



Celebrate
Markham
Grant
Guidelines





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Introduction

The City of Markham Celebrate Markham Grant Program (Celebrate Markham) provides annual funding to non-profit organizations delivering arts and culture events, festivals, sports activities, and seniors' programming. While matching funds are not required, applicants are strongly encouraged to contribute through cost sharing or to seek additional support from other sources such as fundraising, other levels of government, foundations, or corporate sponsors.

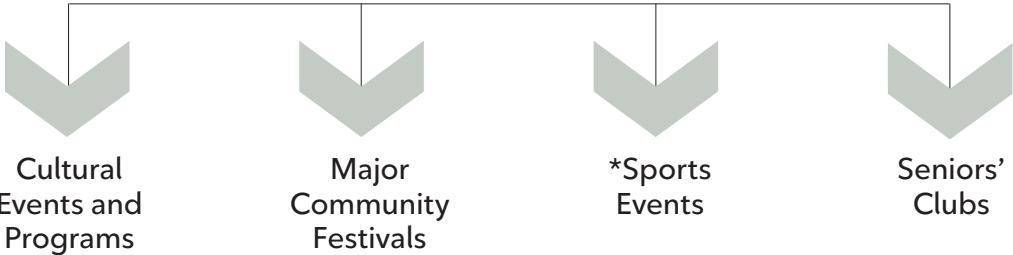
This is a competitive program, and not all eligible applicants will receive funding. Funding approvals and amounts are not guaranteed. Approval in one funding cycle does not ensure funding in future cycles, nor does it guarantee the same funding amount.





Funding Categories

Celebrate Markham funding is available to community organizations for four (4) funding categories:



1. Cultural Events and Programs

These are projects that enable City of Markham residents to participate in activities, events, or programs that promote engagement through the arts, heritage, and culture. Applicant groups must either have a mandate to provide cultural activities or customarily offer cultural programming as part of their services.

Examples include:

- Cultural celebrations.
- Community theatre productions.
- Musical performances (e.g., choir or band concerts).
- Exhibits and art exhibitions.
- Reading or spoken word events.
- Folk arts and craft guild activities.

2. Major Community Festivals

These are large-scale, community-based festivals and events that are open to the public and contribute to the cultural vitality of local communities. Events must have a primary focus on arts, heritage, or culture, and must be capable of attracting over 15,000 attendees across multiple days. Applicants must demonstrate additional sources of revenue beyond City funding and have appropriate organizational infrastructure in place.

Examples include:

- Art festivals.
- Heritage and cultural celebrations.
- Tourism-focused initiatives and fairs.



3. *Sports Events

Eligible projects include sport events that take place within the City of Markham and are hosted by local community sport groups. These events should help elevate Markham's identity as a sport destination and contribute to its recognition as an active city. Supported events align with the City of Markham's Sport Tourism Strategy (currently in development).

*See Definitions for more information.

4. Seniors' Clubs

These are social, cultural, recreational, and educational activities offered by seniors' clubs to City of Markham residents. The aim is to reduce isolation, promote social interaction, enhance physical and mental well-being, support active participation of seniors in community life, and celebrate their contributions.

Examples include

- Wellness and active living programs.
- Volunteer recognition events.
- Seniors' celebrations.
- Holiday concerts.
- Bingo and other social gatherings.

Organizations are eligible to receive only one grant per funding cycle. All applications must meet both the General Funding Criteria for All Categories and the specific criteria for the category under which they are applying. Projects must not duplicate programs, services, or events already provided by the City.

Organizations are responsible for selecting the category that best aligns with their project. Applications for the same project under multiple categories will not be accepted.

For additional information, email your questions to celebratemarkham@markham.ca.



Definitions

The following definitions are provided to help applicants better understand key terms and criteria referenced throughout the program guidelines.

Terms

Administrative costs

Newly incurred expenses that support the project but are not directly related to its delivery (e.g., additional office space, office supplies, new phone lines, or office equipment).

Community Partner

An organization or group that has contributed financial support, in-kind services, volunteer labour, or other assistance that has enhanced your project. This does not include corporate sponsors, foundations, or government funders.

Diversity

The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. Dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Evaluation Criteria

Standards used to assess, score, and determine funding decisions for application.

