



ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

FESTIVALS & EVENTS ONTARIO

package includes:

- List of changes for 2025
- Brochure with required questions
- Application form editable .pdf

deadline to apply:

November 28, 2025

5:00pm

EXCITING CHANGES FOR THE FEO AWARDS

There are several changes going into effect for the FEO Awards this year. Please take the time to read through the changes so that you are fully aware of new requirements.



EXCITING CHANGES

The FEO Awards Program has some exciting changes to announce. The mandate is still the same, "Recognizing the accomplishments and successes of festivals and events, industry suppliers, volunteers and municipalities by honoring best practices in the festival and event profession across the Province of Ontario", but some of the changes to categories and requirements will help to make the Awards Program stronger!

What's New

The **Best Festival or Event Series** will be awarded, based on budget, to festivals/events that meet the criteria of being a Festival Series. A Series is defined by 4 weeks or more of event programming. This may include community events such as Movies in the Park, Farmers' Markets, Waterfront Concert Series and Theatre Seasons.

The **FEO Sustainability Award**, based on budget, has been re-imagined from the former "Best Greening of the Festival". This award aligns with sustainable practices and why festivals need to adopt earth-friendly policies. Think beyond recycling bins and plastic bottles, the FEO Sustainability Award will recognize festivals and events that have successfully adopted an environmental approach to their festivals.

Municipalities will be limited to apply to a maximum of **three (3)** Top 100 Awards.

Canada Day events/parades and Santa Claus Parades are not eligible for Top 100 Awards.

The **Student Leadership Award** will only need to be endorsed by a FEO member in good standing, eliminating the requirement that the school/university offers Event Management or be a member of FEO.

Applying is Easy

Read the Award Program packages and make sure that you answer all of the questions in **10 pages or less**. Most packages require supporting materials, so please read the requirements carefully.

Use the **fillable PDFs** to refer to the application form for all the Achievement Awards, Top 100 and Municipality of the Year. The Service Excellence Awards will also have a separate Awards Package.

Email the completed package as **ZIP file** to the new email address: awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca

Learn about creating a ZIP file [here](#)

(<https://www.compress2go.com/create-zip-file> or, Microsoft Support: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/windows/zip-and-unzip-files-8d28fa72-f2f9-712f-67df-f80cf89fd4e5>)

Do not include actual video or audio files. Instead, please add the URL link to any videos or audio files you would like the judges to experience.

Continued on page 2.....

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Applying is Easy continued

Economic Impact Statements must be the most recent TREIM "[Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model](#)", a free tool provided by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.
OR Festivals can use a Economic Impact Study from within the past 2 years. Do not include data that is older than 2023.

Find out what Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) your festival or event or industry supplier is located here
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/tourism-regions>

All about Judging

FEO Award Judges are looking for your organization to tell a story about why you deserve to be recognized as the best in Ontario! Be concise and providing compelling details related directly to the award application.
In general, awards will be judged based on criteria adding up to a total score of 35 or 40 points. This is the scoring matrix that will be used to determine the Effectiveness of the Award Package:

For more information, please contact Jay Nijhuis (jay@festivalsandeventsontario.ca) or Amanda Murray, FEO Awards Committee Chair at (amurray@clearview.ca)

Thank you for taking the time to read through these changes. We look forward to receiving many awards applications and we wish you the best of luck.

A reminder, Service Excellence Award winners will be announced during the Service Excellence Awards Dinner on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 and the rest of the Award winners will be revealed at the FEO Awards Gala on Wednesday, February 25, 2026.

All winners will be contacted in advance so that they can make plans to attend even if they are not attending this year's conference.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Recognizing the accomplishments and successes of festivals and events by honouring best practices over many different categories within the industry across the Province of Ontario.



