

Subject: Cultural Funding Policy and Program Structure Review

File Number: ACS2025-RCF-GEN-0001

Report to Community Services Committee on 25 February 2025

and Council 26 March 2025

**Submitted on January 30, 2025 by Caroline Barrière, Manager, Business and
Technical Support Services**

**Contact Person: Caroline Matt, Portfolio Manager, Cultural Funding, Recreation,
Cultural and Facility Services**

613-799-2761, caroline.matt@ottawa.ca

Ward: Citywide

**Objet : Politique de financement culturel et l'examen de la structure des
programmes**

Numéro de dossier : ACS2025-RCF-GEN-0001

Rapport présenté au Comité des services communautaires

Rapport soumis le 25 février 2025

et au Conseil le 26 mars 2025

**Soumis le 2025-01-30 par Caroline Barrière, Gestionnaire, Services de soutien
technique et aux activités**

**Personne ressource : Caroline Matt, Gestionnaire de portefeuille, financement
culturel , Direction générale des loisirs, de la culture et des installations**

613-799-2761, caroline.matt@ottawa.ca

Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Community Services Committee recommend that City Council:

- 1. Approve the new Cultural Funding Policy as outlined in Document 1.**

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des services communautaires recommande au Conseil municipal :

1. d'approuver la nouvelle politique de financement culturel décrite dans le document 1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assumption and Analysis

Cultural funding programs are administered in accordance with Council-approved frameworks, dating back to the Arts and Heritage Funding Framework approved by City Council in 2002 ([ACS2001-PEO-IDP-0018](#)). All 100% municipally funded programs are subject to the Grants and Contributions Policy and Procedures and are approved by Council. To provide stable foundational support to local cultural organizations and individuals, programs and processes must be continuously adapted to align with emerging needs and priorities. By approving the new Cultural Funding Policy, Council ensures that efficient, credible, and transparent funding processes continue to govern the allocations to community organizations and individuals for the provision of cultural activities to residents and visitors. This includes the community-supported best practice of peer assessment to determine funding allocations.

The proposed policy aligns with City and departmental priorities by providing funding allocations in support of activities that make Ottawa more livable for all and contributing to a city with a diversified and prosperous economy. Furthermore, cultural funding programs directly support the City's commitment to reconciliation, equity and inclusion, and responds to The City of Ottawa - Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Civic Cultural Protocol and Implementation Plan (2022-2026) and the City of Ottawa Anti-Racism Strategy to ensure that everyone benefits from cultural funding programs.

The new policy also responds to the recommendations of the [2021 Audit of Grants and Contributions](#), which found general adherence with the City’s Grants and Contributions Policy and Procedures, but acknowledged that current cultural funding processes and requirements may be overly onerous for applicants and may not be congruent with levels of risks they pose to the City.

The City of Ottawa currently invests over \$12 million annually in arts, heritage, and culture through 17 cultural funding and awards programs. The new cultural funding program structure, embedded in the policy, is presented in the chart below. This new structure reduces the number of programs to 10 by streamlining smaller programs, some of which are currently closed to new applicants, into larger funding programs. The four core funding programs offer a wide range of funding opportunities from project grants and on-ramps for new applicants to multi-year operating funding for established organizations. Two of these programs (Equity and Inclusion in the Arts Program and the new Indigenous Culture Program) provide access and targeted investment to new, emerging and/or under-funded cultural activities presented by Indigenous and equity-denied applicants. The new structure maintains the project-based funding programs and the three additional support mechanisms currently in place.

Figure 1 – Cultural funding programs and additional support mechanisms

Grants and contributions programs	Core funding programs	Arts Funding Program
		Heritage Funding Program
		Indigenous Culture Program
		Equity and Inclusion in the Arts program
	Project-based funding programs	Cultural Facilities Fund - Minor
		Cultural Facilities Fund - Major
		Capacity Building Program
		Youth in Culture Program
	Awards programs	Ottawa Book Awards/Prix du livre d'Ottawa
		Karsh Award
Additional support mechanisms	Emergency loans	
	Purchase of service agreements	
	Internal transfers	

Public Consultation/Input

The new policy and program structure was developed through partnership with the community and with continuous engagement throughout the review. The foundation for the engagement strategy was based on the recommendations of the Cultural Funding Support Unit's Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC) requesting staff to review programs by using an equity and inclusion lens to remove barriers, decolonize programs and processes, develop programs that are reflective of Ottawa's Indigenous and equity-denied communities, and create opportunity to celebrate cultural expressions in all forms. All changes to the existing framework respond to what staff learned through a multi-pronged community engagement strategy including a survey, community consultations, and reporting back to the community.

