



City of Kingston
Information Report to Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
Report Number AAC-24-003

To: Chair and Members of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Danika Lochhead, Director, Arts & Culture Services
Date of Meeting: June 13, 2024
Subject: Update to Mayor's Arts Awards Program

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: Corporate business

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

This report is to provide the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee with an overview of changes to the Mayor's Arts Awards, an annual recognition program delivered by the City's Arts & Culture Services Department in partnership with the Kingston Arts Council (KAC), that celebrates artistic achievement and impact within the arts community in Kingston. The Mayor's Arts Awards was first introduced in 2017 and every year, five awards are given out to artists and creators, arts organizations, arts champions and supporters, and those who have made a long lasting, legacy impact on the arts in Kingston.

A Nominations Subcommittee of the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, made up of Committee representatives and community members, are responsible for identifying the award recipients based on their knowledge, expertise and community connections. Award recipients are announced at a public event in November of each year, where profile videos of each recipient that are commissioned by the KAC are unveiled, and the community gathers to celebrate the arts community.

As the program goes into its 8th year in 2024, and based on ongoing feedback from award recipients, previous Nominations Subcommittees, and the KAC, staff are implementing changes to the Mayor's Arts Awards program to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs of the arts

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community and in alignment with municipal priorities, especially around IIDEA (Indigenization, inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility).

The changes, as described in Exhibit A – Updated Terms of Reference, include:

- Update the eligibility and award criteria, and consolidate where appropriate, the three award categories including the Creator Awards, Arts Champion Award and Limestone Arts Legacy Award, to be more reflective of the Kingston arts community and to include IIDEA priorities;
- Introduce an open, public nominations process, to support the Nominations Subcommittee in identifying and selecting award recipients and to expand access to the program; and
- Enhance the role of the KAC as a key community partner, to Chair and oversee the Nominations Subcommittee, to liaise with the award recipients on behalf of the City, to continue to commission the profile videos of each award recipient, and to coordinate a joint communications strategy with the City to amplify public awareness of the program, the award recipients, and the public event.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Jennifer Campbell,
Commissioner, Community
Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

The Mayor's Arts Awards program, first established in 2017, has provided an opportunity for the City, in partnership with the KAC, to recognize and celebrate members of the arts community and their role in contributing to cultural vitality in Kingston and to an engaged and meaningful civic life. The purpose of the program is to:

- To recognize the achievements and contributions of individual artists and arts organizations to the cultural vitality of Kingston, and in doing so, inspire and encourage others.
- To recognize and nurture the outstanding and sustained contributions of members of the community as supporters and volunteers in the arts.
- To build the profile of the arts community across the City, increasing awareness of the arts among its citizens, and thus building audiences and other forms of participation.
- To increase Kingston's profile as a place where creative life is valued, where innovation is embraced, and as an attractive destination for visitors, residents and businesses.

Background

Since the start of the program, 35 artists, arts organizations, arts supporters and champions, and those that have made a long-lasting legacy impact on the arts community in Kingston have been recognized. The program recognizes three award categories including:

- Creator Award - recognizing living artists, artist collectives or arts organizations. Three Creator Awards are given each year to honour artistic merit and/or innovation that advances the arts in the City, contributes to the development of the art form and expresses the cultural vitality of Kingston. Recipients each receive a cash prize (\$2,500), an award and a certificate of recognition.
- Arts Champion Award - recognizing a living individual, organization or corporation who makes an extraordinary, leading contribution to the arts in Kingston as a volunteer, advocate, supporter, sponsor and/or philanthropist. Recipients receive an award and certificate of recognition.
- Limestone Arts Legacy Award - a posthumous award that recognizes individuals of the past whose sustained and substantial contributions have built the artistic vitality of the City, nurturing and enabling forms of creation, participation, presentation and enjoyment, whose leadership has inspired others, and whose influence has been felt in the region and beyond. Recipients receive an award and certificate of recognition

A list of past award recipients, including profile videos can be found on the [City website](#). Every year, there is also an exhibit of the recipients installed in City Hall.

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Analysis

The proposed changes to the Mayor's Arts Awards program (Exhibit A) aim to ensure that the program remains responsive and relevant to the arts community, to expand access to the awards program for diverse communities and artists, and to improve administration of the program through enhanced community partnerships.

The Nominations Subcommittee provides an annual report to the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, providing an overview of their work and feedback to staff for consideration on how the Mayor's Arts Awards program can change and grow in the future. The reports can be viewed on the [Arts & Culture Advisory Committee website](#), and direct links to recent reports are included here ([2023 Report](#), [2022 Report](#), [2021 Report](#)). Staff also consult with award recipients annually to collect feedback on their experience being recognized through the program.

