



Report to: General Committee

Meeting Date: July 13, 2021

SUBJECT: Celebrate Markham Grant Program – April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022 (2021-22) – Funding Approvals and Annual Program Review

PREPARED BY: Christina Kakaflikas, Director, Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship x 6590

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report titled, “Celebrate Markham Grant Program – April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022 (2021-22) - Funding Approvals and Annual Program Review” be received; and,
2. THAT Council receive the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee in Attachment 1, which includes 63 Celebrate Markham applicants, totaling \$221,000; and,
3. THAT Council approve the revised recommendations based on the Resolution of Council dated April 6, 2021 which includes 35 applicants to be funded totaling \$48,575 for virtual programming/events for this funding cycle and identified in Attachments 2, 3, 4 and 5; and,
4. THAT Council authorize a one-time carry forward of unused Community Events monies in the amount of \$207,425 to the 2022-2023 Community Events funding envelope; and,
5. THAT Council authorize 26 postponed applications to be carried forward in the amount of \$84,500 to be considered for funding in the 2022-2023 funding cycle; and,
6. THAT Council authorize funding for Kindred Spirits Orchestra (KSO) in the amount of \$5,000 based on the original Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee recommendation and conditional on receiving documents outlined in the Resolution of Council dated April 20, 2021 ; and,
7. THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This Staff report contains recommendations for the 2021-22 funding cycle of the Celebrate Markham Grant program, for events that take place from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022 (application deadline was November 19, 2020, 4:00 pm).

Under normal circumstances, the 2021-22 funding cycle of the Celebrate Markham Grant program, would have recommended that 61 applicants out of 63 eligible applicants be received and approved amounting to \$231,000 in grants, out of the \$256,000 total available funding envelope for community grant applications. This leaves \$25,000 remaining funds to be returned.

In keeping with the Resolution of Council dated April 6, 2021, the 2021-22 funding cycle of the Celebrate Markham Grant program it is recommended that 35 applicants out of 63 eligible applicants be approved for virtual programming/events, which is a 56% subscription rate for virtual events. Virtual event applications total \$48,575 in grants, out of the \$256,000 total available funding envelope for community grant applications, leaving \$207,425 remaining. Twenty-six applicants decided to postpone their events and be considered under the next funding cycle.

PURPOSE:

To recommend Celebrate Markham Grant awards for projects and events to be held between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022. Grant recommendations are included in Attachment 1 and identified in Attachments 2, 3, 4 and 5.

BACKGROUND:

On October 13, 2015, Council adopted a revised Celebrate Markham Grant Program following a comprehensive program review, which included stakeholder consultations. Council approved that the Celebrate Markham Grant funding envelope be set at \$370,000 which is allocated to the following funding streams along with funding caps per applicant:

- a. Cultural Events & Programs = \$76,000 (maximum \$5,000 per applicant)
- b. Major Community Festivals = \$100,000 (maximum \$10,000 per applicant)
- c. Sports Events = \$40,000 (maximum \$10,000 per applicant but up to \$20,000 for International/World level sports events)
- d. Seniors' Clubs = \$40,000 (maximum \$3,000 per applicant)
- e. City led events = \$84,000
- f. Markham Arts Council = \$30,000

Combined, categories a, b, c and d above represent a total available funding envelope of \$256,000 allocated for Celebrate Markham community grant applications.

As stipulated in the Grant Program Guidelines, grant recipients must complete and submit a Project Outcome/Financial Report which includes reporting on community partnerships, participation and attendee statistics, outcomes, community impact, learning and program feedback, as well as detailed reporting on actual expenses vs. projected budget and associated variance explanations within 90 days of the event completion. In addition, certain financial reporting information is required depending on the amount of the grant request (detailed below in Table A).

TABLE A

Revised minimum reporting requirements		
Grant Threshold		Minimum Reporting Requirement
1.	\$5,000 or less	Income statement and balance sheet prepared by the organization and signed by the Board
2.	\$5,001 - \$10,000	Compilation Engagement prepared by a Licensed Public Accountant outside the organization. One document that contains financial statements for the 2 separate fiscal years (the most recent fiscal year and the previous year).
3.	\$10,001 & over	Audit Engagement prepared by a Licensed Public Accountant outside the organization. One document that contains financial statements for the 2 separate fiscal years (the most recent fiscal year and the previous year).

In cases where an organization has not yet fully complied with the Project Outcome/Financial Reporting requirements specified above, Staff recommend that those organizations receive funding from this 2021-22 funding Cycle subject to receiving and approving of the reporting requirements outlined above.

On April 20, 2021, Council approved a set of temporary modifications to the 2021-22 funding cycle including direction to only support applications for virtual events and that for such virtual events funding be limited to a maximum of 35% of the original approved grant and that anything exceeding that require Council approval. Council also authorized 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 whereby surpluses incurred be returned to the same categories they came from.

A call for grant applications was opened on October 5, 2020 for consideration of any programs and events proposed to occur between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 ("2021-22"). The deadline to submit was November 19, 2020, 4:00 pm.

A total of 63 applications were received for this funding cycle (2021-22) and given consideration as eligible to receive funding for this current 2021-22 funding cycle. Based upon evaluation by the Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee, using Council-approved eligibility requirements and program criteria, 61 applications are being recommended for funding (see Attachment 7, Celebrate Markham Program Criteria). Key elements of the review include:

1. Organizational Readiness
2. Project Merit
3. Community Impact
4. Partners and Inclusivity
5. Waste Planning (Zero Waste Event)
6. Workplan
7. Project Budget

The Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee includes representation from the following City departments: Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship (Director and Manager); Financial Services (Financial Planning); Recreation (Director, Senior

Manager and Manager Sport Development); Human Resources (Diversity); and, Corporate Communications & Community Engagement (Events).

Staff have exercised flexibility, where warranted in the review and processing of applications.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Application Review

Table B provides an overview summary of all Celebrate Markham applications within the \$256,000 total available funding envelope for community grant applications for this funding cycle, as well as Staff's recommendation to fund 61 Celebrate Markham applicants, from the \$256,000 available funding envelope:

TABLE B

Summary Table for Celebrate Markham Community Grant Applications vs. Allocation Limits (2021-22 Funding Cycle)							
Grant Category	Total # of Eligible Applications (New Applicants)	Total Funding Requested	Total Funding Envelope (A)	Total Funding (if proceeding as normal)	Total # of Applications Recommended (New Applicants)	Revised Recommendation @ 35% (as per Status Update) (B)	Remaining Budget Available Fav. (Unfav.) C = A - B
Cultural Events & Programs	35 (7)	\$96,675	\$76,000	\$111,000	33 (6)	\$24,950	\$51,050
Major Community Festivals	6 (0)	\$60,000	\$100,000	\$58,000	6 (0)	\$10,500	\$89,500
Seniors' Clubs	17 (1)	\$51,000	\$40,000	\$39,000	17 (1)	\$7,350	\$32,650
Sports Events	5 (2)	\$34,145	\$40,000	\$23,000	5 (2)	\$5,775	\$34,225
TOTAL	63 (10)	\$241,820	\$256,000	\$231,000	61 (9)	\$48,575	\$207,425

Application summaries are provided in Attachments 2 to 5, along with the Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee's recommendations. Attachment 6 contains detailed tables showing the amounts requested and recommended for each funding category and the recommended recipients as well as outlining re-allocations between funding streams, if necessary. Note: on October 13 and 14, 2015, Council approved that "in any given funding cycle, any unallocated funds within a funding stream be re-allocated to remaining streams with qualified applications and should there be no additional qualified applications in other funding streams, the surplus funds be returned to source."

The Celebrate Markham Grant program continues to gain broader awareness among community groups throughout Markham and the program has historically received far more applications for funding than is available in the grant program's funding envelope. Going forward that means reduced funding across the board to each qualifying organization; and/or the possibility that weaker applications (that might otherwise be eligible) not being recommended for funding whatsoever.

Currently for 2021-22, the grant program is undersubscribed. There were fewer requests for funding than the Celebrate Markham Grant program had available. Applicants have requested \$14,180 less funding for their events and programs than the grant program has

available within its current allocation limits if proceeding as normal. This is the first year the program is undersubscribed, in all prior years, the program has been oversubscribed. In conversations with stakeholders this is as a direct result of the public health gathering restrictions that have largely prevented any opportunity to facilitate the typical events and programs that Celebrate Markham has supported in the past.

Attachment 6 summarizes the categories that are over/under subscribed and the relevant amounts.

City-led Events

Out of the total \$370,000 funding envelope for Celebrate Markham, \$84,000 is reserved for City-led events, including:

- a. Senior's Hall of Fame
- b. Canada Day Celebrations
- c. Doors Open Markham
- d. Markham Milliken Children's Festival
- e. Earth Hour
- f. Markham Santa Claus Parade
- g. Black History Month celebrations

Impact of Provincial Emergency Orders and COVID-19 Disruption

Out of the 63 eligible applicants:

- 25 applicants switched to virtual
- 26 responded postponing their event to the next funding cycle (April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023)
- 10 applicants have not finalize their decision and have been included in the grant allocation pending their decision
- 2 applicants withdrew

Staff recommend that for the applicants who have responded postponing their project/event to the next funding cycle (April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023), it is recommended that those organizations not be given financial consideration during the current 2021-22 funding cycle but that their applications be directly carried forward to next year's 2022-23 funding cycle for consideration.