Overall feedback on the revised program structure has been positive, with appreciation for the simplified new direction, programs and processes reflecting community input, and increased funding limits for some project funding programs.

RÉSUMÉ

Hypothèse et analyse

Les programmes de financement culturel sont gérés conformément aux cadres approuvés par le Conseil municipal en 2002 avec l'adoption du Cadre stratégique sur le financement des arts et du patrimoine ([ACS2001-PEO-IDP-0018](#)). Tous les programmes entièrement financés par la Ville sont régis par la politique et les procédures sur les subventions et les contributions et sont approuvés par le Conseil. Afin de fournir un soutien fondamental stable aux organismes culturels locaux ainsi qu'aux individus, les programmes et les processus doivent être continuellement adaptés de sorte à évoluer avec les besoins et les priorités émergentes. En approuvant la nouvelle politique sur le financement culturel, le Conseil veille à ce que des processus de financement efficaces, crédibles et transparents continuent à régir les fonds attribués aux organismes communautaires et aux individus pour l'offre d'activités culturelles aux résidents et aux visiteurs. Parmi ces processus figure l'évaluation par les pairs visant à déterminer l'allocation des fonds – une pratique exemplaire soutenue à l'échelle communautaire.

La politique proposée s'harmonise avec les priorités de la Ville et des directions générales en octroyant des fonds aux activités qui font d'Ottawa une ville où il fait bon vivre pour tout le monde et dont l'économie est prospère et diversifiée. Par ailleurs, les programmes de financement culturel renforcent l'engagement de la Ville à l'égard de l'équité, de l'inclusion et de la réconciliation avec les Autochtones, et tiennent compte du [Protocole culturel civique relatif à la nation Anishinabe Algonquine et au plan de mise en œuvre de la Ville d'Ottawa \(2022-2026\)](#) et de la [Stratégie antiraciste de la Ville d'Ottawa](#) afin d'assurer que les programmes de financement culturel bénéficient la communauté entière.

La nouvelle politique tient compte des recommandations formulées après la [vérification des subventions et contributions en 2021](#). Cette vérification a révélé que, globalement, la politique et les procédures sur les subventions et les contributions sont respectées, mais que les exigences et les processus actuels du financement culturel sont peut-être trop complexes pour les candidates et candidats et ne correspondent pas aux risques qu'ils présentent pour la Ville.

Actuellement, la Ville investit chaque année plus de 12 millions de dollars dans les arts, le patrimoine et la culture par l'entremise de 17 programmes de financement et de prix culturels. La nouvelle structure des programmes de financement culturel, décrite à même la politique, figure dans le tableau ci-dessous. Elle ramène le nombre de programmes à 10 en simplifiant certains programmes de plus petite envergure, dont certains sont fermés aux nouvelles candidatures, pour les intégrer à des programmes de financement de plus grande envergure. Les quatre programmes de financement principaux offrent un éventail de possibilités allant du financement de projet aux voies d'entrée pour des nouvelles candidatures au financement de fonctionnement pluriannuel pour les organisations établies. Deux de ces programmes, soit le Programme d'équité et d'inclusion dans les arts et le nouveau Programme de culture autochtone, permettent d'avoir accès à du financement et du soutien pour des activités culturelles nouvelles, émergentes ou sous-financées présentées par les communautés autochtones et les groupes en quête d'équité et de consacrer des investissements ciblés à ces activités. La nouvelle structure maintient les programmes de financement de projets ainsi que les trois autres mécanismes de financement déjà en place.

Figure 1 – Programmes de financement culturel et autres mécanismes de financement

Programmes de subventions et de contributions	Programmes principaux	Programme de financement des arts
		Programme de financement du patrimoine
		Programme de financement des cultures autochtones
		Programme d'équité et d'inclusion dans les arts
	Programmes axés sur des projets	Programme de financement des infrastructures culturelles – Projets mineurs
		Programme de financement des infrastructures culturelles – Projets majeurs
		Programme de financement pour le renforcement des capacités
		Programme Les jeunes et de la culture
	Programmes de prix	Prix du livre d'Ottawa/Ottawa Book Awards
		Prix Karsh
Autres mécanismes de financement	Prêts d'urgence	
	Ententes d'achat de services	
	Fonds de dotation	