Staff have also met with the KAC, who through their Service Level Agreement with the City ([Report Number 24-101](#)), are responsible for supporting the delivery of the Mayor's Arts Awards program, including through commissioning the profile videos of the award recipients and in promoting the program and public award event. An administrative grant is provided to the KAC for this work, as well as budget to support creation of the videos. The KAC is a trusted community partner of the City and are responsible for overseeing the administration of the City of Kingston Arts Fund, which provides operating and project grants to arts organizations, collectives and artists.

Based on the feedback received from the past Nominations Subcommittees, award recipients, and the consultation with the KAC, the changes to the Mayor's Arts Awards program in 2024 include:

- Update the eligibility and award criteria, and consolidate where appropriate, the three award categories including the Creator Awards, Arts Champion Award and Limestone Arts Legacy Award, to be more reflective of the Kingston arts community and to include IIDEA priorities;
- Introduce an open, public nominations process, to support the Nominations Subcommittee in identifying and selecting award recipients and to expand access to the program; and
- Enhance the role of the KAC as a key partner, to Chair and oversee the Nominations Subcommittee, to liaise with the award recipients on behalf of the City, to continue to commission the profile videos of each award recipient, to coordinate a joint communications strategy with the City to amplify public awareness of the program, the award recipients and the public event.

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Public Engagement

The proposed changes to the Mayor’s Arts Awards program are a result of ongoing feedback collected by staff from past award recipients, past members of the Nominations Subcommittee and by the KAC.

Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations

The changes to the Mayor’s Arts Awards program reflect IIDEA considerations, through the award category updates, and by creating a mechanism for public nominations.

Financial Considerations:

The Arts & Culture Services Department’s operating budget supports the Mayor’s Arts Awards program. With the proposed changes, the financial impact to the City is minimal. Additional administrative funding may be needed to support the KAC’s expanded role, and those key deliverables will be articulated through an Amending Agreement to their Service Level Agreement ([Report Number 24-101](#)). There is sufficient funding in the Arts & Culture Services Department’s operating budget to support an expanded partnership.

Contacts:

Danika Lochhead, Director, Arts & Culture Services, 613-546-4291 extension 1277

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A – Updated Terms of Reference

Mayor's Arts Awards Program

Updated Terms of Reference, May 2024

The Mayor's Arts Awards is an annual recognition program that celebrates high artistic achievement and recognizes extraordinary contributions in and to the arts. By increasing the profile and appreciation of the arts, the Awards enhance the cultural vitality and civic identity of Kingston. Through this program, the City affirms the value of the arts in City life and nurtures and inspires sustained development of the cultural sector to the benefit of all its citizens.

Purposes

- To nurture the sustained growth and vibrancy of the arts sector in Kingston.
- To recognize the achievements and contributions of individual artists and arts organizations to the cultural vitality of Kingston, and in doing so, inspire and encourage others.
- To showcase and celebrate the range of artistic disciplines fostered in the Kingston arts sector.
- To recognize and nurture the outstanding and sustained contributions of community members as supporters and volunteers in the arts.
- To build the profile of the arts community across the City, increasing awareness of the arts among its citizens, and thus building audiences and increasing other forms of participation in the arts.
- To increase Kingston's profile as a place where creative life is valued and innovation is embraced, an attractive destination for visitors, residents and businesses.

Award Categories and Criteria

The Mayor's Arts Awards recognizes two categories of contribution, as follows:

Creator Award (3): *cash prize, award, and certificate of recognition*

The Creator Award recognizes artists or artistic collectives. Three Creator Awards will be given each year to honour artistic merit and/or innovation that advances the arts in the City, contributes to the development of the art form and expresses the cultural vitality of Kingston. This Award should also consider newcomers or new to Kingston artists who have made a profound impact in the arts in a short period of time, as well as emerging artists, youth artists, and equity-deserving artists.

Creator Award recipients will:

- Create works of art of outstanding artistic merit and achievement;

- Create art of a distinctive, powerful artistic voice or character;
- Create art that offers vivid expression of the civic context;
- Create art that enriches, inspires and uplifts the Kingston art scene;
- Create art that is outstanding in and/or fuels the progression of their field of practice;
- Be an active, contributing, and respected member of the artistic community; and
- Bring a distinguished profile to Kingston's arts presence and influence beyond the region.

Recognition may be for recent achievement, for a body of work produced over several years, or for lifetime achievement. Creator Awards must, over time, recognize high achievement in a range of art forms and reflect diverse cultures active in the City.

Arts Champion Award (1): *cash prize, award, and certificate of recognition*

The Arts Champion Award is an arts leader who makes an extraordinary contribution to the arts sector and empowers its sustained growth and development. This award recognizes arts workers, organizations, volunteers, advocates, supporters, sponsors and/or philanthropists.

Arts Champion Award recipients will:

- Act as sector leaders, fueling the development of the arts community at large and empowering artists at all levels of their careers;
- Make an extraordinary contribution to the arts in Kingston through sustained volunteer efforts in arts advocacy, operations, education, philanthropy, sponsorship and/or creative leadership;
- Through their actions, empowering others to contribute to and participate in the arts;
- Have a strong record of increasing the health, profile, and impact of the arts; and
- Uplift emerging artists, equity-deserving individuals, and groups, and uphold the City's ideals of IIDEA (Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility).

