



Festivals and Events Subsidy Guidelines

Program Description

The [Festivals and Events Subsidy Program \(Subsidy Program\)](#) provides approved festivals and events with funding for a percentage of approved City of Calgary services such as permit fees, license fees and pay duty fees. Since its inception, the Subsidy Program has provided well needed support to numerous events.

This program does not cover any City fees and service costs associated with alcohol or cannabis, such as fees for equipment and support related to the operation of beer gardens. These costs are the responsibility of the event organizer and will be tracked and invoiced accordingly.

Background Information

On Feb. 8, 2010, City Council adopted a [Festivals and Events Policy](#) for The City of Calgary. The policy recognizes that festivals and events enhance the quality of life in Calgary and are an essential element in creating complete communities. These experiences are recognized to have significant value by citizens and visitors and are a vital ingredient in Calgary's on-going development as an active and creative city. This program has been developed to ensure consistent alignment with the festival and event policy.



Eligibility

All events must:

- Be hosted by a not-for-profit, a charitable organization, or a Business Improvement Area
- Submit their Event Opportunity Form more than 90 days before their event
- Be an event that is reviewed and approved through the Interdepartmental Event Team process
- Occur within the calendar year

Additionally, returning* events must:

- Be an organization in good standing with The City of Calgary**
- Submit their Event Opportunity Form prior to Nov. 15, or 90 days before their event, whichever is earlier

Visit here for [more information on event planning resources](#).

* Returning events are defined as events that have gone through The City of Calgary's Event Services team within the last 2 calendar years.

** Organizations in good standing with The City of Calgary are defined as:

- Have no outstanding bills with The City of Calgary
- Paid their previous years invoice in full and in accordance with their agreement with The City of Calgary's Accounts Receivables
- Have submitted their Post Event Report from the year prior on time
- Submitted all event documents within the required deadlines set out by their Event Liaison
- Has no history of deliberate or excessive damage to City of Calgary property or resources, equipment, or assets
- Have not been in contradiction of the Service Standard Agreement

Failure to maintain good standing with The City of Calgary as outlined above will result in a reduction or removal of Festival and Event Subsidy support on a case-by-case basis.

Ineligible Events

Any event that does not uphold the City of Calgary commitment to foster equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging through the expression of objection or disapproval towards an idea or action related to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation by any means, including graphic, verbal, or written means.



Subsidy Calculation

Festivals and events that qualify for funding will receive notification of their approval along with information on the percentages of coverage for the following year. Based on the City's total available subsidy budget and the combined total of eligible expenses between all approved festivals and events, this percentage will fluctuate year over year.

The Festival and Events Team will estimate your subsidy requirement using information from the Event Opportunity Form in conjunction with your previous years' service requirements. The Festivals and Events Team will then calculate the total dollar value of the service and support required, based on The City's Festivals and Events Fee Schedule. This estimate is meant to be used as a budgeting tool exclusively. Percentages will be applied to the final bill after all charges are finalized.

Event Category	2024 Subsidy % for City Provided Services	2024 Subsidy % for City Contracted Services
Fully Covered Events	100%	100%
New Events	50%	50%
Returning Events*** – No Substantial Change	90%	50%

*** Any substantial or fundamental change to a returning event must be preapproved or it will be funded as a new event.

Please note: any fines or charges related to damage and/or event cancellation that may be levied against the event or its organizers are excluded from the Subsidy Program. The City also reserves the right to exclude any other extraordinary fee or service from the Subsidy Program, such as any billable fees that are not part of The City's Festivals and Events Fee Schedule, or significant changes to the services requested. Additional services requested after the Service Standard Agreement has been signed by all parties are not eligible for the Subsidy Program and will be charged back to the event or its organizers.

Major one-off events that are part of a bid directly endorsed by City Council, including major event bids under evaluation by the Calgary Sport Tourism Authority, will be categorized as a New Event and are eligible for 50% subsidy coverage, up to a maximum of \$100,000.



Notification of Results

Event organizers will be notified in writing of the results of their eligibility after their Event Opportunity Form has been submitted and reviewed.

Operational and Technical Review

The City of Calgary will assume the responsibility for providing safe and, as it determines, appropriate services, equipment, facilities and sites. All festivals and events that operate on City property and/or use City services receive an operational and technical review by the IET, resulting in final approval of permits, and a Service Standard Agreement between the event producer and The City. The Service Standard Agreement will articulate the level of City services required to support these activities based on the operational and technical review. The technical review is based on the Festival and Event Application, and is separate from this Subsidy Program. Festivals and events that, in the opinion of the IET, contain an undue level of risk to health, safety and/or property may not be awarded subsidy, or may have certain specific conditions placed upon their subsidy award, or may not be allowed to occur.

Conditions of Receiving a Subsidy

The City reserves the right to withhold a subsidy at any point if it determines at its sole discretion that the actual event operations are inconsistent with information provided by the event through the Festival and Event application process.

In exchange for in-kind support of City Services valued at more \$10,000, the event organizer is required to include The City of Calgary logo on all publicity and advertising acknowledging sponsorships.

Events that receive a subsidy will be responsible for filling out a Post Event Report which will be due within 90 days of the events conclusion. Failure to complete/submit this report may result in the suspension of future subsidy.



Deductions to Subsidy

Subsidy levels may be impacted by:

- Late documents
 - Documentation may include, but is not limited to: Site map, Event Application Package, Emergency Response Plan, Building Permits, Parks Power Plan, Event Technical Services Request Form, Pay Duty Request, Post Event Report
- Site impacts
 - Site impacts include, but are not limited to: site not cleaned up post event, damage to site caused by negligence or carelessness, deliberate disrespect of City property, etc
 - No consequences will be incurred if there was accidental damage to site and any associated costs were paid in full and on time.
- Safety concerns and non-compliance
 - Examples of safety concerns and non-compliance include, but are not limited to: major insurance delays, deliberate ignoring of direction from City Business Units, discrimination, harassment and/or disrespect of City staff from event organizer or event staff, in contradiction with the Service Standard Agreement, incorrectly completed ERP, etc
- Repeat occurrences of any of the above

Triggered by a Post Event Review, an Evaluation Tool will be used to assign appropriate consequences to Subsidy funding levels. These consequences will be applied to the next iteration of the same event.

Contact

For more information about this program, or if you have questions about the application process, please email eventservices@calgary.ca.

The City of Calgary website provides information for organizers who are planning new or returning events. For more information, please visit calgary.ca/festivalsandevents.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I have to re-apply if there are significant changes to my event?

A: No. In this context, a “significant change” means a major shift in direction of the event’s stated mandate, and/or an order of magnitude change (smaller or larger) to the event’s operational size. City Event Services staff have sole discretion in determining whether an event has undergone a significant change. If you think your event may fall into this category because of changes you have made to its mandate and/or operational scope, please contact The City’s Event Services in advance of the Event Opportunity Form deadline to discuss it.

Q: How does The City establish the value of the fees and services it provides?

A: Each business unit within The City has established rates for services it provides. These rates then become part of a formal Festivals and Events Fee Schedule, which is approved annually by the Corporate Event Steering Committee. Likewise, when an event is paying for service (in other words not subsidized), the same rates are used to calculate the bill.

Q: How do I appeal a decision made by The City of Calgary?

A: If you wish to appeal a decision made by The City of Calgary, rationale behind your appeal must be submitted in writing within 60 days of the decision to eventservices@calgary.ca. Each appeal will then be reviewed by two members of the Corporate Event Steering Committee. The decision will then be communicated to you by the Manager of Arts & Culture.