



City Enrichment Fund (CEF) 2026

Arts Program Area Arts Festivals Handbook



City Enrichment Fund

Arts Program Area

Objective

To provide opportunities for all the people of Hamilton to enjoy and actively participate in the arts while:

- Enhancing social, economic, and cultural prosperity
- Building strength in the arts sector

All programs funded through the Arts Program Area will support Hamilton's community vision, Our Future Hamilton. [Learn more about Our Future Hamilton here.](#)

How to apply for a grant

- ☐ Read the **City Enrichment Fund Guidelines** and the **Arts Handbook** for details about the program, stream objectives, eligibility, and criteria.
- ☐ Refer to the **Application Details** section to learn about expectations for each question.
- ☐ You will be required to complete all sections of the application online.
- ☐ Upload all documents (use the checklist to confirm that you have submitted all attachments).

ARTS FESTIVALS

Arts Program Area - Arts Festivals Handbook

Objective

To enhance the ability of organizations to produce and present arts festivals that have high merit, strong impact, and solid viability.

Description

This funding stream supports the planning and delivery of arts festivals in Hamilton that have a city-wide impact through annual operating grants for established festivals and emerging festivals.

For the purpose of this funding stream, a festival is defined as a collection of arts activities presented over a set period of time with some theme of interest. A festival may be devoted to one or more disciplines and can be produced annually, on a reoccurring basis, or one-time. A festival has general appeal, a public profile and public access on a free and / or paid basis.

Eligible organizations may submit one application to the Arts Festivals stream.

Please note:

Multi-Year Funding (MYF):

- There is no intake for MYF applications during this application cycle.
- The City Enrichment Fund is piloting a 3-year multi-year funding program which offered returning A rated CEF applicants with an option to receive a 3-year funding commitment.
- The 3-year pilot period began with the 2025 CEF cycle, with qualifying MYF grantees receiving a commitment of funding for years 2 and 3, 2026 and 2027 respectively.
- If the pilot is converted to a permanent program the next intake for MYF funding will be fall 2027 for programs or projects beginning in 2028.

Funding Categories

Established Arts Festival

Definition	Incorporated not-for-profit organizations that have been incorporated for five or more years and have a history of sustained arts festival programming.
Status	Incorporated for five years or more
Maximum Funding	Up to a maximum of \$100,000 for eligible festival administrative and programming expenses. • Funding Requests Over \$15,001: Funding requests should not exceed 30% of the total program budget. Total funding received from all sources in the City of Hamilton cannot exceed 30% of the program budget. • Funding Requests Below \$15,000: CEF funding requests cannot be 100% of the proposed program budget and must demonstrate additional funding/revenue sources. Total funding received from all sources in the City of Hamilton cannot be 100% of the program budget. Note: Audited Financial Statements are required for grant requests greater than or equal to \$30,000.
Assessment Weighting	30% Organizational Capacity 40% Program Merit 30% Community Impact

Emerging Arts Festival

Definition	Incorporated not-for-profit organizations that have been producing the festival for less than five years.
Status	Incorporated for one to five years
Maximum Funding	Up to a maximum of \$10,000 for eligible festival administrative and programming expenses. CEF funding requests cannot be 100% of the proposed program budget and must demonstrate additional funding/revenue sources. Total funding received from all sources in the City of Hamilton cannot be 100% of the program budget.
Assessment Weighting	30% Organizational Capacity 40% Program Merit 30% Community Impact

Arts Festival Guidelines

These guidelines are in addition to the general CEF guidelines and eligibility criteria

Eligibility	Incorporated not-for-profit organizations with a mandate that includes producing an arts festival • The organization's head office must be located within Hamilton • The focus of the festival must be arts-based and occur within the city of Hamilton Arts organizations that receive a City Enrichment Fund Arts Operating Grant may also apply for an Arts Festival grant on a one-year basis for a new festival initiative in the Emerging Arts Festival category.
Ineligible Festivals / Activities / Organizations	In addition to the general CEF ineligible criteria: • Small neighborhood festivals • Book fairs • Literary reading series • Competitions • Sports and recreation tournaments and events • For profit, commercial or entertainment ventures • Trade shows, trade fairs and conferences • Stand-alone parades (e.g. Santa Claus Parade) • Events, defined as one-off single activities, gatherings or celebrations typically taking place over a concentrated period of time, such as a few hours. Examples of events are rallies, demonstrations, fundraising events, single performances, or other single artistic activities. • Business Improvement Associations • Applicants to the Communities, Culture & Heritage program area.
Eligible Expenses	• Artistic (fees and travel) • Production and technical (including equipment and venue rental) • Marketing, promotion, and audience development • Administration • Insurance • Policing and security • Road closure charges • Evaluation
Ineligible Expenses	In addition to the general CEF ineligible expenses: • Hospitality including alcohol