AWARD CATEGORIES

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sponsor of the Year | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best Volunteer Program |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best Promotional Campaign | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FEO Sustainability Award |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best New Festival or Event | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FEO Innovation Award |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best Social Media Campaign | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FEO Impact Award |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best Festival or Event Series <i>*new this year*</i> | |

Become a FEO Achievement Award winner in 2026 and benefit from these high profile marketing opportunities: and benefit from these high profile marketing opportunities:

- You will be mentioned as an Award winner on a dedicated page on the Festivals & Events Ontario website.
- FEO promotes the Achievement Award winners to media outlets, Destination Ontario and travel writers immediately following the Awards Gala and Dinner and throughout the year;
- Each winner will be provided with a template news release to assist with individual media relations, a copy of the award logo to use on your website, and a digital tool kit that will contain specially designed graphics that can be used on social media platforms to help promote and market your company as an award winner.

**FESTIVALS & EVENTS ONTARIO ENCOURAGES YOU TO
GET YOUR APPLICATIONS IN NOW
TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!**

Nominations are
due to FEO by:

**NOV.28,
2025**

For more information:

Contact Jay Nijhuis at awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca Phone: (519) 742-2226 Fax: (519) 742-7206
155-50 Ottawa Street South, Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 3S7 www.festivalsandeventsontario.com

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS BASED ON BUDGET



(Budget is defined as the overall festival/event budget)

\$100,000 or less | \$100,001 - \$500,000 | \$500,001 or more

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SPONSOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

In order to qualify for this Award, your festival/event must have been in operation for at least the last year (Sept. 1, 2024 - Dec. 31, 2025) and is committed to be in operation in 2026. (Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit them by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca)

- 1) Introduction and description of festival/event, and how your organization secures sponsors.
- 2) Description of sponsor; level of sponsorship (cash/in-kind).
- 3) Details of benefit package and length of sponsorship/partnership.
- 4) Identify quantity and quality of support to event by sponsor.
- 5) Identify the goals and success of relationships for both event and sponsor.
- 6) How the sponsor stands out over all other sponsors.
- 7) Activation of sponsorship by sponsor, include pre-festival, during and post-festival support.
- 8) What was the overall effectiveness/success of the event? Please provide measurable results.
- 9) Why should this sponsor be recognized as the BEST in Ontario?

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the sponsor initiatives. Please label pictures properly EX: **WesternFair-SponsorofYear-pic1**
- b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any digital or print ads, promotional material, and url links to any videos or radio spots you'd like the judges to experience. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES**



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BEST PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN (not including Social Media Campaign)

In order to qualify for this Award, your festival/event must have been in operation for at least the last year (Sept. 1, 2024 - Dec. 31, 2025) and is committed to be in operation in 2026. (Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit it by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca)

- 1) Identify the types of traditional marketing that was used (ex: Printed materials (flyers, posters etc), media campaigns (radio-TV-news print), promotional items or giveaways, company website etc.
- 2) What was the annual marketing budget?
- 3) What was the overall effectiveness of these campaigns? Provide examples of customer feedback.
- 4) What level of success did your festival/event enjoy in 2025 and do you have measurable results that can correlate that increase of attendance to the promotional campaign you ran?
- 5) Why should this marketing campaign be recognized as the BEST in Ontario?

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the marketing initiatives. Please label support materials properly EX: **SmallHalls-BestPromotional-pic1**
- b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any digital or print ads, promotional material, and url links to any videos or radio spots you'd like the judges to experience. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES**



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BEST NEW FESTIVAL OR EVENT

In order to qualify for this Award, your festival/event must have completed at least one (1) year of operation and not more than three (3) years and is committed to be in operation in 2026. The new festival/ event may be associated with, or share the theme of an existing festival/event, but not be included as a part of the main festival/event. Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit it by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca)

- 1) Introduction and background of festival/event and duration of program (start to finish)?
- 2) Description and purpose/objective of new festival/event? What makes the event unique and creative?
- 3) How was the event idea conceived and what gap is it filling in the community, region or province?
- 4) How was the new festival funded during year 1?
- 5) Description of sponsor/charity/volunteer/school/other group involvement with program and benefits to each (if applicable)
- 6) What was the overall effectiveness/success of the event?

