



2026 WINTERCITY FESTIVALS & EVENTS GRANT - PROGRAM GUIDE

1.0 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1.1 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Local winter festivals and events encourage Edmontonians to carry their passion for their city year round. The WinterCity Initiative has helped Edmontonians recognize a simple truth: *You can't change winter, but you can change how you feel about it.* WinterCity Festival & Event Organizers contribute to this goal and create experiences that share the magic of an Edmonton winter to both local community members and international visitors.

It is also recognized that operating outdoor festivals and events in winter can be challenging and that there are higher operational costs because of the season. Festivals need to keep staff and volunteers warm, fed and on shorter shift rotations, and deal with unforeseen seasonal challenges such as, winter storm and wind chill warnings or unseasonably warm weather that results in a lack of snow or melting ice and/or sculptures. There are also needs for four-season tents to withstand the cold winter temperatures, additional heating elements, extra lighting and site clearing equipment. Winter festivals and events can see it all - and for this reason, winter specific festival and event funding is provided.

1.2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the WinterCity Festival & Event Grant in 2025, the festival or event must be hosted outdoors and align with the [City Plan](#) in one or more of the following ways:

- Support Edmonton's identity as a winter city through its infrastructure, design, events and economy (City Plan Intention 1.3.2);
- Celebrate our winter identity through the arts, recreation, events, storytelling and inspired design (City Plan Direction 1.3.2.1); and
- Encourage winter events, activities and festivals through community and business partnerships (City Plan Direction 1.3.2.3)



1.3 ELIGIBLE EVENTS AND EXPENSES:

1.3.1 Eligible types of events may include, but are not limited to:

- Events with a City-wide focus that do not serve a specific geographic neighbourhood or community
- Cultural and historical celebrations and observances
- Concerts, performances, and music festivals
- Food, arts, and cultural festivals
- Parades
- Active recreation events
- Not-for-profit events attracted through partnership with Explore Edmonton that have public opportunities to participate.

1.3.2 Eligible events must also:

- Take place in the city of Edmonton
- Take place between January 1 - March 31 and/or November 15 - December 31 (see "2.0 Application Process" for details on when 2026 events are eligible)
- Be an outdoor event primarily located in the public realm (such as parkland, public open space, or road right-of-ways) with more than 80% of the event's programming taking place outdoors
- Held in-person with an attendance of 100 people or more
- Support local and publicly accessible programming
 - The event may be free to attend, or require a participation fee, or require a donation, and/or be a ticketed event
- Produced by an organization that:
 - Is registered as not-for-profit or charitable
 - Business Improvement Area
 - Undertakes their work primarily in Edmonton, or has a history of significant activity in Edmonton when they also work elsewhere
 - Is in good standing, and not in arrears with the City of Edmonton
- Be insured with a minimum of \$2 million in general liability
- Have expenses that as a result of winter conditions require additional funding
- Held in compliance with permitting or licensing requirements as required (Edmonton Fire, Development Services, etc); and public health requirements, restrictions and guidance imposed by the City of Edmonton, Alberta Health Services or the Government of Alberta.



1.3.3 Eligible Expenses:

- Winter events must have a minimum budget of \$2,000 to be eligible for funding
- Winter Operations including, but not limited to:
 - Purchase or rental of infrastructure and/or equipment required to support the safe delivery of the event and to keep attendees/staff/volunteers warm (i.e. four season tents, fire pits, heaters, warming huts, hot food, hot chocolate, cider, hot shots, trailers etc)
 - Hiring more staff and artists or paying premiums (.e. overtime) for those who have expertise in outdoor winter programming and production;
 - Sourcing reliable snow making options (equipment or options to gather/haul), including water and/or dechlorination costs
 - Purchase or rental of equipment / supplies to keep snow and ice cool (i.e. tents, air conditioners, etc)
 - Additional staffing/volunteers/officials needed to ensure health and safety protocols followed, especially in extreme cold weather (i.e. additional warm food, drinks, clothing (toques, scarves), hotshots, etc.
 - Additional needs to manage increasing operational demands as more people embrace winter and enjoy outdoor winter activities
 - Other winter specific operating costs;
 - Winter specific Civic Services costs, materials and equipment such as snow & ice removal, sand/gravel, grading, windrow removal, etc;
- Winter Programming elements including, but not limited to:
 - Production and technical costs related to programming (staffing, performers, artists, volunteers, etc.)
 - Honorariums and wages for workers and artists who are not already employed as staff (event contract staff, artists, performers, etc).