	• Equipment purchase • Expenses not directly related to the festival • Expenses for festival components or activities that take place outside of the city of Hamilton
Assessment Criteria	Each Funding Category will be assessed separately using the following assessment criteria and weighting: 30% Organizational Capacity <i>as demonstrated by:</i> • Successful track record of achievement in Festival programming and delivery (if applicable) • The capacity of the applicant to present the festival as proposed • The soundness of the festival planning and the evaluation plan • Balanced, realistic budget • Capacity to generate earned and private sector revenue • Effective planning and evaluation • Appropriate and effective marketing and promotion 40% Program Merit <i>as demonstrated by:</i> • Clear vision that reflects the organization's mandate • Quality and quantity of arts programming • Qualified, professional artistic leadership • Plans to allocate appropriate resources / fees towards festival programming • Contributing to the development of the festival sector in Hamilton • Attraction of tourists to Hamilton 30% Community Impact <i>as demonstrated by:</i> • Potential for public support, participation, and attendance • Strong and successful relationships and partnerships with the business and the not-for-profit community • Audience development initiatives aimed at reaching Hamilton's broad, diverse community • Offering meaningful opportunities for volunteers • Improving quality of life for the residents of Hamilton • Employment and training opportunities for Hamilton artists, cultural workers, and contractors • Direct and indirect spending in Hamilton • Offering meaningful opportunities for volunteers

Arts Festivals Application

Applicants are to apply through the
[City Enrichment Fund - Survey Monkey Apply Online Platform](#)

- Create an account for organization.
- Applicants are responsible for providing all the information and attachments requested.
- Make updates to the saved organization information, contacts etc. before beginning a new application.
- Save information as you move between pages.
- The City Enrichment Fund will make decisions regarding your eligibility based on the information provided in your application.

APPLICATION

Application Information Form

Applicant Contact Information

Additional Contact persons for your organization: (The CEF recommends including a secondary contact for your organization)

Organization Full Name

Is your organization legal name different than the above organization full name?
Yes / No

Organization Legal Name

Should your application be successful, under what name are you able to deposit funds? Please note that legal names of organizations will be published.

Organization Establish Date Provide the date that organization was formed / incorporated.

Organization Address

Legal Status or Organization (select all that apply)

- Not-for-profit
- Registered Charity
- Individual artist or collective – *ineligible to apply to Arts Festivals stream*
- Unincorporated group with not-for-profit goals and governance structure – *ineligible to apply to Arts Festivals stream*

Not-For Profit Registration Number and/or Registered Charitable Number

Is your organization's head office located in the City of Hamilton? Yes/No

Will the program for which you are applying take place within the city of Hamilton?
Yes / No

Program Information Form

Program Area: Arts

Is this application for a returning program? Yes/No

To be considered returning, a program or service must be delivered by the same organization and have received funding through the same CEF program area and stream.

Arts Stream: Arts Festivals

Category: Established or Emerging

Program Name: The name of the Arts Festival

Provide a brief summary of your program – Please note that this program description will be included in a publicly accessible City of Hamilton Council report. This description is not scored.

Organization Mission or Mandate (Approx. 200 words)

Provide a brief history of your organization – include important milestones and / or changes to the organization's direction over time. (Approx. 250 words)

Provide a detailed description of your program (Approx. 1000 words)

- The programming direction
- A summary of artistic activities describing the quality, diversity, and innovativeness
- A description of how artists/performers are selected, and fees paid
- Festival dates and schedule
- Describe additional festival programming and activities
- Briefly describe your marketing plans

Specify how funding from the City Enrichment Fund will be used. (Approx. 500 words)

Your description should relate to the details provided in your programming description and to your proposed budget.

Describe how this program can be scaled should the total funding request not be received. (Approx. 500 words)

The City Enrichment Fund does not guarantee that successful applicants will receive their full grant request. Applicants are asked to confirm how they will adapt to funding amounts below their request level.

How will your program increase community participation? (Approx. 500 words)

- Details on the festival audience
- Volunteer program(s)
- Festival recognition and the impact on the city

- Artistic contributions / cultural impact

What are the measurable outcomes of your program?

Describe the outcome of your program to your organization and/or to the community as a direct result to your activities. Ensure that each outcome is measurable. Multiple measures for a single outcome are acceptable. If your application is successful and you receive funding, you will be required to report back on the outcomes provided.

Provide three measurable outcomes.

The outcomes listed should reflect the festival goals for the request year in a manner that can be measured and evaluated.

