



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: March 26, 2024

---

**SUBJECT:** Celebrate Markham Grant Program 2024-2025 – April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025 – Funding Approvals

**PREPARED BY:** Chris Rickett, Director, Economic Growth, Culture & Entrepreneurship x 6590

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT the report titled, “Celebrate Markham Grant Program 2024-2025 – April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025 – Funding Approvals” be received;
2. THAT Council approve the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee in Attachment 1, which includes 67 Celebrate Markham applicants for community-led events and programs, totaling \$236,000 conditional on applicants adhering to the Celebrate Markham Guidelines;
3. THAT Council approve \$84,000 for City led events and programs;
4. THAT Council approve \$30,000 for the Markham Arts Council annual programs and activities conditional on receiving and approving 2023/2024 audited financial statements;
5. THAT Council approve \$50,000 in additional funding support for Major Community Festivals that meet the criteria set out in this report;
6. THAT Council approve \$11,975 to be allocated to cover the 2023 Canada Day budget deficit;
7. THAT the unallocated Celebrate Markham Community Grant Program funding of \$42,300 be carried forward to the 2025-26 Celebrate Markham funding stream;
8. THAT any unallocated Celebrate Markham Community Grant Program funding from 2023-24 be carried forward to the 2025-26 Celebrate Markham funding stream; and,
9. THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**PURPOSE:**

To recommend Celebrate Markham Grant awards for events and programs between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025. Grant recommendations are included in *Attachment 1 – Celebrate Markham 2024-2025 Annual Funding Recommendations*.

**BACKGROUND:**

On October 13, 2015, Council approved a revised Celebrate Markham Grant Program after conducting a comprehensive program review involving consultation with stakeholders. As part of this approval, the funding for the Celebrate Markham Grant was set at \$370,000. This amount is divided into two funding streams: one for community programs and events and another for City-led events.

From a community event and program perspective, Table 1 overviews the available funding envelope and maximum amount per application.

**Table 1 – Community-Led Programs and Events Funding**

	<i>Program</i>	<i>Annual Funding Envelope</i>	<i>Maximum Amount Per Application</i>
<i>Community-Led Events and Programs</i>	Cultural Events and Programs	\$76,000	\$5,000
	Major Community Festivals	\$100,000	\$10,000
	Sports Events	\$40,000	\$10,000 (\$20,000 for International or World level sports events)
	Seniors' Clubs	\$40,000	\$3,000
	<b>Total Community-Led Events</b>	<b>\$256,000</b>	

In addition to these funding amounts, Table 2 highlights the funding allocated towards City-led events and the Markham Arts Council.

**Table 2 – City-Led Events and Markham Arts Council Funding**

	<i>Program</i>	<i>Annual Funding Envelope</i>
<i>City-Led Events</i>	Canada Day Celebrations	
	Doors Open Markham	
	Markham Milliken Children's Festival	
	Markham Santa Claus Parade	
	Black History Month Celebrations	
	<b>Total City Led Events</b>	<b>\$84,000</b>
<i>Arts Council</i>	Markham Arts Council	\$30,000
	<b>Total Arts Council</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>

The funding envelope for all Celebrate Markham categories is \$370,000 annually.

**Celebrate Markham Program Guidelines**

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 versus projected budget and associated variance explanations within 90 days of the event completion. In addition, certain financial reporting information is required depending on the grant request amount, which is detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3 – Reporting Requirements**

Minimum reporting requirements		
Grant Threshold	Minimum Reporting Requirement	
1	\$5,000 or less	An income statement and balance sheet were prepared by the organization and signed by the board.
2	\$5,001 - \$10,000	A Compilation Engagement is prepared by a licensed public accountant outside the organization. It consists of one document that contains financial statements for two separate fiscal years (the most recent fiscal year and the previous year).
3	\$10,001 & over	An Audit Engagement is prepared by a Licensed Public Accountant outside the organization. One document contains financial statements for two separate fiscal years (the most recent fiscal year and the previous year).

A Staff Review Committee was formed to evaluate applications in these key areas:

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

The Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee includes representation from the following City departments:

- Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship (3 Coordinators and a Manager)
- Financial Services (Financial Planning)
- Recreation (Senior Manager, Manager and Coordinator of Sport Development)
- Human Resources (Diversity)

**OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

### **Application Review**

For the 2024-25 funding cycle, the City received 67 applications requesting \$410,400. Table 4 summarizes community-led events and programs and their funding allocations.

