



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: A. Prasad, Commissioner, Development Services / C. Kakaflikas, ext. 6590, Acting Director, Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship

Prepared by: D. De Los Santos, ext. 3663, Manager, Markham Small Business Centre and Celebrate Markham Grant Program Coordinator

Date: April 20, 2021

Re: Celebrate Markham 2021-2022 Funding Cycle Alternative Program Options

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the memo titled, "Celebrate Markham 2021-2022 Funding Cycle Alternative Program Options" be received; and
2. That the 2021-22 Funding Cycle be approved to proceed with the following temporary modifications and to be re-evaluated prior to commencing the 2022-23 Funding Cycle:
 - a. That Council only support Celebrate Markham grant applications for virtual events (except Sports Events); and
 - b. That Sports Events be given consideration for Celebrate Markham grants only if they are in compliance with current public health restrictions and return-to-play guidelines established by the relevant PSO/NSO but that spectator participation be restricted to virtual or livestream participation only; and
 - c. That Council authorize a one-time carry-forward of unused Community Events monies (up to \$256,000) from the 2021-22 Funding Cycle to the 2022-23 Community Events funding envelope and be distributed proportionately to each funding category (up to a combined total maximum of \$512,000); and
 - d. That there be no changes to the funding envelope for the City-led events category with a funding envelope of \$84,000 annually; and
 - e. That there be no changes to the funding envelope for the Markham Arts Council annual net grant amount of \$23,400 (Celebrate Markham grant of \$30,000 less 2021 loan repayment of \$6,600 for a remaining balance owing of \$6,600 as of December 31, 2021) for their annual programs and activities conditional on receiving and approving 2020 audited financial statements; and

- f. That the special provision approved by Council in June 2020, allowing an applicant that is approved to receive grant funding during the current funding cycle and is subsequently forced to cancel their project/event due to changes in COVID-19 public health restrictions, be given consideration for financial relief towards unrecoverable/ non-deferrable expenses related to the project but not exceeding 50% of the approved grant amount and conditional on receiving and approving proof of such expenses, not be extended to the 2021-22 Funding Cycle; and
 - g. That the special provision approved by Council in June 2020, allowing an applicant that is approved to receive grant funding during the current funding cycle and subsequently decides to significantly alter/revise the way in which their proposed project/event proceeds (including a switch to virtual), that if necessary to maintain consistency with the established funding category guidelines, Staff be authorized to adjust the funding allocation based on the applicant's revised proposal but not exceeding the originally approved allocation and not exceeding 25% of the applicant's overall revised budget, conditional on receiving and approving a revised work plan, budget and impact estimates, be extended to continue to be in effect for the 2021-22 Funding Cycle; and
 - h. That the special provision approved by Council in June 2020 allowing an applicant that is approved to receive grant funding during the current funding cycle and subsequently decides to postpone their project/event to the following funding cycle (2022-23), be given the option to defer their application to 2022-23, thereby forfeiting their consideration for the current year and have their application directly carried forward for consideration as part of next year's 2022-23 funding cycle, without having to re-submit a new application form, so long as the postponed event is substantially the same in size, scope and budget as the original proposal, be extended to continue to be in effect for the 2021-22 Funding Cycle; and
 - i. That in addition to requiring proof and approval of venue and liability insurance, that all applicants be required to sign an addendum/attestation acknowledging that they and their organization take full responsibility for ensuring adherence to Public Health restrictions (e.g., including safety plans, contract tracing records, etc.); and
 - j. That grants be released no sooner than 30 days prior to the scheduled event; and
3. That Staff report back to Council in June recommending Celebrate Markham grant recipients; and further
 4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

BACKGROUND:

A presentation was delivered to General Committee on April 6, 2021 titled "Celebrate Markham Grant Program – 2021-2022 Funding Cycle Status Update – Alternative Program Options & Implications". This memo summarizes the recommendations and options to be considered for implementation in the upcoming 2021-2022 Funding Cycle.

