

Community Partnership Grants aimed to boost culture and rec initiatives

A new grant program from the Town of Aurora will support culture or recreation-based initiatives.

The Council-approved program is designed to assist individuals and groups with temporary funding to get their initiatives off the ground with a focus on those who that ?build organizational capacity, benefit the community, and support the Town's strategic plan.?

Up to \$10,000 will be made available for eligible organizations and individuals, with applications being considered on a quarterly basis.

The first deadline for interested parties to get their applications in is June 15 and, from there, a panel of municipal staff will evaluate applications ?based on their innovation, feasibility, impact, and alignment with the Town's Strategic Plan and Inclusion Charter.?

?We are excited to launch the Community Partnership Grant Program and provide a platform for individuals and organizations to turn their ideas into a reality,? said Director of Community Services Robin McDougall. ?This initiative reflects our commitment to supporting and empowering community, culture, and recreation groups, as well as individuals working towards creating positive change and impact in their communities.?

As a partner with the Town of Aurora, the Aurora Cultural Centre (ACC) is ineligible for funding through this initiative, but, at the same time, as a cultural services provider, encouraging residents and organizations to help build this cultural and recreational capacity is a welcome move, according to ACC Executive Director Suzanne Haines.

?Having these kinds of opportunities helps every member of the community think about how they might contribute to culture and what that impact might look like if they want to build something from a cultural perspective,? says Haines. ?It really democratizes access to some funding that allows the community to create their own voice around what they want to see happen. Those kinds of funding initiatives are really key to helping build capacity and really identifying artists and artists groups? and helping to build a comprehensive and full cultural community.

?Our programs are two pillars of professional ? performing arts and gallery work ? which tends to focus on professional artists because that complement of artists is often needing that additional support to make it a career. We have had conversations with artists who are either emerging in their career or living in the community; maybe they are established and they don't have quite as much access. We look for ways to support them?through granting opportunities provincially, federally, and now locally. We embark on those kinds of conversations because building cultural community is really a deep-seeded part of what we do.?

For more information about the Community Partnership Grant Program, including eligibility criteria, application guidelines, and evaluation process, visit aurora.ca/communitygrants or email grants@aurora.com

HAVE YOUR SAY ON CULTURE

Building cultural capacity in Aurora is always evolving in Aurora and you still have a chance to lend your voice to the Aurora Cultural Centre's Aurora Arts Survey.

Through to the end of this week, interested residents can weigh in on programs and services they would like to see be a part of the ACC's programming in the future.

?I have seen investments like what the Town is doing with Aurora Town Square and it really does start to highlight the artists in the community and what they want to be doing,? says Haines. ?I just feel like there's this whole group of people who haven't self-identified yet and I am curious to find out who they are and what they want to attract to the community. There are some gaps and we have identified some of them. We're looking for the community to be a part of it.?

To take part in the survey, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter