



**City of Kingston
Information Report to Council
Report Number 25-076**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Ruth Noordegraaf, Director, Community Development & Wellbeing and IIDEA
Date of Meeting: February 18, 2025
Subject: Ethno-Cultural Community Spaces Pilot Program

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 4. Foster a Caring and Inclusive Community

Goal: 4.5 Promote and support diversity.

Executive Summary:

On May 21, 2024, Council passed a motion directing staff to coordinate on the development of a two-year pilot program that would allow emerging ethno-cultural community organizations to access select available and underutilized meeting room space(s) within City Recreation Facilities with the intent to build community capacity and to formalize themselves as community ethno-cultural organizations.

Staff was directed to report back with information on the pilot by the end of 2024. In preparation of the pilot staff researched programs in other communities, policies and procedures, identified space availability across City facilities, and created guidelines and criteria for the program. While the pilot was in development staff supported space requests from emerging ethnocultural organizations through other City programs.

Staff have now finalized the details of the pilot program, which will launch on February 21, 2025. Artillery Park and the Cataraqui Community Centre have been identified as the spaces for this pilot.

February 18, 2025

Page 2 of 7

As directed in the motion, this report outlines background information on the development and implementation of the Ethno-Cultural Community Spaces Pilot Program, detailing the processes involved in creating inclusive, culturally diverse spaces for community engagement, fostering cultural exchange and addressing the unique needs of various ethnic groups within the community.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

February 18, 2025

Page 3 of 7

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 & Emergency Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Ian Semple, Acting Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

February 18, 2025

Page 4 of 7

Options/Discussion:**Background**

On May 21, 2024, the following Council motion was carried:

Moved by Councillor Hassan

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Amos

Whereas the City of Kingston's population has been growing at a rapid rate and has an increasing number of newcomers with various cultural backgrounds; and

Whereas the City of Kingston is committed to supporting emerging community organizations representing various ethnic groups and cultural diversity; and

Whereas the City of Kingston has a process for community organizations to request fee waivers, but this process requires organizations to be established not-for-profits and allows for only one fee waiver request per organization per year to a maximum value of \$2,500, conditions that discourage the use of City facilities to support repeat meetings by emerging community organizations; and

Whereas the City of Kingston has some underutilized meeting spaces within its recreation facilities, particularly at several community arenas and over the winter months at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour which will be undergoing a visioning exercise in 2024-2025;

Therefore Be It Resolved That staff in Community Development and Wellbeing and Recreation and Leisure Services be directed to coordinate on the development of a two-year pilot program that would allow emerging ethno-cultural community organizations to access select available and underutilized meeting room space(s) within City Recreation Facilities with the intent to build community capacity and to formalize themselves as community ethno-cultural organizations; and

That notwithstanding the City of Kingston Waiver of Fees Policy, that the fees and conditions associated with using available and underutilized meeting room space(s) within City Recreation Facilities be waived when booked by emerging ethno-cultural community organizations for the two-year pilot program; and

That staff report back with information on the emerging ethno-cultural community spaces pilot program by the end of 2024.

Analysis

As the first step in developing the pilot, staff conducted research on best practices to understand how other municipalities engage ethno-cultural groups and manage spaces equitably. This included examining the approaches of Kitchener, Toronto and Brampton, with a focus on their engagement strategies and space management practices. While these cities are not

February 18, 2025

Page 5 of 7

comparable to the City of Kingston in terms of size or demographic context, research indicates that they implemented clear, structured and inclusive processes for ensuring community groups have access to free space.

Staff also reviewed internal policies and procedures such as the existing fee waiver policy, funding opportunities such as the Community Development – Neighbourhood Activation Funding (CD-NAF) and the Community Partner program at the Rideau Heights Community Centre and the Kingston East Community Centre, and identified initial underutilized spaces within the City's Recreational Facilities inventory to make recommendations for equitable resource utilization.

Staff provided initial thoughts and recommendations in a report to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Advisory Committee on August 26, 2024, ([Report Number EDI-24-006](#)) seeking feedback and insights from committee members. A primary focus of the discussion in this committee meeting was revising the program's scope to ensure it is inclusive of all community groups (emerging or existing ethnocultural group, informal or formal community groups, neighbourhood associations, and special interest clubs), promoting broader participation and support. Additionally, staff explored ways to remove barriers to participation, with a particular emphasis on prioritizing groups with the greatest needs, with the goal to ensure that the program is accessible, equitable and responsive to the diverse needs of the community.

To reflect these priorities, staff are proposing that the pilot program be named the 'Free Space Initiative'. This name is intended to be clear, concise and responsive, accurately conveying the program's objective of providing community groups with accessible and equitable spaces.

Staff from the Recreation & Leisure Services department identified two City facilities with underutilized space to serve as the primary sites for this pilot program: the Artillery Park Aquatic Centre and the Cataraqui Community Centre.

This program will be launched on February 21, 2025, through the City website and within the Recreation and Activities page under a section titled Community Access Programs. On the website community members can find the Free Space Initiative and other fee-reduction, free or grant programs offered by the City to promote inclusion and community activation. The full criteria and application process for the program can be found in Exhibit A of this report. While staff worked to finalize this process, staff have been actively assisting community groups in accessing space by utilizing the fee waiver policy, CD-NAF, and the Community Partner program at both the Rideau Heights Community Centre and the Kingston East Community Centre.

For the duration of the pilot, staff in Recreation & Leisure Services and the EDI office will work closely together to manage the booking process for these identified spaces, ensuring smooth and equitable access for community groups. As part of the program's guidelines, staff will administer the program in compliance with existing City policies for processes such as fee waiver requests and the Community Development -Neighbourhood Activation Fund program, which prohibit fundraising events and/or charging admission as part of this initiative.

February 18, 2025

Page 6 of 7

To promote the new pilot program and increase community awareness, staff are developing a targeted communication strategy to launch on February 21, 2025. The strategy will focus on reaching groups and individuals who would most benefit from this initiative, ensuring the message is inclusive and effectively communicated.

The Free Space Initiative will be evaluated at both six and 12 months after its launch. The evaluation will assess the use and availability of the two designated facilities, and staff will explore whether additional underutilized spaces would be needed to support the program. The evaluation will also include a review of applications to identify any existing or emerging ethno-cultural groups that may not have accessed the program. Based on this information, staff will determine if additional outreach or communication efforts are needed to ensure the program is fully inclusive and reaches all eligible community groups such as emerging or existing ethnocultural group, informal or formal community groups, neighbourhood associations, and special interest clubs.

Staff will report back on the outcome of the pilot project in Q1 of 2026. The assessment of the pilot will consider program uptake, rates of access by new or previously unsupported user groups and consideration of access provided at alternate sites through fee waivers and community funding programs.

Public Engagement

None

Climate Risk Considerations

None

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

None

Existing Policy/By-Law

None

Financial Considerations

None

Contacts:

Vanessa Mensah, Manager, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, 613-546-4291 extension 134

Tony Gargaro, Manager, Recreation Services, 613-546-4291 extension 1805

February 18, 2025

Page 7 of 7

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Kaitlyn Green, IIDEA Advisor, Community Development & Wellbeing and IIDEA

Ben Leslie, Community Development Coordinator, Community Development & Wellbeing and IIDEA

Amy Elgersma, Director, Recreation & Leisure Services

Erica McPherson, Supervisor, Recreation & Community Development, Recreation & Leisure Services

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A – Criteria and Application Process for the Free Space Initiative

Criteria and Application Process

Free Space Initiative

Emerging and established ethnocultural groups, community members and neighbourhood groups can access and book spaces in several City facilities for free. The intent of this program is to build community capacity and foster inclusion in City spaces. This program is specific to Artillery Park Aquatic Centre and the Cataraqui Community Centre.

Who Can Apply

Anyone looking to book a community space for a free event, program or meeting that aims to strengthen community connections in Kingston is welcome to apply.

The event, program or meeting must align with the City of Kingston's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. Hate groups will not be approved for this program. Political parties or events will also not be supported by this program.

Examples of Eligible Groups and Organizations

- An emerging or existing ethnocultural group
- Informal or formal community groups
- Neighbourhood associations
- Special interest clubs
- This list is for reference purposes only. We determine eligibility on the specific content and requirements of each program and event.

Guidelines and Requirements

The event, program or meeting must be free to attendees and not generate revenue (i.e. sales or fundraising). To be eligible for the Free Space Initiative, applicants must be in good financial standing with the City of Kingston.