Inclusivity

The practice of ensuring individuals and communities—both physical and demographic—are fully engaged and represented in the economic, social, cultural, and political aspects of society.

Project

One or more activities, events, programs, or festivals proposed by an applicant to be delivered to Markham residents. Applicants must clearly indicate how Celebrate Markham funding will be applied to the project.

Project Completion Date

The date provided in the Celebrate Markham application by which the project will be fully completed. The *Project Outcome/Financial Report* must be submitted within 90 days of this date.

Project Outcomes

The intended results and benefits of a project funded through Celebrate Markham. Outcomes should contribute to community well-being and support Markham City Council's vision of a city that:

- Enhances arts and culture, active living, community engagement, and social cohesion, or
- Attracts visitors and enhances Markham's identity as a vibrant destination.

Project Outcome/ Financial Report

A mandatory summary report outlining the results of the project and how funds were used. The report must demonstrate community impact and appropriate use of City funding. The *Project Outcome/Financial*



Report must be submitted through the applicant's online account within 90 days of project completion.

Note: New applications from past recipients will not be considered until their *Project Outcome/Financial Report* is approved and the organization is in good standing with the City of Markham.

Project Work Plan

A detailed outline that identifies implementation steps, demonstrates a realistic project scale and timeline, describes monitoring and evaluation methods, and defines clear and achievable targets.

* Sports Events

Sporting events that are hosted in Markham by community sport organizations and that promote Markham's identity as an active and recognized sport destination. These events should align with the City of Markham's Sport Tourism Strategy (currently in development).

Applications may be submitted by not-for-profit organizations operating as community clubs or associations and registered with a Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) or National Sport Organization (NSO).

An application is eligible only if the grant will be used to support the hosting of a regional, provincial, national, international, or world-level sport event.

Eligible events must:

- Take place in Markham.
- Be sanctioned by a recognized organization (e.g., PSO, NSO, International Federation).
- Be identified within the PSO's or NSO's Canadian Sport for Life implementation plan.



Ineligible Requests in the Sports Events Category Include:

- Events that are unconfirmed or still in the bidding process.
- Sports festivals or participation-focused events.
- York Region elementary, middle, and high school championship events.
- Multi-sport events (e.g., Games).
- Sport development or training camps.
- Conferences, congresses, symposiums, AGMs, or similar gatherings.
- Capital expenditures, gifting, or prize money.



What is the Celebrate Markham Grant Program?

Celebrate Markham is a municipal grant program that provides funding for events, festivals, and activities hosted by not-for-profit groups and organizations – including start-up and early-stage organizations – taking place in the City of Markham. The program is intended to encourage residents to participate in their community, connect with one another, and attract visitors to Markham. Organizers are encouraged to work toward self-sufficiency for their projects.

Our Vision

Celebrate Markham is a transparent, inclusive, and sustainable grant program that reflects Council’s vision for the City of Markham as a place that enhances arts and culture, active living, community engagement, and social cohesion.

We support events and programs that



**Bring the
community together**

OR

**Attract visitors to Markham
as a vibrant destination**





Guiding Principles

The following key principles will guide the Staff Review Committee in evaluating applications:

- The event, festival, or activity provides cultural, recreational, community-building, and/or tourism benefits to Markham residents and businesses.
- It promotes inclusivity, cross-cultural collaboration, and aligns with the City of Markham's [Diversity Action Plan](#).
- It supports the goals and outcomes of the City of Markham's strategic documents, including Building Markham's Future Together, the Culture Plan, Integrated Leisure Master Plan, and Public Realm Strategy.
- It increases the participation of a diverse range of groups and organizations in City-supported events.

Grant Size

The total annual funding envelope is based on a per capita formula of \$1.25 per City of Markham resident, as adopted (or amended) by Council. Each funding category has a specific annual allocation and funding cap.

Up to 50% of the Cultural Events category allocation is reserved for new organizations—those that have not received Celebrate Markham funding in the past three years—and for events, activities, and programs that align with the objectives of the City of Markham's Culture Plan, as determined through the application assessment process.



Who can Apply?

The fund is open to not-for-profit organizations (incorporated or unincorporated) that are based in the City of Markham. These organizations must operate without financial gain to members or directors and must be able to demonstrate their not-for-profit status.

