



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 15.1.5
Halifax Regional Council
April 29, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council
FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE: March 31, 2025
SUBJECT: Municipal Support for Community Led Events

ORIGIN

October 1, 2024, Meeting of Regional Council (Item 15.8.1):

MOVED by Councillor Russell Seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to write a staff report that:

1. Creates a policy/framework that provides clear criteria and a rationale for determining which significant events should be included in the annual municipal event calendar and be managed, either wholly or partially, by the municipality.
2. Conducts a full review of the current annual event calendar and propose changes to the existing events based on new policy and framework.
3. Investigates and propose methods of support for significant community-led events, such as the Sackville Tree Lighting ceremony. Support could include but not be limited to; funding options, in-kind resources, insurance provision, promotional assistance and streamlined permitting processes to help facilitate these important community events.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report reviews the background of municipally delivered events and describes currently delivered events. To streamline resources and enhance impact, new criteria for Municipally Delivered Events (MDE) are proposed to prioritize inclusivity, alignment with municipal goals, and regional benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. approve the criteria, set forth in the Discussion section of this report, that an event must meet in order for the event to be considered in the Annual Calendar of Municipally Delivered Events; and
2. approve the Annual Calendar of Municipally Delivered Events as set forth in Table 2 in the

Discussion section of this report.

BACKGROUND

The HRM Events team supports over 150 events annually through grants and/or municipal services through the Special Events Task Force (SETF). Three Senior Civic Event staff directly deliver 15 Festivals or events which leads to 50+ event days programmed in the Municipally Delivered Event calendar.

Historically, events organized by the municipality have been assigned through different methods such as; being grandfathered at the time of amalgamation, direction from senior management or based on direction from Council.

In 2015, the staff report on [Special events Grant Process - Administrative Orders](#) indicated that events under the direct care and control of HRM Civic Event staff would be defined as "regional operational" events. These were civic events for which:

- HRM assumes the risk and liability;
- HRM civic event staff organize and deliver;
- Budgets are held internally within the HRM SAP accounting system;
- Occur annually and the duration of event activities is no longer than 5 days;
- Provide benefits such as local media coverage, economic and business benefit, promotes HRM within the event's marketing campaign;
- Are accessible and attractive to people of all ages, ethnicity, and cultural background; and
- Program supports a national or regional landmark occasion.

To align with the above, staff recommended the phasing out of Bedford Days and the Dartmouth Tree lighting as municipally delivered events, with a view to these becoming community led events. On May 26, 2015, Regional Council approved the "Regional Events and Cultural Initiatives Operational Event Programs criteria and realignment" but directed the retention of Bedford Days and the Dartmouth Tree Lighting as municipally delivered events. These would be considered legacy events as the care and control from the beginning of the event was the responsibility of the Municipality.

Annual Event Calendar of Municipally Delivered Events

HRM currently operates 11 regional-scale events and 4 culturally significant events in collaboration with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I). The current MDE's are listed below in chronological order and more details on these events are found in **Attachment 1**:

1. National Indigenous People's Day*
2. Bedford Days
3. **Summer Event Series (40 additional event days since 2019)**
4. KANA'TA: HFX Canada Day*
5. Emancipation Day / Freedom Festival*
6. Natal Day Weekend
7. Acadian Day*
8. Clam Harbour Beach Sandcastle Competition
9. Vibrancy Festival
10. Hopscotch Halifax
11. HRM Christmas Tree Lighting
12. Dartmouth Christmas Tree Lighting
13. Halifax Explosion Memorial Service
14. Menorah Lighting
15. New Year's Eve

**Culturally significant events are delivered in collaboration with D&I*

In 2021, Regional Council approved funding to create unique events that could act as a downtown enhancement project to help citizens feel safe at outdoor events during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

and to support businesses affected by the pandemic. The Grand Oasis and Dartmouth Summer Series were created and became a major success drawing over 100,000+ people downtown from 2021 to 2023. The Grand Oasis won Event Atlantic's Festival of the Year in 2022. In 2023 Council approved the Summer Series moving forward within the Parks & Recreation budget. The programming and cultural collaborations including Acadian Day, PRIDE, Emancipation Day and Vibrancy were all part of this series.

Since 2021 staff have created significant opportunities for various cultural organizations and artists in HRM by refocusing our event programming to be more reflective of a variety of citizens and traditions. HRM's events now prioritize long-term impact, community engagement, and inclusivity. This strategic shift has strengthened partnerships, expanded outreach, and directly delivered 100+ events in four years, enhancing Halifax's reputation as a vibrant and welcoming Municipality.

Community Led Events Grants

Since 2016, HRM has provided funding for community-led events fostering community pride, heritage, arts, and culture. On average HRM funds an average of 52 events spread across all districts in the Municipality. The program includes four categories outlined below in Table 1:

Table 1: Regional Special Events Grants Program Maximum Grants and Allocation (2024-25)		
Program	Maximum Grant	Total Allocation
Community Celebrations – Small Local events	\$1,000	\$215,000
Established Community Events – Long standing event, budget over \$10,000	\$25,000	
Significant Anniversaries – Milestone celebrations	\$10,000	
Cultural Events & Showcases – Arts Festivals, budget over \$50,000	\$60,000	\$200,000

DISCUSSION

With direction from Council, staff have been reassessing which events should be municipally delivered versus community led and have reviewed the criteria for municipally led events. Both event types are essential, with regional events raising Halifax's profile in a more substantial way, while community-led events have a focus on building local connections and a sense of belonging.

