



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR 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.

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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.

THE VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Recognizing outstanding commitment to volunteer excellence within the festival and event industry across the Province of Ontario.



OVERVIEW

The importance of volunteers to festivals and events is immeasurable. Many individuals contribute countless hours of their time to their communities, providing quality and memorable experiences to local residents and visitors alike. FEO is proud to recognize this commitment to volunteer excellence within the festival and event industry across Ontario with our annual Volunteer Awards.

FEO's commitment to the festival and event industry is reinforced through the recognition of these individuals who have distinguished themselves by virtue of their service to their community through involvement with festivals or events.

VOLUNTEER AWARD RECOGNITION

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

- The Volunteer of the Year Award winner is entitled to two(2) complimentary dinner tickets
- The Youth Volunteer of the Year Award winner is entitled to three(3) complimentary dinner tickets, one for the youth and two(2) for their parents or guardians;
- The Family Volunteer of the Year Award winner is entitled to three(3) complimentary dinner tickets

**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

THE VOLUNTEER AWARDS



Recognizing outstanding commitment to volunteer excellence within the festival and event industry across the Province of Ontario.

*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.***

Categories for Submission

- **Volunteer of the Year** (19 years of age or older)
- **Youth Volunteer of the Year** (age range from 13-18 years of age)
- **Family Volunteer of the Year** (family of 2 persons or more)

Criteria & Questions

- Festivals/events submitting nominations must have an established volunteer program that encompasses volunteer involvement in a number of the festival/event's operations;
- Minimum number of three(3) years volunteering for the festival/event;
- Must have not received any monetary compensation for the service directly associated with his or her volunteer duties.

In order to Qualify for the Award, the Nominator must provide answers to the following questions in ten (10) pages 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)

1) Outline your festival/event's volunteer program.

- a) Who is in charge of organizing the volunteer program?
- b) How are the volunteers recruited?
- c) What areas of the festival/event are volunteers encouraged to participate in?
- d) How are volunteers recognized within the festival/event?

2) What were the roles, responsibilities and depth of involvement of the nominee(s) including planning, during the event and post-event.

3) Describe how the nominee(s) has shown initiative and leadership in their efforts to strengthen the festival's operations/execution?

4) Describe how the nominee(s) has made a difference to the festival/event. How would their absence affect the festival/event?

5) Describe how your nominee(s) has provided significant enthusiasm, organizational assistance, positive attitude, dependability and specific expertise.

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: **KWOktoberfest-Volunteer-JohnRoberts-pic1**

TAKE YOUR VOLUNTEER AWARD WIN EVERYWHERE YOU GO WITH EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE FEO VOLUNTEER AWARD LOGO, AND THE ABILITY TO CALL YOURSELF AN AWARD WINNER.

2026 FEO Volunteer 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 :

What is Your RTO?: Website:

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

Volunteer of the Year ☐ Youth Volunteer of the Year ☐ Family Volunteer of the Year ☐

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Nominee Information

VOLUNTEER TITLE/ROLE

Festival Name :

Name of Nominee:

Address :

City : Province: Post Code :

Telephone: Email :

Nominator Information

☐ SAME AS ABOVE

Contact Person: Title:

Address :

City : Province: Post Code :

Telephone: Email :

Briefly Tell Us The Story of Your Festival/Event and why your volunteer award nominee is so important to your success.
(Judges are probably not from your area and would benefit from some history)

In 100 words or less, give us an overview of why the volunteer(s) being nominated deserve to win this award. Qualities, Work Ethic, Leadership, etc. (This will be used on the website or potentially on the video voice over)

For more information, contact:

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website: www.festivalsandeventsontario.com