Note:

- Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible to apply;
- Supporting documentation (acceptable to the City) must be provided at the time of application to demonstrate the organization's not-for-profit status. This documentation must clearly show the organization's name and must match the name used on the Celebrate Markham application;
- Applications without proper documentation will be denied.

Eligibility requirements are outlined in the General Funding Criteria for All Funding Categories section and in the application form.

How to Apply

- Review the Grant Guidelines and Application Form to ensure your organization and proposed project meet eligibility requirements.
- Complete and submit your application through the Celebrate Markham online grant portal by the specified deadline.
- Application dates will be posted on the Celebrate Markham website:
markham.ca/celebratemarkham.
 - The application period begins in October for all categories, except for Sports, which opens in August.
 - It is the applicant's responsibility to check the website for updated application timelines.
 - Late applications will not be accepted.
- For additional information, email your questions to
celebratemarkham@markham.ca.

Approvals and Financial Reporting

Approval Process

All applications that meet the program requirements will be reviewed by an interdepartmental City of Markham Staff Review Committee. A staff report, including formal recommendations for each funding category, will be submitted to the appropriate City of Markham Committee for review and recommendation to Council. Council's decision is final. Grants may be awarded with specific terms and conditions.

Steps in the Approval Process:

- Applications must be received before the application deadline.
- The interdepartmental City of Markham Staff Review Committee evaluates all eligible applications using a weighted scoring system. Evaluations are based on the merit of the application and its alignment with the criteria of the funding category.
- A staff report, including formal recommendations and any proposed conditions for each application, is submitted to the appropriate Committee and then to Council for approval.
- Council approval is required before any funds are issued.
- A list of approved grant recipients is posted on the City of Markham's website.
- Funds are distributed 60 days prior to the event, provided that all grant conditions and requirements have been accepted and fulfilled.
- Within 90 days of the project's stated completion date, recipients must submit a *Project Outcome/Financial Report*, which is subject to review and approval by the City of Markham Staff Review Committee.

Approval Timeline

The approval process, from the application deadline to the final decision, takes approximately **six (6) months**. If a grant is approved, the organization will be notified that funding has been offered. Payment will be issued once all grant conditions have been accepted and fulfilled.



Financial Reporting

The financial reporting criteria support the principles of self-sufficiency, public accountability in the use of public funds, and demonstrated benefits to the community.

Grant recipients must complete and submit a *Project Outcome/Financial Report* within 90 days of the project’s stated completion date. This report is subject to review and approval by the City of Markham Staff Review Committee.

Depending on the grant amount awarded, the non-profit organization responsible for delivering the project or event must meet the following financial reporting requirements:

Revised Minimum Reporting Requirements

* These are minimum requirements. Organizations may submit financial statements that provide a higher level of assurance (e.g., audited financial statements, where available). The City of Markham also



reserves the right to request additional information on a case-by-case basis, including statements that provide a higher level of assurance, if deemed necessary.

** Refers to an individual who holds a Public Accounting License (PAL) issued by the Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA) of Ontario.

Grant Threshold	Minimum Reporting Requirements*
Less than \$10,000	Financial statements (at minimum, an income statement and balance sheet) for the most recent fiscal year and the previous year. These must be prepared by the organization and signed by the Board to attest to their accuracy, appropriateness, and fair representation.
\$10,000 - \$19,999	A complete set of applicable financial statements for the most recent fiscal year and the previous year, prepared through a Compilation Engagement by a Licensed Public Accountant external to the organization.
\$20,000 & over	A complete set of applicable financial statements for the most recent fiscal year and the previous year, prepared through a Review Engagement by a Licensed Public Accountant** external to the organization.



Evaluation Criteria

Successful applications to the Celebrate Markham program must demonstrate the following:

- The organization is based in the City of Markham.
- The event will take place within the City of Markham.
- The event is open to the public.
- The organization can provide documentation (acceptable to the City) to demonstrate not-for-profit status.
- The goals and objectives of the event, activity, or program align with the Vision and Guiding Principles of Celebrate Markham.
- The event, activity, or program will provide clear benefits to the community.
- The organization has a plan in place, with the necessary staff, volunteers, support, and partnerships to achieve measurable results.
- The organization demonstrates sound financial management.
- The project has additional sources of revenue beyond City of Markham funding.

