



# STUDENT LEADERSHIP 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](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 STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

*Recognizing Ontario students with exceptional potential, passion and dedication who engage in activity with the aim of bringing communities together for the purpose of celebration.*



## OVERVIEW

Festivals and Events Ontario believes students pursuing a career in event management will have a tremendous impact on the growth and future of this budding sector. The Student Leadership Award is designed to recognize student's efforts and accomplishments within the scope of festivals and events.

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION

The Student Leadership Award will be received at the annual Awards Gala and Dinner at the annual FEO Conference in Niagara Falls. We respectfully encourage the student to be prepared to attend the Awards Gala and Dinner on Wednesday, February 25, 2026.

- The student is entitled to two (2) complimentary dinner tickets
- Student(s) will be recognized on the FEO website
- The student will receive a bursary in the amount of \$250.
- Free FEO Membership for one year

**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 STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD



*Recognizing Ontario students with exceptional potential, passion and dedication who engage in activity with the aim of bringing communities together for the purpose of celebration.*

*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 considered by the judges. **Non-Members may only apply for this award ONCE.***

## Criteria:

- 1) The student must be enrolled in an accredited Event Program, full or part-time.
- 2) Student must meet a minimum of 80% GPA.
- 3) The student must be endorsed by a FEO Member in good standing.

**In order to Qualify for the Award, the Student must provide answers to the following questions in 1000 words or less and submit them ( 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) )**

- 1) Three(3) examples of demonstrated leadership and influence within their academic year. For example: Chaired a committee, student mentoring etc.
- 2) Three(3) examples of event related experience either volunteering or working within the community and/or industry throughout the academic year. Explain how the volunteer/work experience benefitted both the community/event and the student. For example: New process implemented to benefit the community, new skill learned by the student
- 3 )Explain why you feel Festivals and Events Ontario is a valuable resource to the industry and why you would encourage membership?

## Support Materials

- 1) One (1) letter of reference from professor/college and one(1) letter of reference from an employer or organization. The letter does not need to be industry related (it is a letter of reference only).
- 2) A copy of your first term report indicating a minimum 80% GPA.
- 3) 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: **TorontoWaterfront-maggiesmith-pic1**



**TAKE YOUR STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD WIN EVERYWHERE YOU GO WITH EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE FEO STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD LOGO, AND THE ABILITY TO CALL YOURSELF AN AWARD WINNER. THIS WILL LOOK FANTASTIC ON YOUR RESUME AND ON LINKEDIN!**

# 2026 FEO Student Leader Award 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 : What is Your RTO?: 

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

### Nominee Information

Festival Name : Name of Nominee: Address : City :  Province:  Post Code : Telephone:  Email : What University/College Are They Enrolled In? 

### Nominator Information

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SAME AS ABOVE

Contact Person:  Title: Address : City :  Province:  Post Code : Telephone:  Email : 

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  
website: [www.festivalsandeventsontario.com](http://www.festivalsandeventsontario.com)