



MUNICIPALITY OF THE YEAR

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.

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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.

MUNICIPALITY OF THE YEAR AWARD

Recognizing the best in municipal leadership and festival and event partnerships in the Province of Ontario.



OVERVIEW

Festivals and Events quantitatively create tremendous economic impact within your community and qualitatively engage your citizens on a collaborative level. However, perhaps you did not know that partnership support from your Municipality is a critical input to both the success and sustainability of your existing festivals and events and to the ability of your Municipality to attract new festivals and events. FEO is pleased to recognize those Municipalities that have created a supportive atmosphere for the achievement of successful festivals and events.

Three awards will be judged/presented, one from each of the following three(3) Municipality population categories:
Population less than 50,000; Population 50,000- 150,000; Population more than 150,000;

MUNICIPALITY OF THE YEAR AWARD RECOGNITION

Award winners will be invited to the annual Awards Gala and Dinner as part of the annual FEO Conference in Kitchener, Ontario. We respectfully encourage the winners to be prepared to attend the Awards Gala and Dinner Feb. 25, 2026.

- You will be mentioned as an Award winner on the Festivals & Events Ontario website.
- FEO promotes the Municipality of the Year 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 Municipality 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

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*All applications must be emailed and must contain the required amount of documentation requested and the application form. A reminder that FEO Members can apply free of charge, **Non-Members must pay a \$100 entry fee** through Ticketpro before their application is turned over to judges. **Non-Members can only apply for this award ONCE.***

In order to Qualify for the Award, the Municipality must provide answers to the following questions in no more than ten (10) pages total (feel free to use bullet points where applicable) 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)

Question 1

List of your individual festivals & events:

- Include a list of leading festivals (up to 5 max) that are managed and hosted by the municipality. Provide dates between September 1 2024 to December 31, 2025; target demographic; the number of local attendees vs. out-of-town visitors (those residing more than 40km away) and the operating budget provided by the municipality for each event.
- Include a list of festivals operated by 3rd party organizations (up to 3 max) that generate significant impact to your municipality.
- Describe the methods/tools your municipality uses to track attendance and how do you evaluate overall economic and community impact

Question 2

Tell us about your Municipal infrastructure for festivals and events:

- a) Please provide your most recent (Canada Census)Municipal population.
- b) What are the accommodation, parking and transit options for visitors to the festivals and events?
- c) Outline your primary festival and event venues, including capacities for each.
- d) Do you have an emergency response plan for festivals and events operating within your jurisdiction?
- e) Describe recent enhancements to municipal festival infrastructure and outline what other infrastructure you provide to support festivals and events.
- f) Is there anything else you wish to include in this section?

Question 3

Tell us about how your municipality directly supports festivals and events through areas under its direct control:

- a) Do you have a dedicated support team, policy or plan for presenting and/or supporting festivals and events? If so, please elaborate.
- b) What monetary budget in direct funding do you provide for presenting and/or supporting festivals and events?
- c) Do you also provide a value-in-kind budget or allocation as well? If so, please elaborate.
- d) Define the role of your Municipal staff in festival or event Planning Committee/Board involvement (if applicable) and/or describe the Municipal approval process for a festival or event. How many full time, part time and summer staff work for festivals and events?
- e) Does your Municipality help to market or promote the festival or event within your jurisdiction?
- f) Is there anything else you wish to include in this section?

For more information:

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Question 4

Tell us how your Municipality may indirectly support festivals and events through areas that it may be able to influence:

- a) Does your Municipality provide input to and/or assistance with the efforts of other non-Municipal-government operating bodies within your jurisdiction such as Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions, local or regional sports organizations (if applicable) and/or similar externally managed organizations etc. to support festivals and events?
- b) Does your Municipality get involved in such areas as helping the festival and event organizers to source volunteers and/or sponsors and/or media support and/or festival and/or event industry suppliers?
- c) Describe your relationship with your local Destination Management Organizations (DMO), Regional Tourism Organization and Festivals & Events Ontario.

Supporting Materials

- a) supply a maximum of five (5) high resolution photos (as individual files) of your festivals or events operated by your Municipality. Please label pictures properly EX: **QuinteWest-Municipality-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**
- c) Submit a letter of support from the CAO or Mayor's Office.



TAKE YOUR MUNICIPALITY OF THE YEAR AWARD WIN EVERYWHERE YOU GO WITH EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE FEO AWARD LOGO, DIGITAL TOOL KIT OF SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS AND THE ABILITY TO CALL YOURSELF AN AWARD WINNING MUNICIPALITY.

2026 FEO Awards Municipality 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 :

Municipality Name: Department:

Number of Staff: How Many Are: Full Time Part Time Students

Address :

City : Province: Post Code :

Telephone: Email :

What is Your RTO?: Website:

MUNICIPALITY OF THE YEAR AWARD SUBMISSION CATEGORY - [Select One Award Per Entry Form Submission](#)

Population less than 50,000 ☐ Population 50,000 - 150,000 ☐ Population 150,000 or more ☐

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

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