The program will be assessed at the end of each year to confirm or modify eligibility and criteria.

1.4 INELIGIBLE EVENT TYPES AND EXPENSES:

1.4.1 Ineligible types of events and organizations include, but are not limited to:

- Events run by for-profit organizations or individuals;
- Events intended to serve the geographic neighbourhood or community, such as Community League events, block parties or play streets;



- Events where more than 20% of activities and/or programming is hosted indoors (this does not include indoor locations for people to warm up during the event)
- Events of a primarily religious, faith based, political, or commercial nature
- Events where the primary purpose is to raise funds for specific individuals, charities or groups
- Events that require membership to observe or participate and are not open to the public
- Registered programs such as day camps, lessons, community programs, etc
- Events that are (in whole or in part) an extension of regular or permanent programming;
- Seasonal programs and activities (i.e. snowbank ice rinks, winter patios, trail grooming, etc); though special events at these facilities may be considered;
- Professional/semi professional spectator and/or sporting events;
- Tournaments where a membership is required to participate, including regular outdoor sport league play;
 - Professional / semi professional / amateur outdoor spectator sporting events though public "try it" events or programs as part of the overall event may be considered;
- Private events (examples include, but are not limited to: weddings, graduations, showers, celebrations of life, potlucks, awards ceremonies, etc)
- Conferences, symposiums, roundtables, workshops and other events not intended for the general public
- Events held on an individual's private property
- Events run by government; City agencies, boards or commissions; educational and post secondary institutions (including student organizations), or political parties
- Stand alone markets (vending elements are eligible within a larger events);
- Virtual events;
- Film productions;
- For profit attracted events that receive funding from Explore Edmonton and/or the City of Edmonton Partnerships and Event Attraction section
- Performances, exhibitions or activities that promote or incite racism, hatred or violence
- Charter Rights activities such as protests, rallies, demonstrations, processions, marches and vigils

1.4.2 Ineligible Expenses:

- Capital expenses such as construction, renovations or repairs or purchase of major equipment such as computers, video recorders or power tools
- Volunteer honorariums or gifts
- The purchase of alcohol or cannabis or related expenses



- Allowances or personal expenses for program registrants and participants
- Organization's base operational costs including
 - Salaries and expenses of existing staff
 - Office and administration fees, utilities, rent and/or rental of an applicant organization facility

2.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

- There are two scheduled intakes in 2026 for applications to the Wintercity Festivals & Events Grant.
 - The first deadline is Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.
 - Eligible event dates are January 1 to March 31 and November 15 to December 31, 2026.
 - Organizations can apply retroactively for eligible festivals or events occurring between January 1 to March 1, 2026.
 - The second deadline is Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.
 - Eligible event dates are November 15 to December 31, 2026 and January 1 to March 31 or November 15 to December 31, 2027.
 - If all funding is not allocated, further intake dates will be considered.
- Events being hosted in a "series format", meaning a similar program, on multiple dates and/or in multiple locations, only require one application for the series of events.
- Multiple events that have a different program content, purpose, dates, and/or location must submit an application (with required documentation) for *each* event.
- A copy of the application questions are available for download on the webpage. Please review them before starting the online application form.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
 - Examples include: required documents are not complete or not submitted and/or application questions are not answered.
- All applicants will be notified of the committee's decision within eight (8) weeks of the grant deadline.
- Successful applicants will receive funds within eight (8) weeks of the Grant Committee's funding decision.
- Applications will be assessed solely on the contents, attachments and information submitted in the application.