- What is your desired outcome / goal?
- How will you measure your success?
- What is the impact or affect for the organization?

Examples:

Outcome	Measure(s)	Impact or Results Expected
Increased social media presence.	• 100% increase in Facebook 'likes' (total of 400 likes). • 5 Facebook 'shares' per event / program.	An increase in social media activity will expand our audience reach and direct communication.
Increase annual membership by 5%	• 100% renewal rate for 2026 membership (300 total) • Enroll 15 new members (5%)	Our membership has remained at approx. 300 for the past 2 years. With the increased social media presence and focus on membership benefits we hope to attract new members.
Maintain 2025 sponsorship levels.	• After losing 2 significant sponsors in 2020, the organization is focusing on maintaining our 9 longtime sponsors.	By evaluating the mutual benefits of each sponsor relationship, the organization hopes to enhance the value to current and future sponsors.

Describe both formal and informal program partnerships. How do these relationships enhance your program activities? (Approx. 300 words)

- Community outreach partners and relationships
- Partnerships with other not-for-profits and the partnerships festival roles
- Other organization partners
- For-profit partnerships and relationships

List the team members that will ensure your program is well managed and achieves your desired goals. Include a brief explanation of how their expertise/specialization will make your program a success. (Approx. 300 words)

This may include members from your staff, Board of Directors, and/or committee members. Consider how these team members reflect the community you serve.

How does this program enrich the city? (Approx. 300 words)

- What are the benefits and contributions to the community?
- How does your organization develop its audience and reach Hamilton's broad diverse community?

Community Vision

Review the City of Hamilton's Community Vision that aligns with this program.

Which of our community priorities align with this program? (select up to three apply)

- ☐ Community Engagement and Participation
- ☐ Economic Prosperity & Growth
- ☐ Healthy and Safe Communities
- ☐ Clean and Green Built
- ☐ Environment and Infrastructure
- ☐ Culture and Diversity

Describe how your program is aligned with the community priorities chosen.
(Approx. 200 words)

Please explain how the event / activity supports between one to three community priorities.

Program/Stream Specific Questions

Describe your organizational plans for the funding year. (Approx. 300 words)

- Your significant organizational plans for the request year and how they were shaped by the successes and challenges of last year?
- Discuss your organizational structure and any changes to staff or significant volunteer roles.

Describe the economic impact of your activities on the City of Hamilton? Provide an economic impact statement. Your response may include qualitative and or quantitative information. (Approx. 400 words)

Established Festivals only

BUDGET

Budget Information

In addition to financial statements, every City Enrichment Fund application requires a completed budget that represents the entire program including all revenues, expenses, and in-kind amounts. Reference the guidelines and handbook to ensure that all expenses

are eligible. A good budget is realistic, thorough, detailed, and is reflected in the application.

1. Please note your CEF Request for the 2026 year in the budget form under Request Program Year Amount (\$).
2. Funding Requests Over \$15,001: Funding requests should not exceed 30% of the total program budget. Funding Requests Below \$15,000: CEF funding requests cannot be 100% of the proposed program and must demonstrate additional funding/revenue sources (cash only, excludes in-kind).
3. Please note that all funding sources from the City of Hamilton cannot exceed 30% of the Total Eligible Program Budget for Funding Requests over \$15,001 and cannot be 100% of Funding Requests below \$15,000.
4. It is recommended that submitted budgets are balanced. Provide comments for programs that present a budget deficit or surplus under Budget Form Notes.
5. Please note that this budget is used by all CEF program areas. Use the most appropriate line items provided in addition to the blank spaces listed as 'other.'

Revenues:

Item	Current Program Year Amount (\$)	Previous Program Year Actuals (\$)	Name of Funding Program(s) / Brief Explanation of confirmed amounts, rentals etc.
CEF Request			City Enrichment Fund: Amount requested
Provincial / Federal Government			
Membership Fees			
Admission Fees			

Column 1: Item

List of budget line items

Column 2: Request Program Year Amount (\$)

Provide the festival budget for the request year (2026)

Column 3: Previous Program Year Actuals (\$)

Provide the festival budget from the previous year (2025, or the last year the festival took place)

Column 4: Name of Funding Program(s) / Brief Explanation of confirmed amounts, rentals etc.

