CITY OF Lethbridge

HEART OF OUR CITY

Re- Imagine Downtown Activation Grant

Application Guide | 2027 Events







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Overview

The **Re-Imagine Downtown Activation Grant** provides limited financial support for businesses, entrepreneurs, organizations, and community-minded individuals to implement initiatives, events, and/or programs that activate the Downtown district. The program has a particular focus on Downtown spaces that are underutilized and under-programmed. For 2027 the Re-Imagine Downtown Activation Grant there will be a particular focus on activating Galt Gardens Park.

Another major goal of the Re-Image Downtown Activation Grant is to fund new, unique, and innovative events that improve the Downtown, with a key focus on those events becoming financially sustainable in future years. To support this goal, new events will be prioritized over reoccurring events, and new events will be eligible for greater funding amounts.

Outcomes

Proposed initiatives, events, and programs should align with the vision and direction of the Heart of Our City Master Plan and be connected to addressing the wants, needs, and pain points identified in the Heart of Our City Downtown Personas Project.

Proposed initiatives, events, and programs should also support the following outcomes (additional details can be found in the Evaluation section of this Guide):

- Experiment with fun and innovative ideas that generate community participation and engagement.
- Transform or breathe new life into vacant or underutilized public or private spaces, making them attractive, inviting, inclusive, and safe.
- Create opportunities for people to safely connect with their local Downtown neighborhood.
- Showcase the Downtown, including businesses and organizations that call this neighborhood home.
- Enhance the creativity, connection, and local identity of the Downtown and Lethbridge community.
- Encourage links between community, arts, culture, recreation, business, and tourism.
- Promote environmental sustainability.
- Promote **I**nclusion, **D**iversity, **E**quity and **A**ccessibility, ensuring Downtown is a welcoming and accessible space for all.

Eligibility

The following eligibility requirements apply to the Re-Imagine Downtown Activation Grant.

- Businesses and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply. If an Individual is applying, they must be partnered with a non-profit organization or a business.
- The initiative, event and/or program must physically take place within the Downtown, Civic Precinct, Warehouse District and 13 St N areas. Online or digital proposals will not be considered (see Figure 1).
- A significant portion of the initiative, event and/or program must take place outdoors in a public space. (i.e., the event cannot take place exclusively inside) Applications with events where 100% of activities take place outside will be scored higher.
- At least some component of the initiative, event and/or program must be free to the public.
- Applications for an initiative, event and/or program for which the main purpose is fundraising will not be accepted.
- Initiatives take place in 2027 and final reports must be completed and submitted within 90 days of event completion.
- Outside of peak season (June-September) events will be prioritized.

Ineligible Expenses

Applications may not receive funding for the following ineligible expenses:

- Prizes including gift cards, alcohol, and merchandise for resale.
- Retroactive expenses or accumulated deficits.
- Administrative/Project Wages and Salaries (See description below)
- In-Kind expenses. (See description below)
- Purchase of land or buildings.
- Capital expenses not related to or necessitated by the proposed initiative, event and/or program. (See description below)

Ineligible In Kind Expenses

An in-kind contribution is where facilities or services are provided to the event at no real cost to the event. The dollar value of these contributions can be attributed to the budget, but they must be listed in the in-kind column on the budget sheet.

Examples of Items that are considered ineligible in-kind expenditure.

- Administrative/project fees charged to the grant, by the grant recipient.
- Rental of space charged to the grant by the grant recipient. If a business or business owner is applying for a grant, they cannot charge the grant for the use of their own business space. This is also considered an in-kind expense.

Ineligible Project Wages & Salaries

All administrative/project wages and salaries are ineligible expenses; however, honorariums may be offered to external volunteers to a maximum of $15/hr/volunteer for the duration of the event. If you are planning to provide honorariums to external volunteers, these must be detailed in the application and project budget. Note that the applicant, and employees and current volunteers of the applicant, are ineligible to receive honorariums.

Services offered by a 3rd party business or not-for-profit, security wages (through a professional security company), and 3rd party entertainment expenses **are** eligible expenses.

Ineligible Capital Purchases

Any equipment required for an event can be rented. If the event organizer desires to utilize a piece of equipment that is not available for rental, this cost is solely on the event organizer and not eligible for grant funding. If it was determined that City of Lethbridge Funds were used for the purchase of equipment, these funds or equipment must be returned to the City.

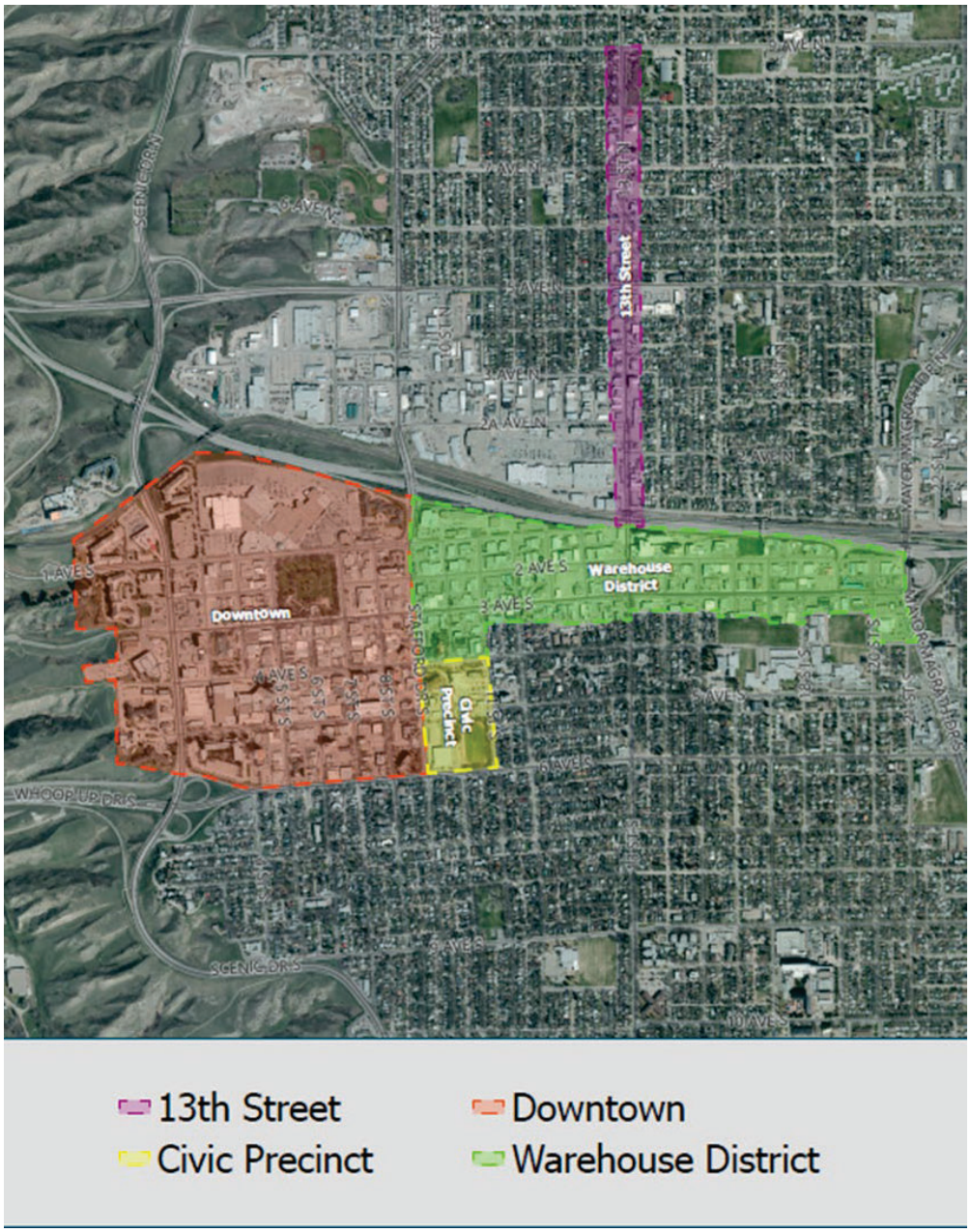


Figure 1. Boundaries of the Eligible Districts

Funding

Total funding available for 2027 is $120,000.00.

- There will be 1 application intakes for 2027. The ReImagine Grant will see up to $120,000 in funds awarded.
- The ReImagin Grant will open November 16, 2026, and close December 31, 2026. Events will be awarded in January 2027. Final Reports for the 2027 ReImagine Grant will be due within 90 days of the event completion.
- Applications for events ***OUTSIDE*** of Galt Gardens can be made for up to $10,000 per initiative, event, or program. However, a City of Lethbridge Fee for Service Organization is limited to 2 events per year.
- Applications for events ***INSIDE*** of Galt Gardens will be prioritized and can be made for up to $15,000 per initiative, event, or program. However, a City of Lethbridge Fee for Service Organization is limited to 2 events per year.
- 60% of grant funds will be released when grant is awarded, the remaining 40% of funds is released upon acceptance of Final Report. The City is not obliged to release all of fund committed if deemed City funds were used for ineligible expenses. Furthermore, See Grant Expectations and Final Reporting Requirements, as well as the Ineligible Expense sections.