3.0 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Grant funding awards will be considered based on the following criteria:

- Opportunity for attendees to experience winter;
- Programming and operational costs required to support the winter experience;
- Event size, scope, and scale (including expected attendance and location capacity);
- History of the event in Edmonton;
- Benefit to the public (cultural, recreational, charitable significance and/or supports engagement and representation of communities who have historically been marginalized and underrepresented);
- Public access (free versus charged/cost to participate);
- Not-for-profit or charitable organization status;
- Business Improvement Association status;
- Funding need (those organizations with sufficient funds to host the event without municipal support);
- Receipt of funding from other City of Edmonton sources to cover the same expenses.

4.0 FUNDING AND GRANT AWARDS

- Grant awards range from \$500 to \$60,000
 - The maximum grant amount for any one event will initially be based on event classification

Event Classification	Maximum Grant Amount
Signature Festivals and Events	\$60,000
Foundational Festivals and Events	\$20,000 - 50,000
Niche Events	\$500 - \$15,000

- Grant amounts must not exceed 25% of the total cost of the event but are normally allocated in the range of 5-10% due to the demand for funding.
 - Availability of funds and the number of eligible applications will determine the number and amount of grants awarded.
 - Events must have a minimum budget of \$2,000 to be eligible for this program.
- Grant funds can only be used for the purpose outlined in the grant application.
- Funding decisions made by the City of Edmonton are final and cannot be appealed.



- Funding to successful applicants will be in the form of an EFT (electronic funds transfer) or cheque which will be mailed to the address that you provide.
- Wherever possible, recipients are requested to acknowledge funding received from the City of Edmonton WinterCity Festivals & Events Grant program in related advertising or promotional materials.
 - The City of Edmonton will provide logos as required.

5.0 FINAL REPORT

Successful applicants are required to provide a Final Report within 90 days of the completion of the festival or event. The Final Report must include the following items:

Outcome Reporting:

How the festival or event aligned with the [City Plan](#) in one or more of the following ways:

- Support Edmonton's identity as a winter city through its infrastructure, design, events and economy (City Plan Intention 1.3.2);
- Celebrate our winter identity through the arts, recreation, events, storytelling and inspired design (City Plan Direction 1.3.2.1); and
- Encourage winter events, activities and festivals through community and business partnerships (City Plan Direction 1.3.2.3)

Output Reporting:

- 3-5 Pictures of the Event (in operation) which should include, at minimum:
 - one picture that includes as much of the event site as possible
 - one picture of a key event activity/program
 - one picture of a winter specific equipment or resource that the grant funding supported
- Final List of Event Activities and/or Programming
- Final Total Revenue \$ (actual, not estimated)
- Final Total Expenses \$ (actual, not estimated)

Measures:

- Which Ward was the event located in? ([Find the Ward](#))
- If an event is located in a Business Improvement Area (BIA) & which one. ([BIA Map](#))
- Final Event Attendance Number
- Total Number of Years the Event Has Been Operating
- Total Number of Event Operation Hours
- Total Number of Staff (during event)
- Total Number of Volunteers



Additional Questions:

- Does the organization intend on hosting the event again next year?
- If the funding provided by the City was directly used to leverage funding from other sources, please advise which sources and the amount leveraged.
- Are there any other details of your event you would like to share?
- Do you have feedback on this grant program?

Event Budget (Revenue & Expenses):

The budget document that was submitted with the grant application will be used again in the Final Report to confirm the actual expenses & revenue versus the anticipated expenses & revenue. If requested, receipts must be provided.

Note:

- The City of Edmonton has the right to audit any financial or event records associated with the grant funding.
- Final Reports for the WinterCity Festivals and Events Grant may be considered part of the assessment of any future applications by the organization to the same grant program.

***If your organization is awarded a grant, this list of Final Report requirements will be included in the Funding Letter.*

6.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions for our team, please email us at wintercityeventsgrant@edmonton.ca