of a more vibrant downtown through the traditional festival season, enhancing tourism, local business success and the local economy. The program also broadens the festival season to the shoulder months to attract residents and visitors to the downtown year round thereby supporting economic development in traditionally slower economic activity periods.

Respectfully submitted,



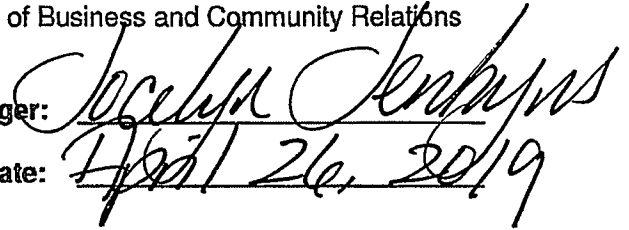
Jeff Day
Senior Cultural Planner



Kerri More
Head of Business and Community Relations

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


April 26, 2019

List of Attachments

- Appendix 1 – Detailed list of FIG allocations
- Appendix 2 – FIG City service allocation details
- Appendix 3 – 2011 Festival Investment Grant policy and guidelines