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the event initiatives. Please label support materials properly EX: **ParisFair-BestNewFestival-pic1**
- b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any digital or print ads, promotional material, and url links to any videos or radio spots you'd like the judges to experience. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES**



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FEO SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

In order to qualify for this Award, your festival/event must demonstrate that efforts were made to ensure earth-friendly practices were carried out throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation of the festival or event. You must have completed at least one (1) year of operation (Sept 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025) and be committed to operating in 2026. Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit it by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca

- 1) Introduction and background of festival/event?
- 2) Description and purpose/objective of the environmental/sustainability policies and processes.
- 3) Target audience/attendance/number of participants.
- 4) Describe the key sustainable practices at your festival: Waste Reduction, Sustainable Food & Drink, Green Mobility/Transportation Services, Infrastructure & Resource Management, Renewable Energy
- 5) Measurable results: how much was recycled; savings/cost of Green program; carbon footprint reduction.
- 6) Non-tangible results: education; awareness; involvement etc.
- 7) Duration of program (start to finish) and number of years the program has been a part of the event.
- 8) List the event supporters and describe the multi-sectoral supporters(sponsor/charity/volunteer/school/municipal governments and other groups)contributions they made to the success of the sustainability practices.
- 9) How do you communicate sustainability practices to festival patrons, vendors etc.

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the green initiatives. Please label support material properly EX **HillsideFestival-Sustainability-Pic1**
- b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any digital or print ads, promotional material, and url links to any videos or radio spots you'd like the judges to experience. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES**



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FEO IMPACT AWARD

In order to qualify for this Award, you must have completed at least one (1) year of operation (Sept 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025) and be committed to operating in 2026. Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit it by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca

The **FEO Impact Award** will recognize the achievement from a festival/event that embodies the best ideas to advance cultural diversity and inclusion at events, or empowering marginalized demographics to participate, or increases the social impact of events within your community, region or the Province of Ontario, or being a leader in regards to truth & reconciliation in the Indigenous community.

1. Introduction and background of festival/event
2. Describe the new initiative, program or best practice that created impact within your own organization.
3. Describe how your festival/event generated a substantial impact and contributed to your community, region or the Province.
4. Outline your method to measure your event/festival's impact
5. Provide any other examples that highlight the impact of your festival/event

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the Impact initiatives. Please label support material properly EX **Carassauga-FEOImpact-Pic1**
- b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any digital or print ads, promotional material, and url links to any videos or radio spots you'd like the judges to experience. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES**



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ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS BASED ON BUDGET



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FEO INNOVATION AWARD

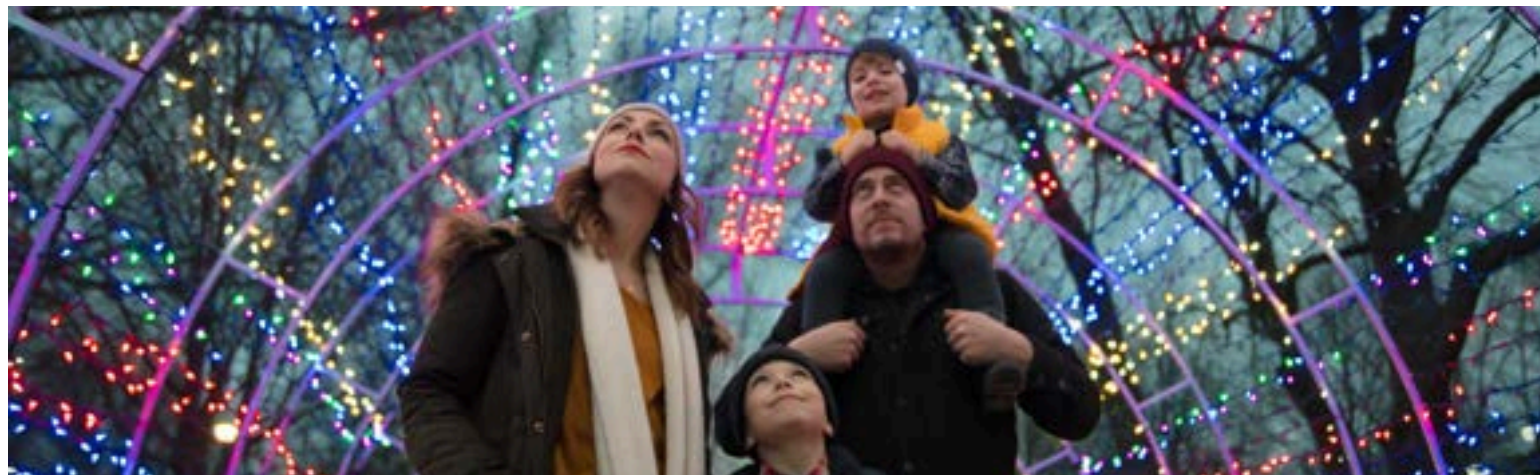
In order to qualify for this Award, you must have completed at least one (1) year of operation (Sept 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025) and be committed to operating in 2026. Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit it by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca)

The **FEO Innovation Award** will recognize the achievement from a festival/event that have introduced creative, effective solutions to strengthen events, appeal to a broader audience or enhance the experience for patrons. This may include new sponsorship activations and fundraising campaigns, the use of innovative technology to increase sales or overall guest experience, a public-private partnership or other transformational or entrepreneurial method to strengthen your festival/event.

1. Introduction and background of festival/event
2. Describe the new initiative, program or best practice that transformed your organization
3. Describe how your festival/event was innovative within your community, region or the Province
4. Outline your method to measure your event/festival's innovation
5. Provide any other examples that highlight innovation of your festival/event

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the Innovation initiatives. Please label support materials properly EX: **CNE-FEOInnovation-pic1**
- b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any digital or print ads, promotional material, and url links to any videos or radio spots you'd like the judges to experience. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES**



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ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS BASED ON BUDGET



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BEST FESTIVAL OR EVENT SERIES AWARD

In order to qualify for this Award, you must have completed at least one (1) year of operation (Sept 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025) and be committed to operating in 2026. Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit it by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca)

In order to qualify for the **Best Festival or Event Series** award, your festival/event series must have a minimum of four (4) weeks of event programming that happens weekly or over the course of a season. The winning festival series should demonstrate how it brings people together, strengthens local pride, and enhances Ontario's reputation as a vibrant place to live and visit. Events that are suited for this category included Theatre Seasons, Farmers' Markets, Music/Movies in the Park, Concerts on the Canal etc.

1. Introduction and background of your festival series. Include all dates and times of events.
2. Description and purpose/objective of the festival series.
3. Target audience and attendance/number of participants.
4. Community Impact – How does your festival series contribute to community pride, inclusivity, and participation? Provide examples of partnerships, volunteer involvement, or audience engagement.
5. Economic & Tourism Impact – Describe how your festival series supports the local economy, tourism, or regional growth. How do you measure success?.
6. Creativity & Cultural Value – In what ways does your festival series showcase innovation, creativity, or cultural significance for your community and Ontario as a whole?
7. Sustainability & Legacy – How do you ensure your festival series remains sustainable for the future, and what long-term benefits does it provide to your community?

Supporting Materials

a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the Innovation initiatives. Please label support materials properly EX: **ConcertsontheCanal-BestSeries-pic1**

b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any digital or print ads, promotional material, and url links to any videos or radio spots you'd like the judges to experience. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES**



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ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS NOT BASED ON BUDGET



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BEST SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

In order to qualify for this Award, entries must demonstrate the positive use of social media as part of their regular promotional campaigns. Your festival/event must have completed at least one (1) year of operation (Sept 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025) and be committed to operating in 2026. Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit it by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca)

- 1) Please include a description of what forms of social media were used in your campaign. (ie Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snap Chat, Tik Tok etc.), and include the social media handles for each platform
- 2) What strategies were used based on the different platforms (ex: text, VS photos VS video)
- 3) How many members of your organization were involved with the social media campaign?
- 4) Estimated amount of times per day a new post was made?
- 5) What was the overall effectiveness/success of the campaign? Please provide measurable results
- 6) Why should your festival's social media campaign be recognized as the BEST in Ontario?