All applicants must also ensure their project complies with all applicable City of Markham policies and bylaws, including Zero Waste event policies.

Applications will be evaluated in comparison to others within the same funding category. This is a competitive process—not all qualified applicants will receive funding. Funding approvals and amounts are not guaranteed. Approval in one funding cycle does not ensure funding in future cycles, nor does it guarantee the same level of funding.



Release of Funds

Funding cheques will be issued to successful recipients prior to the start date of their project, as indicated on the completed application form, provided all grant requirements and conditions have been met.

To receive funding, grant recipients must:

- Demonstrate that the organization is a not-for-profit by providing Articles of Incorporation, Letters Patent, or an equivalent document (for unincorporated not-for-profit organizations);
- Provide proof of insurance coverage that meets the City of Markham's requirements prior to the release of funds;
- Acknowledge Celebrate Markham funding on all promotional and marketing materials related to the project.

Please note:

Approved but unclaimed funding that remains outstanding more than three months after the end of the funding cycle (i.e., after June 30 of a given year) will be cancelled.



Celebrate Markham

Funding generously provided
by the City of Markham

Celebrate Markham Logo

The Celebrate Markham logo must be present on all promotional materials. The logo can go in one of three possible locations:

- Bottom left corner
- Bottom centre
- Bottom right corner

All materials must be submitted for approval to celebratemarkham@markham.ca

Reporting

A *Project Outcome/Financial Report* is required following the completion of the project. Organizations with an outstanding *Project Outcome/Financial Report* from a previous project will not be eligible to submit a new grant application.

If a project cannot be undertaken or completed as planned, an extension may be granted, and funds may be carried forward to the next fiscal year. Extension requests must be submitted in writing to celebratemarkham@markham.ca for approval.

Any unused funds must be returned to the City of Markham.

As part of the final report, organizations must also include a sample of photographs from the event, activity, or project.



General Criteria for All Fund Categories

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following general eligibility requirements to be considered for funding:

- Be a not-for-profit organization (incorporated or unincorporated), and provide support documentation (acceptable to the City) must be provided at the demonstrating the organization's not-for-profit status.
- Be based in the City of Markham.
- Ensure the event, activity, or program takes place within the City of Markham.
- Ensure the proposed project is not eligible for or currently funded through other City of Markham funding programs.
- Be governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, Steering Committee, or similar body.
- Ensure that the majority of the Board of Directors, Steering Committee, or similar body are Markham residents, unless significant community benefit can be demonstrated during the application review process.
- Submit a complete application by the Celebrate Markham program deadline.

- Apply through the official application process provided by the City.
- Organizations may receive only one grant per funding cycle (exceptions may apply at staff's discretion).
- The project must be completed by the date stated on the application form; otherwise, funding must be returned.
- Recipients must submit a *Project Outcome/Financial Report* for approval within 90 days of the stated project completion date.
- New grant applications will not be accepted from organizations with outstanding or unapproved Project Outcome/Financial Reports.
- The organization's membership and activities must be open to the public.

In addition to the general criteria above, applicants must also meet the specific eligibility criteria for the funding category under which they are applying:

- Cultural Events and Programs.
- Major Community Festivals.
- Sports Events.
- Seniors' Clubs.

The following entities are ineligible

The following entities are not eligible to apply for Celebrate Markham funding:

- For-profit organizations.
- Schools, universities, hospitals, daycares, group homes, or any group whose mandate or activities are governed by provincial or federal legislation.
- Political parties and lobby groups.
- Religious organizations where services or activities include promotion of, or require adherence to, a faith (if religious services are provided, there must be a

clear separation between religious and community service functions at both the event and budget levels).

- National and provincial organizations, unless they have an affiliated club or local chapter within the City of Markham.
- Landlord, tenant, or condominium corporations.
- Organizations in significant deficit or debt.
- Individuals.

Expenses

Grants awarded through Celebrate Markham for projects in the Cultural Events & Programs, Major Community Festivals, and Sports Events categories may not be used to cover an organization's day-to-day operating costs.