Consultation publique/commentaires

Les nouvelles politique et structure de programmes ont été élaborées de pair avec la communauté et à l'aide d'un engagement soutenu tout au long de la période d'examen. La stratégie d'engagement se fonde sur des recommandations du Comité d'équité et d'inclusion (CÉI) de l'Unité du soutien au financement culturel. D'après ces recommandations, le personnel devrait examiner les programmes en respectant l'optique d'équité et d'inclusion afin de faire tomber les obstacles, de décoloniser les programmes et les processus, d'élaborer des programmes qui reflètent les communautés autochtones et en quête d'équité d'Ottawa, et de créer des occasions de célébrer l'expression culturelle sous toutes ses formes. Tout changement apporté au cadre actuel tient compte des leçons tirées par le personnel grâce à l'application d'une stratégie d'engagement communautaire à multiples volets (sondage, consultations communautaires, rapports destinés à la communauté, etc.).

Les commentaires partagés sur la nouvelle structure des programmes sont généralement positifs, avec une appréciation pour la nouvelle orientation simplifiée, les programmes et les processus reflétant la rétroaction de la communauté, ainsi que la hausse des limites de financement de certains programmes de financement de projets.

BACKGROUND

Cultural funding programs are currently operated in accordance with the Arts and Heritage Funding Framework approved by City Council in 2002. This current framework has been the foundation for cultural funding programs for more than 20 years, and included the development of the Arts Funding Program, Heritage Funding Program, Cultural Facilities Fund, and Short-Term Loan Program. At the time of approval, staff were directed to develop additional programs, and in the years since, more cultural funding programs have been approved in response to community need and Council priorities and directives.

In 2024, the City assessed 626 funding submissions and provided over \$12.2 million in funding through 411 allocations under cultural funding programs. For 2025, City Council approved a cultural funding envelope of \$12.4 million. Currently, Council-approved cultural funding programs consist of the following:

Grants and contributions programs:

- Arts Funding Program
- Creation and Production Fund for Professional Artists
- Arts Service Agreement Program
- Major Arts and Cultural Festivals Program
- Festival Service Agreement Program
- Rural Arts Fund
- Heritage Funding Program
- Heritage Service Agreement Program
- Museum Service Agreement Program
- Major Agricultural Fairs Program
- Equity and Inclusion in the Arts Fund
- Cultural Facilities Fund - Minor
- Cultural Facilities Fund - Major
- Capacity Building Program
- Youth in Culture Pilot Program

- Ottawa Book Awards/Prix du livre d'Ottawa
- Karsh Award

Additional support mechanisms:

- Emergency loans
- Purchase of service agreements
- Endowment fund

All 100% municipally funded cultural funding programs are subject to the City of Ottawa Grants and Contributions Policy and Procedures that outline the city-wide approach to administering such programs. Accordingly, City Council must approve and re-affirm all grants and contributions programs, as well as review and approve any substantive changes to existing programs. Staff have considered corporate and departmental priorities and strategies, as well as community feedback in the development of a new Cultural Funding Policy and its programs.

The Cultural Funding Support Unit's Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC) [made recommendations](#) in 2019 that staff review programs by using an equity and inclusion lens. The cultural community also expressed the need for a process that considers ease of application and reporting, accessibility of documents and process, use of plain language and better reflection of diverse cultural practices.

The Grants and Contributions Audit of 2021 recommended that departments should review funding frameworks to ensure alignment with City priorities and access for new organizations. It also recommended that the department should consider a risk-based approach to reduce undue application, reporting, and administrative requirements for both applicants and staff.

Revisions to the cultural funding program structure also align with the objectives of recent Council approved strategies such as the [City of Ottawa Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#), [The City of Ottawa - Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Civic Cultural Protocol and Implementation Plan \(2022-2026\)](#) through cultural funding and support (Partnership area #7), and strive to honor the commitments made in the [City of Ottawa Anti-Racism Strategy](#) by removing structural barriers causing inequitable access to funds.

DISCUSSION

City of Ottawa cultural funding programs contribute essential financial support to the local cultural sector; an investment that pays dividends not only in economic outcomes, but most importantly in fostering healthy and connected communities.

