

DOWNTOWN VIBRANCY STRATEGY

The Downtown Vibrancy Strategy is built upon a commitment of collaboration and partnership with businesses and organizations that have a vested interest in downtown Edmonton. This agile approach to supporting vibrancy in the heart of our city focuses on four pillars - **Downtown as a Home, Economic Hub, Destination, Safe & Welcoming place** – to achieve its goals. Strategy details are available at edmonton.ca/downtown.

The Downtown Vibrancy Fund provides financial support to projects led by businesses and organizations that support achieving the outcomes in the Strategy. Priority is given to projects that demonstrate a high and long term impact.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Businesses/organizations of all sizes are eligible to apply. Organizations must meet ALL of the following criteria in order to be eligible to apply for the Fund:

- Project must occur within downtown Edmonton as defined by this [map](#)
- Project must align with one or more of the four pillars listed above (more information [here](#))
- Must have a valid business license or a valid exemption
- Project costs must be incurred after April 10, 2024
- **New for 2024:** project must fall within one of the following four funding streams (additional streams may be released later this year):
 - [Stream 1: Recreational Amenities](#)
 - [Stream 2: Decorative Lighting](#)
 - [Stream 3: Downtown Events](#)
 - [Stream 4: Public Art and Placemaking](#)

Note: Projects with a scope outside of the streams listed above may still be considered. Contact downtown@edmonton.ca to find out if your project might be eligible for funding.

INELIGIBLE COSTS FOR ALL FUNDING STREAMS

The following costs are **not eligible** for funding under any of the Downtown Vibrancy Fund Streams (please note this is not an exhaustive list and the Program Manager reserves the right to identify additional costs that may be ineligible):

- Salaries and expenses of existing staff (hired contract work could be eligible)
- Office and administration fees
- Mortgages, bills, interest, debt servicing
- Utilities, rent, fees for memberships or professional associations
- Storage, takedown and maintenance fees related to the project
- Other costs at the discretion of the Program Manager

EVALUATION PROCESS FOR ALL FUNDING STREAMS

- Grant application intake will be from April 10 - May 10, 2024
- Applications will be evaluated from May 11 - June 10, 2024
- Applicants will be advised of their grant status by June 30, 2024
- Projects will be evaluated against the eligibility criteria for the particular stream which they have applied for.
- Evaluations will be conducted by the Core Partners Committee which includes City administration and representatives from organizations with a vested interest in the future of downtown. These organizations' mandates strongly align with the Strategy's four pillars as they represent and/or work directly with a wide variety of downtown businesses, organizations and residents. The Committee brings a unique perspective and skill set to their evaluation, based on their experience, knowledge and insights. Those organizations include:
 - Downtown Edmonton Community League
 - Edmonton Downtown Business Association
 - Explore Edmonton
 - NAIOP (Commercial Real Estate Development Association)

Funding decisions made by the Committee are final and cannot be appealed. The City of Edmonton reserves the right to consider exceptions, including the maximum amount of eligible funding per stream, based on exceptional circumstances and make changes to the program at the Director, Downtown Vibrancy, and Safe City's judgment. The Director, Downtown Vibrancy and Safe City has the

sole authority, in their sole and unfettered discretion, to determine the eligibility of applications for the Downtown Vibrancy Fund.

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ALL FUNDING STREAMS

Once you are ready to apply, please complete the [online application form](#). Please note that additional funding streams may be released later in 2024.

DOWNTOWN VIBRANCY FUND REPORTING PROCESS

A final report must be submitted as outlined in the funding agreement which will be signed by all successful applicants.

The City of Edmonton is committed to respect and inclusivity and welcomes all applicants with diverse expertise, experience and perspectives.

STREAM 1: RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Available Funding: Up to \$250,000 per project, requires a 50% investment from the applicant

Funding Stream Overview: Recreational amenities are anything that provides sport, recreational or leisure opportunities for members of the public on public or private land, inside or outside. Examples would include but are not limited to: basketball, pickleball or tennis courts, playgrounds, parks, climbing walls, exercise equipment, skate parks, inclusive recreational opportunities and emerging sport.

This stream requires a 50% financial investment from the applicant (can include other grant funding) in order to be eligible for funding. Please note that funding for the Recreational Amenity stream will be disbursed only upon project completion. There will be no progress payments.

1. Eligibility Criteria for Recreational Amenity Stream:

- a. Projects must be planned for publicly accessible areas (inside/outside).
- b. Renderings of the proposed project must be supplied with your application. Renderings can be in draft form and do not need to be professionally done, but do need to provide visual context for the project.
- c. Any required approvals or permits must be in place and are the responsibility of the applicant.
- d. The project must be new; funding will not apply for projects already in place.
- e. The project can provide access to the amenity for free or charge a user fee.
- f. Maintenance and operational costs for up to 3 years are eligible, however cannot exceed 15% of the total project cost.

2. Eligible Costs for Recreational Amenity Stream:

- a. Purchase of recreational equipment
- b. Construction costs directly related to the install of the amenity
- c. Design
- d. Permits
- e. Initial installation costs

3. [Application Process](#)

STREAM 2: DECORATIVE LIGHTING

Available Funding: Up to \$250,000 per project, requires a 50% investment from the applicant

Funding Stream Overview: This focuses on projects on private property that improve publicly accessible areas indoors or outdoors. Projects that will be considered can include (but are not limited to) decorative string lighting, uplighting/downlighting, coloured lighting, programmable building facade lighting etc. Projects will be evaluated based on their creativity, longevity and placemaking capabilities (ie: does the new lighting make your location a destination?)

This stream requires a 50% investment from the applicant in order to be eligible for funding. Please note that funding for Decorative Lighting projects will be disbursed only upon project completion. There will be no progress payments.

1. Eligibility Criteria for Lighting Stream:

- a. Lighting projects must be planned for publicly accessible areas (inside/outside).
- b. Lighting must be year-round (holiday/seasonal lighting projects will not be considered).
- c. Renderings of the proposed lighting project must be supplied with your application.
- d. Lighting projects must be decorative in nature (security lighting projects will not be considered).
- e. Any required building permits must be in place and are the responsibility of the applicant.
- f. The lighting must be new; funding will not apply for existing projects already in place.

2. Eligible Costs for Lighting Stream:

- a. Purchase of new lighting or lighting software
- b. Electrical upgrades
- c. Initial installation costs

3. [Application Process](#)

STREAM 3: DOWNTOWN EVENTS

Available Funding: Up to \$100,000 per project, requires a 50% investment from the applicant

Funding Stream Overview: “Events” include festivals and activities which are designed to increase the number of people visiting downtown. Our goal is to help establish newer event projects that have the potential to have a high, long term impact on downtown. Note that only events requiring a **minimum** of \$100,000 in funding would be funded, meaning that the total event cost must be at least \$200,000 in order to qualify. Successful applications will be automatically approved for another 50% of the approved funding for the following year, if the event continues. For example, if you are approved for \$100,000 you will qualify for an additional \$50,000 for the event if it takes place again next year.

Successful applicants shall receive the City funding in one installment within a reasonable time after the parties have fully executed their agreement.

1. Eligibility Criteria

- a. This funding stream is dedicated to newer events. Event must not have taken place prior to January 1, 2022.
- b. Indoor or outdoor events on public or private property are eligible.
- c. There is no restriction on scheduling. The event can be one day or multiple days. It may also be a series (ie: weekly, monthly, etc). There is no duration minimum or maximum.
- d. Events spanning multiple days must be connected thematically or branded in the same way.

2. Eligible Costs

- a. Entertainer/Artist/Other Professional fees
- b. Marketing and Advertising
- c. Event/Festival permit and license fees
- d. Equipment rentals
- e. Venue costs
- f. Event Catering
- g. Other costs associated with events, festivals and activities at the discretion of the Program Manager

3. [Application Process](#)

STREAM 4: PUBLIC ART & PLACEMAKING

Available Funding: Up to \$100,000 per project, requires a 50% investment from the applicant

Funding Stream Overview: Public art can be any medium of artwork displayed within public space or publicly accessible private property. Examples include but are not limited to murals, sculptures, art installations, decorative banners, etc. Placemaking refers to projects in public space that animate, activate and/or improve the appearance. Examples include but are not limited to street furniture, creative lighting, etc.

Creativity and outside-the-box thinking is encouraged! Projects should contribute to the overall vibrancy of downtown in any of the following ways¹:

1. Unifying themes or characteristics in downtown public spaces.
2. Placemaking: creating focal points, or adding value to existing sites.
3. Encouraging pedestrians to explore downtown spaces outside of the immediate pedestrian realm.
4. Helping to navigate the core or define key downtown locations.
5. Embellish or add value to functional elements (ex: art installation is also a bench)
6. Creating a destination: the new public art should be something that visitors would make a point of coming downtown to see in person.
7. Funds cannot also be provided by the City of Edmonton Community Mural Grant.

This stream requires a 50% investment from the applicant in order to be eligible for funding. Eligible costs include those associated with both the design process and project installation. Successful applicants shall receive the City funding in one installment within a reasonable time after the parties have fully executed their funding agreement.

1. Eligibility Criteria for Public Art Stream

- a. Projects must be planned for publicly accessible areas (inside/outside).
- b. Renderings of the proposed project must be supplied with your application.
Renderings can be in draft form and do not need to be professionally done, but do need to provide visual context for the project. A portfolio of previous work would be helpful and can be shared if applicable.
- c. Any required approvals or permits must be in place and are the responsibility of the applicant.
- d. The project must be new; funding will not apply for art projects already in progress.

¹ [Downtown Public Art Guide and Initiatives - June 2022](#)

- e. The design theme must be appropriate for all members of the public. The City reserves the right to deny requests that do not merit public support or are mainly personal, private, political, polarizing or commercial in nature. Please note that advertising, political messages or content deemed as offensive or hateful will not be accepted for grant funding.

2. Eligible Costs

- a. Material costs
- b. Installation
- c. Artist fees (local or international)

3. [Application Process](#)