Provide point form, brief notes to support proposed budget of line items (point form). Some examples include:

- Confirm government funding, sponsorship etc., with *Pending or Confirmed*
- Provide a breakdown of a line item i.e. *Total vendor fees, 15 vendors x \$250.*
- Provide notes for significant variances between the previous and request year i.e. *Projecting a 15% fundraising increase with launch of fundraising initiative and team members. OR \$10K decrease as 2025 was final year of OAC 'XXXXXX' project grant*

Expenses:

Item	Current Program Year Amount (\$)	Previous Program Year Actuals (\$)	Brief Explanation of Expense Line Item (Budgeted vs Actuals)
Venue Rental			
Materials			
Other			

Column 1: Item

List of budget line items

Column 2: Current Program Year Amount (\$)

Provide the budgeted festival expenses for the request year (2026)

Column 3: Previous Program Year Actuals (\$)

Provide the budgeted festival expenses from the previous year (2025 or the last year the festival took place)

Column 4: Brief Explanation of Expense Line (Budgeted vs Actuals)

Provide point form, brief notes to support proposed budget of line items (point form). Some examples include:

- Provide information on new expense items i.e. *New family zone for 2026, includes set up (\$XXX) and animator fees (\$XXX).*

- Provide notes for significant variances between the previous and request year i.e. *Increase of artist fees with launch of new stage, OR \$5K decrease as new sponsor is providing marketing services in-kind.*

In-Kind Expenses:

Item	Current Program Year Budget Amount (\$)	Previous Program Year Actuals (\$)	Brief Explanation of Expense Line Item (Budgeted vs Actuals)
Estimated Volunteer Expenses			
In-Kind Rent Expenses			

In-Kind expenses will not be included in the overall eligible budget but add to the overall understanding of the program.

- Provide the estimated volunteer hours and value of other in-kind contributions.
- For Volunteer Expenses, calculate at \$21/Volunteer hour contributed.

Budget Notes:

If needed, please provide brief, point form notes to support the proposed budget.

- Significant variances between the previous year and request year
- If projecting or carrying a surplus or deficit, please include a surplus justification or deficit reduction plan

Attachments

Organization Attachments:

- Board of Directors list **(mandatory)**. Include role titles, length on BOD.
- Staff list **(mandatory)**. Include job titles and whether full or part-time for both administrative and artistic staff.
- Financial Statements **(mandatory)**. If audited financial statements are not available, then unaudited statements are required. Please note, for grant requests greater than or equal to \$30,000 audited financial statements are mandatory.

Program Attachments:

- Program Marketing Material **(mandatory)**. Poster, flyer, pamphlet.

- Program Specific Material
Optional up to 4 program materials, including;
 - Most recent annual report
 - Additional marketing material
 - Performance programs
 - Images
 - Festival statistics and data

IDEA Form

Please note: this task is not scored.

A form collecting information about the IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility) groups supported through City Enrichment Funds. Applicants are asked to specify the target population(s) of their projects, and if applicable, equity designated groups represented within their organization's governance structure.

Applications are not evaluated based on this form, which serves only for data collection.

Declaration Form

Declaration, terms of use, applicant signature(s).

Communications (confirm correct email)

Outstanding CEF Final Reports: Yes / No

Two signatures are required – Recommended 1 Board Member and 1 Staff member.

Submitting Your Application

After each task is finished, please press the **'Mark as Complete'** button on the lower right of the task window. Once all tasks are marked complete, and the application is ready to be submitted, please review the application for completeness by selecting **'Review'** (bottom right).

Applicants will be prompted to review each page. Any incomplete question / field will be clearly marked.

After you Apply

- The application owner will receive confirmation from the portal that the application has been submitted.

- If needed, CEF staff will contact the main applicant by email or phone to confirm the details in the application and ensure the application is complete.
- If the application receives a passing score (above 60%), the application score and recommended level of funding will be presented to the City of Hamilton Grants Sub-Committee for review and approval in spring 2026.
- Funding notifications will be delivered by email. The email will include instructions to receive your funding and a timeline of when funds will be released.
- CEF funding must be used in the same year that it is awarded.
- Grantees must acknowledge the support provided by the City of Hamilton through the funds received by the City Enrichment Fund in program materials and promotion.
- Grantees must complete a Final Report and submit it to CEF staff by February of the following year. A template will be provided by CEF staff after confirmation of funding is received, by Fall 2026. In the Final Report, grantees are required provide the following information:
 - The anticipated vs. actual program budget
 - Examples of any marketing materials, supporting documents, photos, etc. that help tell the story of the initiative and its impact.
 - The measurable outcomes and measures included in within the application. Grantees must report on how your initiative achieved this goal by describing the direct or indirect impact of the program or project on the organization or the community.
 - Describe any unanticipated changes made to the delivery or implementation of the program.
 - Describe learnings from this initiative and provide recommendations to improve this initiative if the organization were to initiate it again, or if the organization was providing advice others considering a similar initiative.

Organizations that do not provide complete Final Report(s) for each program that receives CEF funding will not be eligible to apply for future CEF grants.