The review of cultural funding programs and implementation of a governing policy is timely and necessary based on audit recommendations for grants and contributions program delivery, the changing nature of culture in Ottawa as a result of population growth and changing demographics, the impact of COVID-19 on the cultural landscape, emerging cultural trends and advancements in technology, and a greater understanding of the systemic effects of colonialism and racism.

In addition, cultural funders at the federal and provincial levels (i.e. the Ontario Arts Council and The Canada Council for the Arts) have updated their funding objectives, models and processes over the last few years. City of Ottawa cultural funding programs were designed to complement and leverage funding opportunities at these levels and were reviewed to ensure that they continue to provide stable foundational support to local cultural organizations and individuals.

Departmental objectives of the review are as follows:

1. Reconsider program objectives based on community input and the City's strategic priorities.
2. Increase access to cultural funding programs, specifically for Indigenous and equity-denied communities.
3. Streamline the application process for usability, efficiency and to take a risk-based approach to its administration and reporting requirements.
4. Create a Cultural Funding Policy to define the values and processes that are unique to cultural funding programs like the peer assessment process.

Community engagement has been the cornerstone of this work, ensuring the current cultural landscape and practices are reflected. EIC recommendations laid a foundation for balancing the need for sustainable cultural community support while providing opportunities for new voices to emerge.

The community engagement strategy ranged from surveys to community conversations led by staff, to engagement sessions led by Cultural Community Liaisons with a focus

on Indigenous and equity-denied communities that are currently under-represented, or do not benefit at all, from cultural funding programs. In total, over 900 people took the time to speak with staff and liaisons, fill in the survey or share their experiences through other channels.

Overall, the findings highlighted the vital role culture plays to promote a sense of community and belonging, build bridges and increase tolerance, contribute to well-being and positive mental health, and a means to reclaim identity lost through colonization.

The community has indicated that with minor adjustments, current programs are serving their needs. As a result, the new cultural funding program structure has kept what currently serves the community well, while improving and streamlining programs and processes to address the main barriers and concerns identified in the feedback received. They include:

- A framework structure that is too difficult to navigate.
- Lack of community awareness of funding opportunities.
- Timelines that are too long when awarding grants.
- A siloed approach to what programs support.
- Elements of bias in program structure, including language and processes that disadvantage Indigenous and equity-denied applicants.
- A need for gathering more effective statistics and developing qualitative and quantitative outcome indicators so that impact and value of culture can be better highlighted.
- A need for some process-related improvements (including less onerous application and reporting requirements, higher project funding limits in some programs, additional deadlines that align with community needs, and a plain language review).

Community feedback showed strong support for the peer assessment process, which is considered best practice when qualified assessors are selected to review the applications, and when there are strong processes in place to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest or biases when making funding recommendations to the department.

The new program structure incorporates what staff learned from the extensive consultations. It provides equitable access to funds, is easier to navigate for applicants,

streamlines programs that will allow for faster turnaround times on funding decisions without compromising the range of activities supported, and will include a less siloed approach to funding. The peer-assessment process will be maintained.

The following chart presents the new program structure. It streamlines smaller programs (most of which are currently not open to first-time applicants) into larger Core funding programs. There is retention of the Equity and Inclusion in the Arts Program and the development of the new Indigenous Culture Program to provide access and targeted investment to new, emerging and/or under-funded cultural activities presented by Indigenous and equity-denied communities. Project-based funding programs, awards, and additional support mechanisms are well received and remain untouched.

Figure 3 – Revised cultural funding program structure

Grants and contributions programs	Core funding programs	Arts Funding Program
		Heritage Funding Program
		Indigenous Culture Program
		Equity and Inclusion in the Arts program
	Project-based funding programs	Cultural Facilities Fund - Minor
		Cultural Facilities Fund - Major
		Capacity Building Program
		Youth in Culture Program
	Awards programs	Ottawa Book Awards/Prix du livre d'Ottawa
		Karsh Award
Additional support mechanisms	Emergency loans	
	Purchase of service agreements	
	Internal transfers	

This structure responds to the objectives of the review by incorporating community input and audit requirements as follows:

Provide equitable access to cultural funding programs, specifically for Indigenous and equity-denied communities

All core funding programs offer a full range of support ranging from project funding for a first-time applicants to multi-year operating funding for established cultural organizations with a proven track record. The simplified framework will enable more effective messaging as to what funding supports are available to the community.

