



INFORMATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	October 20, 2020
SUBJECT:	Arts Awards Program Renewal (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Carrie Brooks-Joiner Director, Tourism and Culture Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

In recognition of the changes in Hamilton's arts community, a review of the City of Hamilton's Arts Award Program was undertaken in the third quarter of 2020. The review included consultation with past recipients, jurors, nominators and sector experts through a series of seven online focus groups. This is the first major review and revision of the program in 10 years.

Based on this review, a revised process to nominate and select award winners has been developed by Tourism and Culture staff and Arts Awards Program partner Cobalt Connects. This process will make nominations easier for the public, allow for more flexibility in award categories and provide opportunities for the awards to be more responsive to and celebrate the evolving arts community each year. It will be piloted for the 2021 awards. No additional funding or staff resources will be required to implement the new process.

Overview of Major Program Changes

The major program changes include:

- Simplified public nomination process
- Addition of sector review and nomination step
- New award categories
- Consolidation of multiple juries to one

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Public Nominations

A simplified public nomination process that requires the nominator to confirm basic eligibility criteria and provide reasons why they think the artist should be recognized will replace the current requirements for extensive information about the nominee's career.

Arts Sector Review Short-List

The list of public nominations will be provided to a group of 30 to 50 volunteer members of the local arts community and sector experts selected to represent the diversity of the arts community. Each will be given the opportunity to add up to three additional nominees if they feel a specific artist or arts sector volunteer that deserves recognition had not been included in the public nomination list. This group will review the updated list, and each will select 10 nominees to be considered for awards. The top ranking 30 nominees identified by this process will comprise the short-list.

This will replace in part, the current jury process that requires the volunteer time of up to 60 artists on up to 11 separate juries. It will also allow for staff and program partner time previously set aside for jury coordination, to be used to work with short-listed artists to develop fulsome nomination information to allow for easier adjudication and promotion of artists. Moreover, it will enable arts sector experts to identify gaps in public nominations, ensuring that those making vital contributions to the arts community are recognized.

Award Categories

New broader award categories have been created to allow for flexibility in recognizing changing artistic practices and to include individual artists, collectives, bands and emerging artists. These include:

- Lifetime Achievement
- Creator Awards (up to 10 awards)
- Shirley Elford Emerging Artist Commission (in partnership with the Hamilton Community Foundation)
- Arts Champion Award (non-monetary to recognize volunteers and board members)

These award categories replace the current eight discipline specific categories that in several cases have had few or no eligible nominees in a specific discipline for a year resulting in no award. They also allow for the jury adjudication of emerging artists, whereas the current program depended on established artists to identified emerging artist award winners. In addition, the new categories will allow for the recognition of artist collectives and bands. This was not possible in the current program.

The Jury

The jury will consist of 12 to 15 arts community leaders that represent key disciplines and will be reflective of our diverse communities including: Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) and LGBT2S+. They will be involved throughout the process providing guidance to staff and the program partner and an evaluation at the end of the program. They will select the award winners from the short-list and play an important role in recognizing and celebrating the short-listed nominees and award winners. They will be offered an honorarium for their contribution.

They will replace the current 11 award specific volunteer juries and the volunteer steering committee.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

During public consultation, the Arts Awards program was recognized for its success in working towards being representative and inclusive of the diversity of the evolving arts community in Hamilton. The continuation of this work is seen as essential to the ongoing success of the awards program.

The program will remain committed to representing the diversity of the arts community in all aspects of the program including the selection of jurors, nomination reviewers, adjudication and outreach. This will require ongoing efforts to ensure that the program includes and represents citizens and practicing artists from a range of artistic disciplines and levels of experience that live in different areas of the city and from demographic groups such as Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, differently abled and LGBT2S+.

The program will continue its practice of surveying nominees to determine representation and to guide outreach to those groups that are under-represented.

Public Consultation and Evaluation

This revised program was shaped by the input of program participants and citizens as part of evaluation surveys and interviews conducted annually for the last 10 years. In addition, the draft process and current program were reviewed and refined this summer by seven focus groups and two individual interviews of artists, citizens and stakeholders that have had an involvement with or an interest in the program. This consultation process also included a focus group of BIPOC community leaders and a review by the Arts Advisory Commission.

The program revisions were guided by the following key points from the consultation process:

- Simplify the public nomination process and engage arts experts prior to adjudication

to assist in achieving greater inclusion;

- The in-person event is important for the community and should be maintained;
- Meaningful implementation of equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the program to ensure the program is representative of the arts community is essential; and
- More outreach, especially to youth and marginalized communities is necessary to ensure the awards are embraced by the community and not perceived as elitist.

The Arts Awards Program is committed to continuous improvement. The annual evaluation will continue the practice of seeking feedback from program participants and citizens to gauge the success of the program and identify refinements to ensure that the program remains vital and relevant.

Any questions related to the above-noted can be directed to Ken Coit, Program Manager Public Art and Projects, Tourism and Culture Division by e-mail at Ken.Coit@hamilton.ca or at Ext. 6281.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A