The information below outlines eligible and ineligible expenses for all funding categories.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible activities and expenses include project-specific costs related to the planning, organization, and implementation of events, activities, and programs, as well as limited administration costs. Examples include:

- Rental of space.
- Rental of equipment.
- General liability insurance.
- Event, activity, or program management.
- Event marketing.
- Performer or instructor fees.
- Delivery and materials costs.
- Interpretation and translation services for events and communications.
- Up to 20% of approved expenses for administration costs, including bookkeeping, office supplies, and associated auditing costs.

Ineligible Expenses

Grants may not be used for the following activities and expenses:

- Staff salaries and benefits.
- Capital costs or building renovations.
- Fundraising or donations to charitable causes.
- Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and business meetings.
- Consultant fees.
- Loans or interest payments.
- Debt repayment or deficit reduction.
- Activities resulting in direct or indirect private benefit to the recipient.
- Political or religious activities.
- Contests and competitions.
- Demonstrations, marches, and rallies.
- Trade shows and trade fairs.
- Block parties, picnics, garden shows, and barbecues.

Insurance Requirements

Prior to receiving funding, applicants must provide confirmation—satisfactory to the City of Markham, at its sole discretion—that the following insurance coverage will be in place for the duration of the project:

Commercial General Liability Insurance, underwritten by insurers licensed to operate in the Province of Ontario, with coverage satisfactory to the City. The policy must include coverage for bodily injury and property damage with a minimum limit of \$5,000,000 (Five Million dollars) per occurrence, and must include:

- An endorsement naming The Corporation of the City of Markham as an additional insured;

- A cross liability/severability of interest clause endorsement;
- Non-owned automobile coverage, including contractual non-owned automobile coverage.

If the applicant does not hold an annual Commercial General Liability Insurance policy and the Celebrate Markham funding is used exclusively for project activities/events conducted within a permitted City facility or City park, the applicant may obtain insurance through the City's Facility User Program with the coverage limits noted above. This insurance may fulfill grant requirements provided the applicant submits written confirmation that all Celebrate Markham-funded activities/events will take place solely within the rented premises.

If the applicant does not hold an annual Commercial General Liability Insurance policy and the funding is not used exclusively for project activities/events in a permitted City or School Board facility, or City park, the applicant must purchase (at their own cost) liability insurance specific to the project, with the same limits and endorsements described above. A certificate of insurance and facility rental permits must be submitted prior to release of funds.

Certificate of Insurance Requirements

The Certificate of Insurance must meet the following criteria:

1. Be issued to "The Corporation of the City of Markham".
2. Name the recipient organization as the insured party.



3. Specify the type of insurance as “Commercial General Liability”.
4. Include a cross liability clause endorsement and non-owned automobile coverage, including contractual non-owned coverage.
5. Cover the full period during which the funded activities/events will occur.
6. Include full participant coverage for sports and athletic activities/events (see acceptable statements below*).
7. Show a minimum coverage limit of \$5 million per occurrence.
8. State that “The Corporation of the City of Markham” is added as an additional insured—this should appear in the memo or special note section of the certificate.
9. Be signed by an authorized insurance representative.

Acceptable Statements for Full Participant Coverage

One of the following statements must be included on the certificate:

For Sport Activities:

- “Full participant coverage included.”
- “Participant coverage included.”
- “Participant liability included.”
- “Participant liability coverage included.”
- “Members in good standing are covered.”

For Non-Sport Activities:

- “Coverage includes all invited guests.”
- “Coverage extended to invited guests.”
- “Invited guests included in coverage.”

Note: Full participant coverage means both the facility user and participants are protected from claims made by third parties, and the facility user is also protected from claims made by participants.

Certificate of Insurance					
Issued to: 1 The Corporation of the City of Markham 101 Town Centre Blvd. Markham, Ontario L3R 9W3			Name of Insured: 2		
Type of Insurance	Insurer	Policy Number	Policy Dates	Coverage	Limits of Liability
3 Commercial General Liability Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross liability clause • Non-owned automobile coverage including contractual non-owned coverage 4	Insurer licensed in Ontario	XXX	5 Effective date and expiry date	6 Inclusive limits for Bodily Injury and Property Damage Full Participant Coverage Included	7 \$5,000,000 per occurrence \$5,000,000 general aggregate
Special Items/Comments					
Additional Insured: The Corporation of the City of Markham 8					
Date of Issue:			Authorized Representative: 9		

Note: please provide a jpeg of this certificate