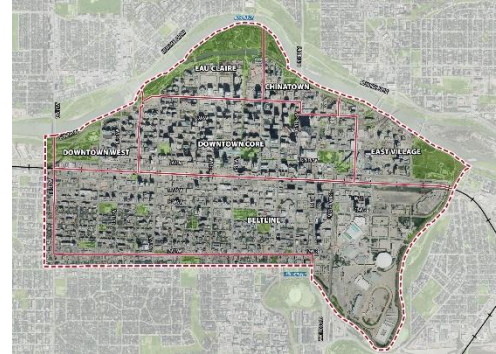


Downtown In Motion Grant Program Guidelines and Expression of Interest

A thriving arts and culture scene makes Calgary a more livable city by strengthening the local economy, enriching cultural diversity, supporting well-being and fostering social connection for all Calgarians.

“Your vision, our downtown—let’s light it up!”

Greater Downtown* is the economic and cultural heart of Calgary. The City of Calgary’s Downtown In Motion grant program [*Downtown In Motion*] empowers organizations to host publicly accessible arts, culture and sports initiatives that are financially sustainable and create lasting community impact in the greater downtown area. This initiative strengthens Calgary’s cultural landscape, increases access to inclusive programming, and enhances public safety by activating public spaces with engaging projects.



**The greater downtown is located on the south bank of the Bow River and bordered to the east by the Elbow River, to the south by 17 Avenue SW and to the west by 14 Street SW.*

What are we looking to support?

This funding supports publicly accessible arts, culture and sports programming, including temporary installations, creative placekeeping, workshops and events in Greater Downtown Calgary. Funded initiatives must:

- Take place between September 2026 and September 2027.
- Enhance public safety by activating public spaces and increasing foot traffic.
- Promote community engagement and contribute to economic revitalization.
- Build valuable collaborations between organizations, businesses and community groups.
- Develop a financially sustainable plan for the initiative during and beyond the funding period.

Some ideas for initiatives include multi-site interactive programming, reimagine underuse space, pop-up cultural pavilions, interactive installations, night market hub, performance stage series, weekly physical wellness sessions, sports league, shared maker space, monthly workshops, and many more.

Downtown In Motion supports initiatives that uphold the respect and dignity of all people regardless of race, culture, national or ethnic origin, religion, education, age, ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, or socio-economic status. This program does not fund annual general meetings or activities of a political, faith-based, or fundraising nature, including rallies, protests, illegal activities, galas or banquets.

Who can apply?

Registered non-profits, charities, Community Associations and Business Improvement Areas that:

- Are in good standing with The City of Calgary with no outstanding reports and/or payments.
- Take an active role in hosting the initiative.
- Obtain the required insurance, permits, permissions and approvals.
- Do not receive The City’s Arts and Culture Microgrant for the same project.

What is the funding model?

With a total funding pool of \$1 million, this grant supports medium- and large-scale initiatives.

- Maximum of \$50,000 per initiative.
- The City contributes up to 75 percent of eligible project costs, excluding in-kind contributions.
- Applicant must contribute at least 25 percent in cash or sponsorship.
- Each organization may receive only one *Downtown In Motion* grant per intake.

What can I use the grant for?

Downtown In Motion supports direct costs associated with implementing the approved local initiatives.

Eligible expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- Initiative-specific venue costs, such as venue rental fees and event insurance.
- Permitting fees and other expenses for City services (e.g., parks permit, road closures).
- Production and technical costs related to the programming.
- Initiative-specific equipment, materials, and supplies (including transportation of these items).
- Wages for contractors, technicians, and workers who are not already employed as staff.
- Honorariums and fees for artists and performers.
Note: We champion the use of industry standard minimum fees for artists, for example [CARFAC-RAAV Minimum Recommended Fee Schedule](#) and the [Dance · Opera · Theatre Policy \(caea.com\)](#).
- Marketing and communication costs associated with promoting the initiative.
- Tobacco products and accessories used for Elder offerings and Truth and Reconciliation activities.
- Training and support for volunteers.
- Other expenses and supplies that the Arts and Culture Division deems reasonable and necessary.

What cannot be covered by the grant?

Downtown In Motion does not cover capital expenses or operational costs associated with your organization's day-to-day functions. Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Expenses incurred prior to the application approval.
- Expenses that are not directly relevant to the initiative being applied for.
- Expenses that are already covered by other funding sources.
- Office and administration fees, including office supplies, bookkeeping, postage, etc.
- Overhead costs such as utilities, rent, mortgage, etc.
- Travel, accommodation and meal allowance costs.
- Capital investments (i.e. building permanent infrastructure, construction, renovations, repairs, or significant equipment for other projects such as computers, video recorders, power tools, etc.)
- Prize monies, trophies, or medals.
- Fundraising activities, donations, contingency funds, or repayment of deficits or debts.
- Alcohol or cannabis.
- Compensation for existing staff, grant writers, reporters or key volunteers.
- Payments to the applicant's organization, its directors, staff, their family members, or businesses they own.
- Expenses and supplies deemed unreasonable and unnecessary by the Arts and Culture Division.

How to apply?

Step 1: Expression of Interest

We would love to learn about your idea, its potential community impact, the budget range, and how it aligns with this grant program priorities. [Scheduling a virtual meeting](#) with our staff to discuss your idea is optional, but encouraged, before submitting [an online Expression of Interest form](#) by **Wednesday, March 25, 2026**.

Step 2: Full application [invited only]

City Staff will provide the full application form to selected applicants by April 17, 2026, for a more detailed programming plan, goals, logistics, budget, project sustainability strategy, partnerships, and support. The application needs to be submitted by Wednesday, May 13, 2026.

How are the applications reviewed?

A review group of City staff will assess expression of interest based on alignment with the grant program's core goals: activation, creativity, uniqueness, public accessibility, and contributions to the Greater Downtown Calgary.

Only selected applicants will be invited to Step 2, where a review committee, formed by internal city staff and key partners in the greater downtown, will evaluate the applications based on level of community benefit, engagement, impact, inclusion, equity, partnerships, feasibility, marketing plan, risk mitigation, proposed budget, financial sustainability and budget. The result will be announced by the end of June 2026. The decision of the Review Committee is final.

How to provide updates and report back?

Downtown In Motion recipients will be asked to provide project updates, the frequency depends on the project length. A **final report** is required within 60 days of completing the initiative or by October 8, 2027, whichever comes first. The reporting template will be provided upon grant approval. We may visit your initiative and provide feedback for future funding eligibility.

We ask that recipients acknowledge the City of Calgary as a funder in any related digital or print advertising, promotional materials and public communication. The City of Calgary will publish a list of recipients with the funding amount awarded.

Questions?

Email microgrants@calgary.ca or view our Frequently Asked Questions section on our [website](#).