Furthermore, proven strategies recommended by the EIC will be applied more broadly as all program guidelines and application forms are updated during the program implementation stage. These strategies include plain language review, enhanced application support, a risk-based approach to developing application and reporting requirements, and continued community engagement to increase both awareness of programs and continued relevancy. The development of the new Indigenous Culture Program and retention of the Equity and Inclusion in the Arts Program provide access and targeted investment to new, emerging and/or under-funded cultural activities presented by Indigenous and equity-denied communities. These two programs respond not only to expressed community needs, but also reflect the City's commitment to equity and inclusion, reconciliation and the objectives of [The City of Ottawa - Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Civic Cultural Protocol and Implementation Plan \(2022-2026\)](#).

Program objectives that reflect current cultural practices while allowing for new ones to emerge

While overall community feedback indicated a positive view towards program objectives in current cultural funding programs, a need for a less rigid approach was voiced. The new structure allows for multi-disciplinary practices to be supported (a gap identified by the community) and for non-European practices to be placed on equal footing by letting applicants categorize their own practice, rather than directing them to align it with a pre-determined silo. This will also allow staff more flexibility to select peer assessors reflective of the applicants they are assessing to ensure a fair and equitable peer assessment process.

Activities supported within the new programs align with what staff learned from the community. Even though some smaller stand-alone programs are streamlined (most notably support for festivals, fairs, community museums and arts and heritage service organizations) into larger and more flexible programs, the objectives of these programs are maintained, as is an assessment process that will ensure that these organizations continue to be evaluated by a jury of their peers.

Streamlined and risk-based application process for usability and efficiency

The 2021 Grants and Contributions Audit recommended a risk-based, tiered approach to funding processes by eliminating undue or onerous reporting and application requirements for low-risk applicants. The Cultural Funding Policy defines the risk-based approach and provides metrics to consider in the identification, prioritization, and management of risks for a more proportional and effective allocation of resources and

efforts by applicants and staff. During the implementation phase of the new program structure, the application and reporting requirements for all programs will be aligned with funding categories and amounts requested/awarded.

The new policy reduces the number of cultural funding programs from 17 to 10 by streamlining programs to ensure access and prevent duplication of support mechanisms for similar types of applicants. This will alleviate the administrative load by concentrating processes within fewer programs, thereby improving staff workflows, and increasing efficiency in the management of funds and programs. It will also allow staff to respond to community input by improving response times, increasing efforts in communication and applicant support, and the establishment of additional funding deadlines for select programs.

A City of Ottawa Cultural Funding Policy that governs programs and processes specific to cultural funding

While subject to the provisions of the overarching corporate Grants and Contributions Policy and Procedures, the new Cultural Funding Policy further addresses processes specific to cultural funding administration and programs:

- Cultural funding mandate and principles
- Program objectives and priorities
- Cultural funding programs and additional support mechanisms
- Funding application process
- Funding categories
- Applicant and program eligibility
- Assessment process (including peer assessment process, assessment criteria, right to reconsideration, conflict of interest and confidentiality, right to reconsideration)
- Funding agreements
- Reporting
- Administration of finances
- Risk mitigation
- Responsibilities

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications as a result of the policy and program structure changes. Sufficient funds are available in the RCFS budget to support the program.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to adopting the recommendations in this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This is a City-wide report.

CONSULTATION

The public engagement phase of the project ran from June 2023 to March 2024.

The [Cultural Funding Framework Review Engage Ottawa](#) page and public survey were launched on June 6, 2023. The survey was live until November 30, 2023, and was completed by 317 participants.

Staff led 28 program-related focus group sessions attended by 151 individuals (either on their behalf or on behalf of organizations they represent) who are currently applying to the funding programs. These sessions were held both virtually and in-person between August 2023 to February 2024. Staff also held weekly virtual and in-person drop-in sessions from August to December 2023. These sessions were open to all community members and held over MS Teams and at Arts Court.

As recommended by the Equity and Inclusion Committee (EIC), Cultural Community Liaisons (CCLs) were hired to conduct engagement sessions with communities who have faced barriers accessing the City's cultural funding programs. In total, six CCLs led 21 sessions with 213 Indigenous and equity-denied community members and reported their findings to staff.

Since September 2021, staff have asked jurors to complete a survey after serving on a peer assessment committee. The survey focused on the peer-assessment process and the clarity and relevancy of program objectives and assessment criteria. Between September 2021 and April 2024, 217 peer assessors provided their feedback.

In total, more than 900 people provided input over the various platforms, including representatives from 138 cultural organizations.

