

Appendix B

Community Events Grant Program – Draft Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Community Events Grant Program provides financial support to events that contribute to Oakville’s cultural vibrancy, economic vitality, and sense of belonging. The program aligns with the outcomes of the Town’s Special Events Plan and promotes inclusive, accessible, and sustainable community celebrations.

This program consolidates and replaces the former Special Event Permit Fee Assistance Program, ensuring a transparent, consistent, and equitable approach to community event support.

Objectives

The program aims to:

- Encourage events that enhance Oakville’s identity and community pride.
- Support events that contribute to tourism, local business growth, and economic activity.
- Promote inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) in community celebrations.
- Facilitate cultural exchange and participation across all demographics.
- Encourage distribution of events across Oakville’s neighbourhoods and wards.
- Leverage volunteerism and community resources for maximum impact.

Eligibility

Who can apply:

- Non-profit organizations, registered charities, and recognized community groups.
- Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) operating on a non-profit basis.
- For-profit businesses are not typically eligible. Exceptions may be considered only where the event:
 - Demonstrates significant community benefit,
 - Operates on a cost-recovery basis, and
 - Ensures no personal or shareholder profit is realized.

Event requirements:

- Must take place in Oakville.
- Must be open and accessible to the general public.

Not eligible:

- Events serving only members of a single organization without broad community access.
- Fundraisers not directly tied to event delivery.
- Ongoing operations or capital costs.
- Events already receiving Town support through another program for the same event.

- Alcohol, prizes, gifts, or gratuities.
- Retroactive requests.

Grant Categories

Category	Typical Event Profile	Funding Level	Expected # Funded	Approx. Allocation (flexible)
Community Event	Small-scale, neighbourhood-focused events (<1,000 attendees), volunteer-driven, fostering local engagement and community pride.	Up to \$2,000	20–25	\$40K–\$50K
Emerging Event	New or growing events (1,000–5,000 attendees) with potential to become long-term community traditions; often culturally focused or innovative.	Up to \$4,000	10–15	\$40K–\$50K
Signature Event	Established events (5,000+ attendees) with a proven track record of success, strong community participation, and measurable economic/cultural impact.	Up to \$6,000	1–2	\$6K–\$12K
Major Event	Large-scale, multi-day events attracting regional visitors and generating significant tourism/economic benefits; anticipated to be supported through the MAT program in future.	To be determined	–	Outside envelope

Note: Legacy events (e.g., Terry Fox Run, Remembrance Day, BIA-led events) will continue under separate multi-year agreements approved by Council.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

To ensure funds are directed toward event delivery:

- At least **50% of the awarded funding must support programming and event delivery**, such as artists, performers, staging, equipment rentals, logistics, accessibility, and volunteer support.
- The remaining funds may be applied to **promotion, marketing, and administration** costs, provided they are directly tied to the event.
- Applicants will be required to submit a simple post-event financial summary confirming these allocations. Town staff may request receipts or invoices to verify expenses.

Ineligible expenses include:

- Fundraising activities not tied to event delivery.
- Ongoing organizational operating costs (e.g., staff salaries not specific to the event, rent, utilities).
- Capital or equipment purchases.
- Alcohol, prizes, or gifts.
- Retroactive requests or deficit coverage.

Transition Year (2026)

Eligible organizers may elect to receive a fee reduction (e.g., park permits) under the former Special Event Permit Fee Assistance Program in lieu of a grant; however, both forms of support are not permitted for the same event. Fee reductions will be applied against the same \$94,600 funding allocation.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed using the following weighted criteria (subject to adjustment depending on the event profile and funding level):

- **Community Benefit (approximately 25%)** – Alignment with the Town’s cultural, recreational, and tourism objectives; contributions to IDEA.
- **Participation & Attendance (approximately 20%)** – Anticipated audience size, diversity, and community reach.
- **Economic Impact (approximately 20%)** – Local business engagement, visitor spending, and tourism potential.
- **Organizational Capacity (approximately 15%)** – Demonstrated ability to deliver safe, well-managed events; experience and track record of the organizing team.
- **Financial Plan & Leverage (approximately 10%)** – Budget clarity; confirmed matching funds, sponsorships, or in-kind contributions.
- **Sustainability & Environmental Practices (approximately 10%)** – Measures to minimize impacts on neighbours and the park environment; may include waste reduction, active transportation promotion, and environmental stewardship initiatives.

Application Process

- **Transition Year (2026):** Applications may be accepted on a rolling basis. Beginning in 2027, the program will move to two fixed intake dates annually.
- Requirements will be scaled to event size and organizer capacity.
- All grant recipients will be required to enter into a funding agreement which describes the commitment to the event(s)
- All funded events must submit a final report within 60 days of event completion, including attendance data, financial reconciliation, volunteer contributions, and an evaluation of successes and challenges.