Grant, Budget, and Final Reporting Expectations

The intent of this grant is to bring positive activities into the Downtown through events. One applies for this grant because you are an urban champion who is willing to donate a portion of their time and resources to activate the Downtown to increase safety, public perception and inclusive for persons visiting the space. Another purpose of this grant is to reflect its name “Re-Imagine” so new and unique events will be strongly encouraged.

You are required to submit a budget as part of your application. The purpose of this is to gauge an understanding of potential economic impact as well as a method to check for budget feasibility. All anticipated event expenses are to be included in the budget sheet. If your event is funded this does not mean that every item listed in your budget is eligible for City funding. It is the applicant’s responsibility to understand what expenses are ineligible and eligible.

Final Reports must be submitted by the assigned deadlines. If a final report has not been submitted by the assigned deadline, then this organization will be no longer considered in good standing and will not be permitted to apply for any further grants until the final report from the previous grant has been submitted. Final reports submitted after the assigned deadline will forfeit the remaining 40% of funds committed. These funds will be returned the Re-Imagine Grant fund for use in future intakes.

Keep all receipts, invoices, proof of payments (screen shots of successful e-transfers, copies of both front and back of cleared cheques etc.) as the City of Lethbridge can request these to back up your final report.

Key Dates

Applications will be accepted in one (1) intake for 2027 events. Dates are subject to change. All Events must take place in 2027. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

Grant Intake

- Opens November 16, 2026, and close December 31, 2026. Events will be awarded in January 2026. Final Reports for the 2027 intake will be due within 90 days of the event completion.

Funding Notes

- Successful applicants will receive ***60%*** of their approved grant within 4 weeks of award and the final ***40%*** within 4 weeks of a Final Report being submitted and deemed complete by City administration. Special circumstances may be considered.
- The City of Lethbridge reserves the right to:
    - Not expend all allocated funding.
    - Request further information in considering any application.
    - Reject any application that does not meet the criteria; and/or
    - Award an amount less than that applied for, if it is assessed that the amount requested is not justified or the full amount is not available.
- All decisions are final and non-negotiable.

- Events that turn a profit may receive a lower final disbursement, or may be required to return all, or a portion, of the first 60% disbursement. The total amount of which will be calculated by subtracting the total profit amount from the awarded grant total.

  For example, an event that received $5,000 through the Re-Imagine grant but turned a $6,000 profit would not receive a final disbursement and would be required to return the first 60% disbursement. An event that received $10,000 through the Re-imagine Grant but turned a $1,000 profit would receive $1,000 less in the final disbursement.

  - Applicants that purposefully avoid disclosing profits will be unable to apply for future Re-imagine grants.

Evaluation Criteria

Project Plan	Describe project in detail. Identify what Heart of our City Personas are being acknowledged through your event.
Attendance	How many people do you anticipate attending this event?
Event Duration	Describe event duration. 1-2 day one time event? Multiple days across the span of a few months? Outside of peak season events (June-September) events will be prioritized.
Community Support and Benefit	Does the proposed initiative, event and/or program show evidence of community support, partnerships, engagement with Downtown stakeholders? Are there financial and/or in-kind contributions from other parties? Does the proposed initiative, event and/or program showcase what is unique and special about Downtown Lethbridge to the community and beyond? Identify what percentage of events are being held outside.
Marketing Plan	How is your event to be marketed? Ex. Radio, Meta advertising. Will you be hiring a marketing firm? Provide estimated marketing budget.
Organizational Capacity and Project Sustainability	Does the applicant have experience successfully delivering an initiative, event and/or program of similar scale? How does the proposed initiative, event and/or program consider its own ongoing financial sustainability (i.e., reduced dependence on City grants over time)?

	How will the organizers limit the environmental impact of the proposed initiative, event and/or program?
Budget and Level of Reliance	Is the budget comprehensive and realistic? Does the proposed initiative, event and/or program provide good value for the money invested by the City? Value is determined through aspects like anticipated attendance and accessibility, as well as the level of reliance of City funds to hold event.
Inclusion **Diversity** **Equity** **Accessibility**	How does the proposed initiative, event and/or program consider cultural, social and economic **IDEA**? Think about… *What potential barriers are there to accessing the proposed initiative, event and/or program?* *Are there unique or under-represented voices that the proposed initiative, event and/or program seeks to highlight?* *Are there opportunities for local/small businesses, equity seek communities or others facing barriers to get involved as partners, programmers or participants?*