**Table 4 – Community-Led Programs and Events Funding Allocations**

<b>Grant Category</b>	<b># of Applications Received</b>	<b>Funding Requested</b>	<b># of Approved</b>	<b>Total Funding Recommended</b>	<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>Funds Remaining</b>
<b>Cultural Events &amp; Programs</b>	32	\$165,000	24	\$76,000	\$76,000	\$0
<b>Major Community Festivals</b>	10	\$110,000	8	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$20,000
<b>Seniors' Clubs</b>	18	\$54,000	18	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0
<b>Sport Events</b>	7	\$81,400	7	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>\$410,400</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>\$236,000</b>	<b>\$256,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

Table 4 shows the total number of approved applications. Given the volume of the applications, some applicants will receive less than their requests based on the Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee scoring.

Applications that were not approved failed to meet one of the following criteria:

- Application did not meet the requirements specified under the funding category;
- Application was incomplete or was missing critical information.
- Application did not attain a high enough score to be eligible for funding consideration.

The Interdepartmental Staff Review Committee's recommended approvals are in Attachment 1—*Celebrate Markham 2024-2025 Annual Funding Recommendations*.

### **Additional Funding Support**

Given the financial challenges identified by large community festivals, City staff recommend providing additional funding support to those with significant attendance and destination events that draw visitors to Markham. This additional funding would apply to any Celebrate Markham approved Major Community Festival that meets the following criteria:

- Attracts an audience of a minimum of 15,000 attendees;
- Attracts at least 10% of its audience from outside of Markham; and,

- Not be its inaugural event/festival.

Based on the analysis completed by staff, five festivals will qualify for this additional funding. For each of these festivals, \$20,000 more would be provided for a total of \$100,000 in additional funding. This would be funded through the following sources:

- Celebrate Markham Carryforward – \$50,000 of this funding would come from the 2023 Celebrate Markham Carryforward. In 2023, Council approved \$84,275 of unallocated Celebrate Markham funding from the pandemic to be carried forward to support events in 2024.
- Destination Markham Partnership Funding Program – the remaining \$50,000 in funding would come from Destination Markham’s Partnership Funding Program, which is focused on helping local attractions market their activities to audiences outside of Markham.

Qualifying festivals will need to report on their use of this funding as part of their final reports, and the funding will need to be targeted to the following costs specifically:

- Celebrate Markham Additional Funding – qualifying festivals will need to direct the additional \$10,000 in funding towards road closure and security costs.
- Destination Markham Partnership Funding – qualifying festivals will need to direct the additional \$10,000 in funding towards marketing outside of Markham to draw visitors to the community.

### **Canada Day 2023 Budget Deficit**

In 2022 and 2023, Canada Day was moved to Markham Centre. The decision was made to turn the event into a destination event that would draw visitors from across the Greater Toronto Area and Markham.

To grow the event, headline entertainment acts were secured. In 2023, there were 25,000 attendees at Canada Day, and just over 50% came from outside of Markham. Drawing people from outside the city helps build their sense of Markham as a destination, elevating their understanding of the arts, culture, and entertainment options and helping draw them back to future activities in Markham.

Expanding Canada Day required additional funding secured from both internal and external grants. Unfortunately, in 2023, the delivery of the City’s Canada Day event resulted in a budget deficit of \$11,975. This deficit resulted from a reduction in external funding grants and increases in production expenditures, specifically headline entertainment acts. Staff are recommending that this deficit be covered by the Celebrate Markham reserve for \$11,975.

### **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 2024-2025 will open as follows:

- Q3 2024:
  - Sport Events
- Q4 2024:
  - Culture Events Programs
  - Major Community Events
  - Seniors' Clubs

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

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A total available funding envelope of \$441,225 is allocated for Celebrate Markham activities delivered between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025, and is provided in detail in Table 5.

**Table 5 – 2024 Celebrate Markham Funding Overview**

Funding Stream	\$
Celebrate Markham 2024 Funding	\$370,000
2023 Carryforward	\$84,275
<b>Total 2024 Funding Available</b>	<b>\$454,275</b>
<b>Celebrate Markham Funding Recommended for Approval</b>	
Community Events	\$236,000
City-led Events	\$84,000
Markham Arts Council	\$30,000
Celebrate Markham Enhancement	\$50,000
2023 Canada Day Deficit	\$11,975
<b>Total 2024 Celebrate Markham Spend</b>	<b>\$411,975</b>
<b>Remaining Celebrate Markham Reserve</b>	<b>\$42,300</b>

### **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, Economic Growth, Culture and Entrepreneurship, Recreation, Human Resources Departments and Destination Markham Corporation.

### **RECOMMENDED BY:**

Chris Rickett  
Director, Economic Growth,  
Culture & Entrepreneurship

Arvin Prasad  
Commissioner,  
Development Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment 1 - Celebrate Markham 2024-2025 Annual Funding Recommendations