Prior to the engagement series launch, an email was sent to members of the cultural community. Engagement opportunities were advertised through cultural funding mailing lists, Discover Rec e-newsletter, Cultural Development Initiatives e-newsletter, Public Art newsletter, social media posts, an ottawa.ca feature story, Culture landing page update, Engage Ottawa updates, and were shared by community partners.

Follow-up meetings were held in June 2024 to present engagement findings and the proposed new program structure to the EIC and community at large. Two additional meetings took place with a focus addressing concerns of applicants who currently receive funding through programs that will be streamlined (Arts, Festivals, Heritage and Museum Service Agreement Programs; and Major Arts and Cultural Festival Programs). Overall feedback from these sessions was positive, with appreciation for the simplified new direction, incorporation of input received and increased funding limits for some project funding programs.

The findings and the proposed programs were presented to the City of Ottawa – Anishinabe Algonquin Cultural Consultative Circle. The presentation was well-received, and members of the Consultative Circle support the development and implementation of the Indigenous Culture Program. Consultations with Indigenous Anishinabe Algonquin Nation, urban First Nations, Inuit and Métis people will play a key role in the implementation of the new policy and its programs. The department maintains a commitment to follow the five steps of the community engage continuum: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower.

Results of community consultations are reported in a [What We Learned Report](#) posted on Engage Ottawa.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

As per requirements outlined in the City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy, and in compliance with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#), staff ensure that cultural funding programs are delivered to people with disabilities in a manner that provides an opportunity equitable to others to access, and takes into consideration a person's disability when providing application support. As per requirements outlined in the City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy, and in compliance with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#), staff ensure that cultural funding programs are delivered to people with disabilities in a manner that provides an opportunity equitable to others to access, and takes into consideration a person's disability when providing application support. Community consultations led by Cultural Community Liaisons included conversations with members of the cultural community with disabilities or who are members of the d/Deaf community to ensure that all cultural expressions are reflected and supported through cultural funding programs, and to address any barriers disability applicants may face when accessing cultural funding programs.

While no consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee was required in relation to this report, staff did engage with the City's Accessibility Office to ensure an accessibility lens was applied in the development of this policy and framework, as well as to seek guidance regarding offering accessibility-related supports to applicants with disabilities. The corporation continues to ensure that any City communications related to the Cultural Funding Framework, Policy and cultural funding programs are provided in an accessible format and with communication supports. Concrete steps towards removing these barriers will include:

- a plain language review of the application forms and guidelines,
- a process to provide accessibility-related support to applicants with disabilities,
- continued provision of forms and communication materials in accessible formats and with communication supports, available upon request, and
- ensuring representation of people with disabilities on the EIC and on peer assessment juries.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

The delegated authority of the General Manager of Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services is outlined in the Delegation of Authority By-law No. 2023-2, Schedule “E”.

Section 3 outlines the powers related to service and funding agreements and states the General Manager’s delegated authority to approve, amend, extend, and execute these agreements.

All uses of delegated authority are reported annually to Council through the RCFS Information Previously Distributed Report (IPD).

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The Cultural Funding Policy and programs support the City’s Economic Development Strategy’s second area of focus, tourism and creative industries, which states that creative industries sectors in Ottawa are important economic drivers and contribute significantly to quality of life – an important economic indicator and key consideration for business and talent attraction and retention. Supporting the growth of creative industries such as music, film, television, cultural festivals, animation, digital media, fine arts, etc., is an important priority that not only supports employment but also grows Ottawa’s reputation and profile around the world.

The arts and culture contribute to a strong economy and build local economic development. Arts and culture in Ontario directly contribute \$27 billion annually to the provincial economy, representing 3.4% of Ontario’s GDP. There are more than 254,985 culture jobs in Ontario or 3.8% of total Ontario employment. (*Provincial and Territorial Culture Indicators, 2020* Statistics Canada, June 2022)

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, “arts, culture and heritage improve the ability of municipal governments to influence local economic development by attracting and retaining a skilled and talented workforce.” (*Policy Statement on Social-Economic Development*, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, March 2016).

The City's investment in local cultural activities such as arts, festivals and heritage attract tourists and are leveraged many times by provincial and federal cultural funding and earned admission revenues that are spent in the local community on jobs, artist contracts, equipment, advertising, maintenance, etc.