Further, to help alleviate the administrative burden on these applicants, such a postponement should not require the completion of a new application, so long as the postponed event is substantially the same in size, scope and budget as the original proposal.

Postponements will be considered for this year only (from the 2021-22 cycle to 2022-23 cycle). Further postponements will require an entirely new application to be submitted for the 2023-24 funding cycle.

For the applicants who responded but were still uncertain about their direction, staff have included recommendations as if these organizations were proceeding as normal, but subject to standard conditions required of all applicants, including proof of insurance.

This type of conditional recommendation allows these applicants the time needed to finalize their decisions, while maintaining the integrity and standards of the Celebrate Markham grant program process.

Kindred Spirits Orchestra (KSO) has requested the full funding based on the original Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee recommendation of \$5,000. This is conditional on receiving documents outlined in the Resolution of Council dated April 20, 2021. KSO's offers a wide range of musical/orchestral programming throughout the year. KSO has informed that they have been one of the very few orchestras in Canada that has been able to provide a complete concert season during the pandemic.

Conclusions

The Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee has reviewed all applications, in detail, by fund category, on the basis of the program criteria, as approved by Council. During this 2021-22 funding cycle, a total of 61 applications would have been recommended for funding out of the 63 eligible applications received, totaling \$231,000 in grants for this funding cycle out of the \$256,000 total available funding envelope for community grant applications. Based on the Resolution of Council dated April 6, 2021, 35 applications are being recommended for funding totaling \$48,575.

Continuous improvements to the Celebrate Markham Program benefit from Council's role to confirm the program's goals and objectives, to establish the overall funding envelope and to direct funding requests to the Celebrate Markham Program. Staff's role, meanwhile, is to ensure effective and efficient administration of the Fund, according to the established process and criteria. Success of this program depends upon adhering to the revised process which has been put in place. Going forward, the Staff Review Committee will incorporate the feedback received and continue to work on improvements identified through the 2022-2023 funding cycle. Criteria and application forms will be adjusted and further recommendations presented to Council as part of the year-end report on Celebrate Markham in 2022.

An important part of the program is the monitoring of outcomes and impacts. Based on Staff review of grant applications from the previous Cycle (2020-21), for events and programs that took place between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 and based on the budgeted spending by each organization, we observed that for every \$1 of Celebrate Markham Grant funding approved, \$8.36 was budgeted to be spent directly by the recipients hosting these events and programs (representing direct spending leverage of about 8:1). As we receive the Project Outcome/Financial Reports from these organizations we will be able to report on what the actual leverage was, based on actual spending reported by the grant recipients.

Next Steps

Upon approval of the Staff report and funding allocations, Staff will follow-up with applicants to inform them of the decisions related to their applications. The next round of applications for 2022-2023 will open in Q4 of 2021.

Staff will continue to evaluate and implement continuous improvement processes to the grant program.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

A total available funding envelope of \$256,000 was allocated for Celebrate Markham community grant applications delivered between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022. The amount of \$48,575 is recommended for approval in this 2021-22 funding cycle out of the \$256,000 available for Celebrate Markham community grant applications. The remaining funds of \$207,425 to be carried forward to the 2022-23 Community Events funding envelope as per Council direction on April 20, 2021. Table B, earlier, illustrated the recommended fund distribution from the approved available funding envelope of \$256,000 for community grant applications.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This initiative aligns with the strategic focus for community engagement to promote meaningful involvement and participation of residents, businesses and organizations that result in improved citizen engagement.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Financial Services, Corporate Communications and Community Engagement, Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship, Recreation and Human Resources Departments.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Christina Kakaflikas
Acting Director, Economic Growth,
Culture & Entrepreneurship

Biju Karumanchery
Acting Commissioner,
Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1 - Celebrate Markham Grant Program – April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022 (2021-22) - Funding Recommendations
- Attachment 2 - Celebrate Markham Grant Recommendations - Cultural Events and Programs Category
- Attachment 3 - Celebrate Markham Grant Recommendations - Major Community Festivals Category
- Attachment 4 - Celebrate Markham Grant Recommendations - Seniors' Clubs Category
- Attachment 5 - Celebrate Markham Grant Recommendations - Sports Events Category
- Attachment 6 - Celebrate Markham Grant Allocations and Totals
- Attachment 7 - Celebrate Markham Program Criteria