Additionally, you must submit an insurance certificate at the time of your booking request or within five business days of the initial request. We use this certificate to create the contract so we cannot proceed without it.

Insurance Certificate Specifications

The insurance certificate must include the following information:

- Minimum of \$5 million in third-party liability coverage.
- List "The Corporation of the City of Kingston" as 'Additionally Insured.'
- List the City's address as 216 Ontario Street, Kingston, ON K7L 2Z3.

- A description of your event/use of space, including event date(s).

[How do I obtain an insurance certificate?](#)

[What if I already have an insurance?](#)

How to Apply

Sign up/log in to MyKingston to complete your application online. If you have questions, please call [**613-546-0000**](tel:613-546-0000) or [**Contact Us**](#).

As part of your application, please include your preferred location for the booking. Below are available City of Kingston facilities for this program:

Artillery Park Aquatic Centre

- a. Matthew Cahill Gymnasium (250 people maximum, but dependent on set-up)
- b. Multipurpose Room (50 people maximum)

Cataraqui Community Centre

- a. Sunnyside Hall (100 people maximum, upper level)
- b. Cloverdale Hall (100 people maximum, upper level)

The facilities and spaces listed above are the only eligible spaces available as part of the Free Space Initiative. If you would like to book a space at another City of Kingston location, please apply for a fee waiver.

How do we Process Applications?

We process booking requests on a first-come, first-served basis. Each applicant can book up to once a month. For us to start processing your application, you need to submit all information and documentation related to it. We will respond to your application within 5 business days.

Free Space Initiative Application

Use this form to request support under the Free Space Initiative to waive fees for rentals of city facilities for community meetings, events, and programs.

Currently the only spaces available as part of this program are below. Please select your preferred space:

Artillery Park Aquatics Centre

- a. Matthew Cahill Gymnasium (250 people maximum, but dependant on set up)

- b. Multipurpose Room (50 people maximum)

Cataraqui Community Centre

- a. Sunnyside Hall (100 people maximum, upper level)
- b. Cloverdale Hall (100 people maximum, upper level)

Contact Information

Please provide the contact information of the person in charge of this event

- Name*

First Name, Last Name

- Phone #*

Please enter a valid phone number

- Cell Phone #

Please enter a valid phone number

- Email*

example@example.com

Group or Person in Charge Information

Please provide the name of the group or organization who is planning the program/event (if applicable):

- Name of the group/individual*
- Are you a registered not-for-profit organization or charity organization?*

Yes No

*This does not exclude you from applying for the program, and we encourage groups and organizations that are not registered to apply.

Does this community group or organization identify with any of the following? (not required)

- a. An ethnocultural group
- b. A neighbourhood association
- c. An informal community group
- d. Other: _____

Do you, or one of the members of your group, reside in Kingston?*

Yes/No

Program/Event Information

Name of the program/event*

Program/event description*

*This field is required.

Age group

Does this event or program charge a fee for admission?

Yes/No

Will this event or program generate revenue or fundraise? (This would make a group ineligible for the Free Space Initiative)

Yes/No

Is this event/program open to anyone in the community?*

Yes/No

The event, program or meeting must align the City of Kingston’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. Hate groups will not be approved for this program. Political parties or events will also not be supported by this program.

Program/Event Details

- Number of participants*

Indicate the maximum number of participants for this program/event in a single session

- Start date*

Date

- End date

Date

- Will this event/program occur periodically?*

Yes/No

What is your preference and/or availability for booking (please select all options that apply). [Only the times for each day would be able to be selected]

Day	Time		
Monday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Tuesday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Wednesday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Thursday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Friday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Saturday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Sunday	Morning	Afternoon	Evening

Consent to Communication*

The City of Kingston is committed to working closely with ethnocultural groups, community groups, organizations and partners to promote inclusivity and belonging. Would you, or someone from your group, be willing to be contacted by City staff for future engagement opportunities?

Contact information:

If you have questions or comments, or require follow-up, please contact us at contactus@cityofkingston.ca.

Notice of Collection

Personal information, as defined in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, and in accordance with MFIPPA. Personal information collected on this form will be used by City of Kingston staff in the review of the Community Partner Rate Program application, and to contact you if necessary. Questions regarding the collection, use, and disclosure of this personal information may be directed to City staff responsible for Community Development through contactus@cityofkingston.ca or at 613-546-0000.