INDIGENOUS, GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

The new Cultural Funding Policy builds on the [seven recommendations](#) put forward by the Cultural Funding Support Unit's Equity and Inclusion Committee. This committee provides guidance and expertise to make cultural funding programs more accessible to all and is composed of individuals active in culture in a variety of roles. It currently consists of 14 members representing the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation, urban First Nation, Inuit and Métis people, as well as equity-denied communities. The community engagement strategy that led to the new Policy and program structure used the full spectrum of the engagement continuum and included the hiring of Cultural Community Liaisons that held community conversation on behalf of the City with communities currently under-represented in cultural funding programs: urban Indigenous community, the Deaf and disability community, the African and racialized francophone diaspora, new immigrants, youth, Caribbean and other racialized communities.

Indigenous Policy Considerations

Adherence to the [The City of Ottawa - Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Civic Cultural Protocol and Implementation Plan \(2022-2026\)](#) and consulting with members of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation was paramount. This included conversations with current applicants on Pikwakanagan First Nation and Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, and guidance from Indigenous members of the Equity and Inclusion Committee.

The review findings and proposed policy and program structure, including the development of a new Indigenous Culture Program, were positively received when presented to the Anishinabe Algonquin Cultural Consultative Circle. The Circle encouraged staff to proceed with this approach, and to consider expanding eligibility requirements beyond Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation and Pikwakanagan First Nation, by including access to cultural funding for eligible members and organizations of all 11 Anishinabe Algonquin Nations as part of the development of the Indigenous Culture Program.

These ongoing consultations, the new Indigenous Culture Program, and consideration of expanded eligibility directly respond to the Protocol's Implementation Plan's objectives related to cultural funding:

- Integrate Anishinabe Algonquin values and protocols in cultural funding work
- Provide increased opportunities for Anishinabe Algonquin input in program design and delivery

- Increase access to cultural funding programs for Anishinabe Algonquin First Nations peoples and organizations
- Increase number of submissions received from Anishinabe Algonquin applicants
- Support cultural activities proposed by Anishinabe Algonquin applicants

The Indigenous Culture Program will also respond to the [City of Ottawa's Reconciliation Action Plan](#), that identifies and sets priorities for allocating cultural funding to support initiatives from the public, which contribute to the reconciliation process as one of the actions within culture. This is achieved not only through targeted investment in the Indigenous Culture Program, but also through cultural funding principles outlined in the Cultural Funding Policy that governs all programs.

Gender and Equity Implications

Gender and equity considerations were key factors in the development of the new Cultural Funding Policy. Similarly to the approaches outlined above to engage with Indigenous communities, members of equity-denied communities played a leadership role in its development, as members of the EIC and as Cultural Community Liaisons. Engagement findings have expanded upon the recommendations put forward by the Committee and have greatly influenced a Policy and program structure that is simpler to navigate and more open in its interpretation of culture. The Equity and Inclusion in the Arts Program is retained as it is proven to be extremely successful in attracting first-time applicants and continues to be a vehicle to close historical funding gaps. Staff are committed to engaging with equity-denied communities on an on-going basis as the revised cultural funding programs will be implemented.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Cultural funding programs strive to benefit all residents and visitors. While all cultural funding programs are open to rural residents, special efforts are made to support cultural activities in rural areas. Targeted investments are made by supporting rural arts activities, Agricultural Fairs, as well as Community museums, many of which are located in rural communities. Throughout the Cultural Funding Framework Review staff have been in conversations with rural funding applicants and the Rural Affairs Office to improve communication and programs to better meet the needs of rural communities. Staff recommend that alternate funding opportunities for Agricultural Fairs should be explored in partnership with the Rural Affairs Office in order to simplify the application process and alignment with program objectives.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The new Cultural Funding Policy aligns with the City of Ottawa Strategic Plan 2023-2026's strategic priority of a city that is more livable for all by making recreation and cultural programs available to more residents through enhanced cultural programming and initiatives made more available for all communities and include an ethnocultural lens (8c); cultural facility new development and renewal of existing assets through contributions to community cultural spaces (9c); and the strategic priority of a city with a diversified and prosperous economy by diversifying its economy and amplifying the region's brand by investing in organizations through City of Ottawa Cultural Funding Programs (25d), including the related performance indicator of number of organizations funded annually under the City's cultural funding programs.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: Cultural Funding Policy

DISPOSITION

Following approval at Committee and Council, staff will implement the new Cultural Funding Policy and revised program structure.