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the event initiatives. Please label support materials properly EX: **NorfolkFair-SocialMedia-pic1**
- b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any social media posts, your social media calendar to highlight the thought process of which platforms to use when and how often (if one was used), and url links to any videos you'd like the judges to experience from social media platforms. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES**



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BEST VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

In order to qualify for this Award, your festival/event must have completed at least one (1) year of operation (Sept 1, 2024 - December 31, 2025) and be committed to operating in 2026. Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less and submit it by email in .pdf format). Please email your complete package (application form, answers to all questions and supporting documents to awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca)

- 1) Introduction and background of festival/event.
- 2) Description and purpose/objective of Volunteer Program.
- 3) Volunteer demographics (age, gender, individuals, charities, schools etc.).
- 4) Volunteer job descriptions.
- 5) Tell us about your Recruitment, Communication and Training methods/materials/applications.
- 6) Describe how you organize and schedule information/materials.
- 7) Volunteer perks/benefits.
- 8) Tell us about your volunteer Appreciation/recognition methods/materials.
- 9) Describe your volunteer retention methods/materials.
- 10) Overall revenue/expense budget of volunteer program.
- 11) Overall effectiveness/success of the volunteer program.
- 12) Measurable results: ratio of volunteers to guests; # of volunteers; # of volunteer hours; # of volunteers in database; estimate of the financial value of your volunteers

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festival or event specifically highlighting some of the volunteer initiatives. Please label support materials properly EX: **EloraRiverfest-VolunteerProgram-pic1**
- b) within your 10 page maximum .pdf, also include screen caps of any digital or print volunteer recruitment ads, promotional material, and url links to any recruitment videos or radio spots you'd like the judges to experience. **DO NOT EMAIL ACTUAL VIDEO FILES.**
- c) A letter of Support from a Volunteer that endorses the Volunteer Program as the BEST in Ontario.



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2026 FEO Achievement Awards Program FORM



Please ensure you fill out all of the requested information especially under the category of award you are applying for. FEO Members can apply free of charge, **Non-Members must pay a \$100 entry fee** through Ticketpro before their application is considered by the judges. *Non-Members may only apply for this award ONCE.*

APPLICANT INFORMATION (REQUIRED)

FEO MEMBER ☐ FEO NON-MEMBER ☐

Applicant Name :

Organization Name: Festival or Event:

Address :

City : Province: Post Code :

Telephone: Email :

FEO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD INFO

Festival/Event Name : Where It Happens:

Festival Website: Is This An Annual Event? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How Long Has This Been Operating? Festival Dates 2026-2027:

Admission Fees? Is your festival or event... ☐ Free: ☐ Ticketed ☐ Both

What is Your RTO?: Event Duration: ☐ 1 day ☐ 2-3 days ☐ 3 days ☐ 4+ days

Briefly Tell Us The Story of Your Event (Judges are probably not from your area and would benefit from some history)

In 100 words or less, give us an overview of your event. This will be used on the website or potentially on the video voice over

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD SUBMISSION CATEGORY - *Select One Award Category Per Entry Form Submission*

Overall Budget Category ☐ \$100,000 or less ☐ \$100,001 to \$500,000 ☐ \$500,001 or more

Awards Based on Budget Categories (indicate which category you are submitting for):

Sponsor of the Year ☐

Best Promotional Campaign ☐

Best Festival or Event Series ☐

Best New Festival or Event ☐

The FEO Sustainability Award ☐

The FEO Impact Award ☐

The FEO Innovation Award ☐

Awards NOT Based on Budget Categories:

Best Volunteer Program ☐

Best Social Media Campaign ☐

For more information, contact:

Jay Nijhuis at awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca Phone: (519) 742-2226 Fax: (519) 742-7206
155-50 Ottawa Street South, Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 3S7
website: www.festivalsandeventsontario.com