



**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](mailto: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](mailto:jay@festivalsandeventsontario.ca)) or Amanda Murray, FEO Awards Committee Chair at ([amurray@clearview.ca](mailto: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.

# THE TOP 100 AWARD

*Acknowledging industry excellence, this designation provides its recipients with a high visibility profile and marketing benefits unmatched by any other awards program in the province.*



## OVERVIEW

Don't miss out! The FEO Top 100 Festivals & Events Program is recognized by festival goers, peers and government officials alike as Ontario's leading source of quality festivals and events happening across the province.

## TOP 100 AWARD RECOGNITION

Become a FEO Top 100 Festival/Event in 2026 and benefit from these high profile marketing opportunities:

- Your festival/event is guaranteed a listing in 2026/2027 on the Festivals and Events Ontario website
- Top 100 festivals and events are featured on the website to make them stand out more than those not Top 100 winners.
- FEO promotes the Top 100 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;
- Take your Top 100 win everywhere you go with exclusive use of the FEO Top 100 logo and the digital tool kit which will contain several digital graphics that can be used on specific social media platforms to help you advertise and promote and brand yourself as an "Award-winning Festival/Event";
- Special promotion is given to Top 100 through FEO's social media channels and e-Newsletters.

**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](mailto:awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca) Phone: (519) 742-2226 Fax: (519) 742-7206  
155-50 Ottawa Street South, Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 3S7 [www.festivalsandeventsontario.com](http://www.festivalsandeventsontario.com)

# THE TOP 100 AWARD



*Acknowledging industry excellence, this designation provides its recipients with a high visibility profile and marketing benefits unmatched by any other awards program in the province.*

*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+hst entry fee through Ticketpro before their application is considered by the judges. **Non-Members are only eligible to apply for the TOP 100 Award once.***

**In order to qualify for this Top 100 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 next year. (Please provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages or less & 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](mailto:awards@festivalsandeventsontario.ca))**

## **Uniqueness of Event**

- 1) Summarize the main objectives of your festival/event and the importance in your community.
- 2) List 5 popular/unique components of your festival/event based on fan feedback

## **Audience Appeal**

- 3) Who is/are your target audience?
- 4) Who attends your event (community, regional, tourist destination/draw)? How many local vs. out-of-town visitors (tourists are from 40kms or further) and how do you collect this information?
- 5) Briefly summarize the cost to attend your festival including free programming, ticket price ranges, exclusive experiences etc.

## **Impact on Community**

- 6) Describe how your festival/event contributes to the community. Include 2 specific success stories from partners or business.
- 7) Describe the Economic Impact the festival has on the Region or Province. Please provide the TREIM 2025 results for visitor spending (Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model) or provide an independent economic impact study from within the past 2 years.
- 8) How do you collect data and measure success?
- 9) Briefly tell us about your volunteer program, vendor program, and sponsorship program. Provide any other examples of impacting the community.

## **Overall Experience of Event**

- 10) Describe the most innovative or newest element that enhanced the visitor experience in the past festival.
- 11) Describe how you plan to enhance or add-on to your festival next year to keep festival-goers from coming back.
- 12) Describe how your event is unique to the Province, in your Region or in the Industry.

## **Supporting Material**

- 1) 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: **WinonaPeach-Top100-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**

# 2026 FEO Awards Top 100 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 :

## TOP 100 EVENT INFORMATION

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