



## ARTS AND CULTURE ACTIVATION GRANT POLICY FINAL REPORT

### Issue

The Arts and Culture Activation Grant Policy CMD-F-2.4 ran as a pilot in 2024 and an evaluation of its effectiveness is provided to Council as directed.

### Motion Proposed by Administration

That the Arts and Culture Activation Grant continue to be offered with an annual allocation of \$15,000.00.

### Report, Analysis and Financial Implications

To enhance arts and culture activities, boost visitation, and provide essential funding for arts development and artists, Council initiated the Arts and Culture Activation Policy and Grant for 2024. Recognizing arts and culture as key economic, social, and place-making drivers, this grant aims to foster the economic and social development and vibrancy of the Town. 2024 was the first year for this grant.

To apply for an Arts and Culture Activation Grant, applicants needed to ensure their event was new or significantly different from previous iterations, scheduled for evenings or weekends, and aligned with the Town's objectives, including reconciliation efforts. They were required to provide detailed information about the proposed event, including its name, dates, location, description, and how it would present an opportunity for attendees to experience Okotoks arts and culture. A proposed budget outlining all expenses and revenues was also necessary. Additionally, the event had to be free to attend or have a free-to-attend component. Applicants completed an application form with organizational details, event specifics, and how the event would provide income to artists. The completed application was submitted for review, with the Town of Okotoks evaluating applications based on a decision-making matrix and notifying successful applicants.

In 2024 the grant received nine (9) applications from eight (8) applicants. Four (4) applications met the criteria of the grant and received funding. The events were required to provide a final report that included details of their events and responses to surveys distributed to attendees.

The questions asked were:

1. How satisfied were you with the event from an artistic perspective?
2. To what extent did the event strengthen your sense of community in Okotoks?
3. Did you shop, dine, or stay at a paid accommodation in Okotoks before or after this event?
4. Do you live in Okotoks?

Total Results from All Surveys: (for a detailed breakdown see Appendix A.)

- Number of Surveys: 32
  1. Artistic Satisfaction: Very satisfied: 30, Satisfied: 6
  2. Community Strengthening: Significantly: 25, Moderately: 11
  3. Local Economic Impact: Yes: 19, No: 17 (Shop: 6, Dine: 15, Stay: 0, Other: 1)
  4. Local Residency: Yes: 34, No: 3

The total budget for this pilot year of the Arts and Culture Activation Grant was \$30,000.00. The total grants approved came to \$10,3030.48. Unused funds totaled \$19,696.52.

Applicant	Name of Activity	Amount Approved	Partnership	Event in Series	Grant Level
Okotoks Film Society	Pop-Up Flicks	\$4,999.00	n/a	10	2
Okotoks Film Society	Alberta Film Trivia Night	\$300.00	Hub Town Brewing	1	1
Okotoks Arts Council	Acoustic Summer Nights	\$4,244.00	n/a	6	1
True Colors Rainbow Connection	Halloween Dance Party	760.48	n/a	1	1

The Arts and Culture Activation Grant in Okotoks only used approximately one-third of the allocated funds for several reasons. While it is common for grants of this nature to require matching funds and for government grants to pay out at the end of the contract to ensure accountability to taxpayers, these conditions may have posed challenges for some applicants. However, it is important to note that one of the main purposes of this grant was to increase evening and weekend activities in Okotoks, which was successfully achieved. All recipients expressed their intention to continue the events they initiated. Additionally, only one (1) grant recipient raised concerns about the financial requirements, indicating that these issues were not widespread among applicants. It is also possible that awareness of the Arts and Culture Activation Grant was limited during its pilot year. As with many new initiatives, reaching all potential applicants can be challenging. Increasing promotional efforts and outreach in future years could help ensure that more people and organizations are aware of the grant and its benefits.

The Arts and Culture Activation Grant had a significant positive impact on the Okotoks community. It supported diverse events that fostered community connections, provided platforms for artists, and brought vibrancy to the local arts scene. Despite some challenges, such as weather-related disruptions and financial constraints, the events were well received and achieved their goals. The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with high levels of satisfaction and a strengthened sense of community. The grant enabled the hosting of free events, which encouraged participation and accessibility. Overall, the grant has

proven to be a valuable resource for enhancing arts and culture and contributing to the unique identity of Okotoks.

Based on the success of this pilot year and the comments from all three (3) event producers that they would like to continue their events, Administration recommends continuing the grant on an ongoing basis, with a total of \$15,000.00 allocated annually to the initiative to allow for potential growth.

### Strategic Plan Goals

<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibly Managed Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated Environmental Leadership
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong Local Economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Culture & Community Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organizational Excellence		

### Equity/Diversity/Inclusivity Impacts and Strategy

All events were open to the public, making them inherently inclusive. The Halloween Dance was organized by the True Colors Rainbow Alliance, an LGBTQ2S organization dedicated to promoting inclusivity.

### Environmental Impacts

n/a

### Governing Policies/Bylaws/Legislation or Agreements

Culture, Heritage and Arts Master Plan

### Community Engagement Strategy

Final Report from Grant Recipients

### Alternatives for Consideration

n/a

### Acting CAO Comments

The Arts and Culture Activation Policy had a successful pilot year in 2024. Administration was able to work with community groups to initiate and support new activation activities and evaluate the degree of support going forward that will ensure continued program success.

### Attachment(s)

1. Appendix A. Arts and Culture Activation Grant Survey Results

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