Staff have considered the option of adding a new, separate funding category to the Celebrate Markham grant program, with simplified criteria and easier application process, issuing numerous smaller-scale grants, similar to the \$500 neighbourhood grants program that were disbursed in 2017 during Canada 150. Staff has considered this option but are concerned about the administrative burden such a program will place on existing staff resources.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

Table A provides an overview of selected program guideline areas of the Celebrate Markham grant program which require consideration and in some cases, potential modification in order to take into account impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty around public health restrictions.

TABLE A: Selected Program Guideline Areas of the Celebrate Markham Grant Program for Consideration

Ref.	Current State	Recommendations
1.	In any given year, applicants may propose in-person activities as part of their application to Celebrate Markham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Council only support Celebrate Markham grant applications for virtual events (except Sports Events); and That Sports Events be given consideration for Celebrate Markham grants only if they are in compliance with current public health restrictions and return-to-play guidelines established by the relevant PSO/NSO but that spectator participation be restricted to virtual or livestream participation only
2.	In any given year, any unallocated, remaining funds are to be included as part of the year-end results of operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Council authorize a one-time carry-forward of unused Community Events monies (up to \$256,000) from the 2021-22 Funding Cycle to the 2022-23 Community Events funding envelope and distributed proportionately to each funding category (up to a combined total maximum of \$512,000)
3.	City-led events are allocated \$84,000 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change
4.	Markham Arts Council is allocated a net grant amount of \$23,400 (Celebrate Markham grant of \$30,000 less 2021 loan repayment of \$6,600 for a remaining balance owing of \$6,600 as of December 31, 2021) for their annual programs and activities conditional on receiving and approving 2020 audited financial statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change

Ref.	Current State	Recommendations
5.	<p>In June 2020, Council approved a special provision allowing an applicant that is approved to receive grant funding during the current funding cycle and is subsequently forced to cancel their project/event due to changes in COVID-19 public health restrictions, be given consideration for financial relief towards unrecoverable/non-deferrable expenses related to the project but not exceeding 50% of the approved grant amount and conditional on receiving and approving proof of such expenses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That this special provision not be extended to the 2021-22 Funding Cycle
6.	<p>In June 2020, Council approved a special provision allowing an applicant that is approved to receive grant funding during the current funding cycle and subsequently decides to significantly alter/revise the way in which their proposed project/event proceeds (including a switch to virtual), that if necessary to maintain consistency with the established funding category guidelines, Staff be authorized to adjust the funding allocation based on the applicant's revised proposal but not exceeding the originally approved allocation and not exceeding 25% of the applicant's overall revised budget, conditional on receiving and approving a revised work plan, budget and impact estimates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That this special provision be extended to continue to be in effect for the 2021-22 Funding Cycle
7.	<p>In June 2020, Council approved a special provision allowing an applicant that is approved to receive grant funding during the current funding cycle and subsequently decides to postpone their project/event to the following funding cycle (2022-23), be given the option to defer their application to 2022-23, thereby forfeiting their consideration for the current year and have their application directly carried forward for consideration as part of next year's 2022-23 funding cycle, without having to re-submit a new application form, so long as the postponed event is substantially the same in size, scope and budget as the original proposal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That this special provision be extended to continue to be in effect for the 2021-22 Funding Cycle

Ref.	Current State	Recommendations
8.	For any approved applicant, proof and approval of a venue and liability insurance are required to be provided as a condition prior to the release of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That in addition to this requirement, all approved applicants be required to sign an addendum/attestation acknowledging that they and their organization take full responsibility for ensuring adherence to Public Health restrictions (e.g., including safety plans, contact tracing records, etc.)
9.	Release of grant funds can occur up to 60 days prior to the scheduled program/event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That grants be released no sooner than 30 days prior to the scheduled event

NEXT STEPS:

Upon approval by Council, Staff will communicate final program modifications to applicants and allow up to 4 weeks for applicants to re-consider their position and either postpone for the year, or alter their plans to switch to virtual. The Celebrate Markham interdepartmental staff review committee will then evaluate applications.

A staff report recommending Celebrate Markham grant recipients will be made to Council in June 2021.

Depending on the Covid situation and evolving public health restrictions, there may be an opportunity to reintroduce larger in-person events in 2022.