*Every year, the Nominations Subcommittee can choose to give a posthumous award in both the Creator Award and Arts Champion Award categories, recognizing individuals whose sustained and substantial contributions have helped to build the artistic vitality of Kingston. This award is not required to be given out every year and should be considered in addition to the number of awards per category.

Awards Administration

The City of Kingston, through the Arts & Culture Services Department, provides administrative oversight and coordination related to the Mayor's Arts Awards program

to ensure integrity, efficiency, and alignment with City procedures in the delivery of the Mayor's Arts Awards program.

The Kingston Arts Council (KAC) leads the nominations process including acting as Chair (ex-officio, non-voting) of the Nominations Subcommittee through the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee and overseeing the assessment and selection of the award recipients by the Subcommittee members. The KAC will help promote the public call for nominations and provide key administrative support to the Subcommittee.

The KAC will function as the main liaison with the award recipients to coordinate the documentation through the creation and commissioning of the profile videos, communication, promotion, and celebration of award recipients, taking advantage of their specialist networks and capacities. This role is well aligned with the KAC mandate and Strategic Plan, and this relationship is formalized annually through the KAC's Service Level Agreement.

Selection of award recipients is made through the City of Kingston's Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, which is tasked with establishing a Nominations Subcommittee each year for this purpose. The Mayor's Arts Awards Subcommittee is responsible for and selecting award recipients in accordance with the program criteria as defined, which includes identifying eligible applicants and also reviewing and assessing any submissions through the open call for nominations. The Subcommittee through the Chair is also responsible for providing a short, written statement (80 to 150 words) identifying and briefly describing the reason for each award.

The Mayor's Arts Awards Subcommittee

The Mayor's Arts Awards Nominations Subcommittee shall be comprised of five to seven members with a range of expertise and perspectives, who are respected, knowledgeable and representative of a spectrum of artistic practices. The Subcommittee is chaired by the Executive Director of the Kingston Arts Council, who is also an appointed member of the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, who will function in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity. The members of the Subcommittee must include two additional members of the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee and three community members. The membership is reconstituted on an annual basis with Council's approval and no member may serve more than two consecutive years. Each Subcommittee may include up to two members who served in the previous year and Subcommittee members are ineligible for award consideration during their tenure.

Mayor's Arts Awards Announcement and Reception

The announcement of the Mayor's Arts Awards takes place each fall. The awards are announced at a public reception, and the award recipients will then be recognized formally at a City Council meeting.

Implementation

Responsibilities:

The Arts & Culture Services Department provides oversight and ensures the successful delivery of the Mayor's Arts Awards program that includes supporting the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, the establishment of the Nominations Subcommittee, and the Kingston Arts Council (KAC) in their role as a community partner on the program. This includes establishing the deliverables expected of the KAC through their Service Level Agreement (SLA) annually or through an Amending Agreement to the SLA, coordinating the public event, and providing program funding.

The KAC supports the Mayor's Arts Awards program by completing the deliverables identified in their SLA with the City. This includes:

- Administer the Mayor's Arts Awards program and provide key oversight and support to the work of the Nominations Subcommittee.
- Chair the Nominations Subcommittee, as an appointed member of the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee and act in ex-officio, non-voting capacity. This includes convening the meetings of the Subcommittee, developing required assessment forms and materials, conducting outreach to raise awareness of the program and opportunity, receiving, and processing all submissions through the public, open nominations process, and reporting back to the City and the Arts & Culture Advisory Committee on the progress of the Subcommittee.
- Once the award recipients are selected, act as main liaison with them to coordinate the profile video creation.
- Participate in the planning and promotion of the award recipients and public events, and work collaboratively with the City on a joint, city-wide communications campaign to promote the program and the City's investment in artists and the arts community.

Funding:

Funding to support the Mayor's Arts Awards is provided through the Arts & Culture Services Department's operating budget on an annual basis, pending Council approval.

Annual Implementation Schedule:

Month	Action
June	Arts & Culture Advisory Committee establishes the Mayor's Arts Awards Nominations Subcommittee

June	Council approves the appointment of the Subcommittee members
July	Open call for nominations is posted on the City website and is promoted by the City and the Kingston Arts Council. The Kingston Arts Council convenes the first meeting of the Subcommittee.
September	Subcommittee confirms final selections for the Mayor's Arts Awards recipients.
October	The City and the Kingston Arts Council confirms event plans, develops promotional plan, including the commissioning of the profile videos, and begins advance communications
November	Awards presented at a public reception and included as part of City Council meeting
December	Post-event communications; evaluation and event post-mortem
October through May	Sustained recognition program to highlight the award winners

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Updated Terms of Reference, May 2024

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