Defining Regional Municipally Delivered Events and Community-Led Local Events

Regional Municipal Events: Municipally led initiatives designed to attract broad audiences, promote Halifax's culture, and drive tourism and economic growth. These events may require significant logistical coordination, including security, transportation, and permitting. These events are directly delivered by the Events division.

Community Events: Grassroots initiatives focused on local traditions and culture, strengthening community identity and fostering resident participation. Led by nonprofit or volunteer groups, these events also help develop new industry professionals. These events are supported by HRM's Event Grant Process and multiple divisions representing the Special Events Taskforce (ie HRP Services, Road Closures and signage support, EHS medical support, Alcohol and Gaming permits, etc).

Municipally Delivered Events (MDE)

Staff recommend the adoption of revised criteria and process, listed below, which must be met to qualify and be included in the annual calendar of municipally delivered events. These criteria will be used moving forward, should there be opportunity to add events to the current successful event calendar. The new criteria aim to ensure equitable access, enhance cultural and community vitality, and optimize municipal resources for events that benefit residents and visitors alike. The guidelines govern the review, selection,

and management of these events to ensure alignment with municipal priorities and values moving forward. To ensure events are meeting the evolving municipal priorities, staff recommends a review of the calendar, every 4 years.

Event Type

The first phase of the event assessment by staff is to ensure events meet the “Event Type” criteria. Staff recommend that ineligible events are defined in accordance with [Administrative Order Number 201 4-020-GOV](#) – respecting grants, as such events such as trade shows or conferences would not be considered to be municipally delivered events. Staff further recommend that the event must align with three or more of the following categories:

Phase 1: Eligibility Assessment (Events must align with a minimum of three to move to phase 2)

- **Cultural** – Celebrates Halifax’s heritage, arts, and diversity.
- **Tourism-Boosting Initiatives** - Measurable and significant economic return. Should reflect the vision of the new Event Strategy
- **Anniversary / Commemorative** – Marks milestone achievements or historical events.
- **Regional** – Appeals to a broad audience, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.

In consideration of any new events, staff will review the event overview and purpose, branding, marketing plan and overall budget to ensure these categories are significantly aligned with these event types. If the event meets these standards, staff will review the following Criteria to ensure it aligns and fills a gap within the annual calendar.

Phase 2: Event Criteria

Staff recommend that all new events added to the annual calendar align with all five (5) categories:

1. **Municipal Priorities**
 - Reflects HRM’s evolving values and strategic priorities.
 - **Civic Identity**: Contributes to Halifax’s brand as a welcoming, culturally rich, and vibrant city.
 - **Meets a Demand**: Is this event unique to others in the current annual calendar, allowing HRM to diversify event offerings
2. **Accessibility & Inclusion**
 - **Diverse Programming** – Represents Halifax’s cultures and identities.
 - **Accessible Sites**: Accessibility and inclusion are at the forefront of the event site planning
 - **Open & Affordable** – Civic holiday events should be free; ticketed events must offer free access plans for a minimum of 25% of the event capacity. The event must create free access via ticketing applications or non-profit organizations aligned with the festival or event.
3. **Regional & Economic Impact**
 - **Economic Growth** – Supports local businesses, event professionals, and the creative sector.
 - **Tourism & Exposure** – Attracts visitors from within and beyond the region, strengthening Halifax’s reputation as an event destination. Marketing plans targeted beyond the area the event is held.
4. **Feasibility & Safety**
 - **Logistics & Coordination** – Requires municipal infrastructure, permits, and multi-agency collaboration to ensure public safety.
 - **Reputation Management** – High-profile or municipally-created events (e.g., Natal Day, Vibrancy, Hopscotch, New Year’s Eve) should be municipally managed to maintain quality and reputation.

5. **Resource Capacity & Sustainability**

- **Staffing & Budget:** Must fit within available municipal resources and be scheduled to complement, rather than overburden, existing event commitments.
- **Sustainability:** Demonstrates a long-term strategy for growth and community impact.

Review of the Current Event Calendar

Upon review of the current event calendar, staff believe that 11 of the 15 current events listed meet at least three categories within the proposed criteria of the MDE definition. The events that qualify are either well-known established events highly recognized as part of the Municipality's reputation of delivering large-scale spectacles (e.g. Canada Day, Natal Day, NYE) or they attract new communities and age demographics the municipality was not catering to pre-pandemic and have proven track records as revenue generators and/or community builders (Hopscotch, Emancipation Day/Freedom Festival, Acadian Day and Vibrancy). Existing events that do not meet three (3) or more categories would continue to be legacy events in the annual events calendar based on previous council direction.

Table 2: Annual Calendar of Municipally Delivered Events + Legacy Events	
Annual Events Calendar that meets Criteria	Legacy Events
National Indigenous People's Day	Dartmouth Christmas Tree Lighting
Summer Event Series	Bedford Days
KANA'TA: HFX Canada Day	Halifax Explosion Memorial
Emancipation Day / Freedom Festival	Menorah Lighting
Natal Day	
Acadian Day	
Clam Harbour Beach Sandcastle Competition	
Vibrancy Festival	
Hopscotch Festival	
HRM Christmas Tree Lighting	
New Years Eve	

Staff believe the event calendar captures a diverse mix of events and if approved should remain with this current calendar until the 2028/29 budget period following the election of the next Council.

Legacy Events

Bedford Days & Dartmouth Tree Lighting

Upon review of all the events, Bedford Days and the Dartmouth Christmas Tree Lighting were specifically dedicated and branded as local celebrations of specific districts and did not meet the identified criteria above. These two events were presented to Council for removal in 2015 as they did not meet the criteria for regional operated events at that time. They were, at that time, approved to remain in the annual calendar based on their legacy as official HRM events for over 20 years. Both events have been under the care and control of event staff from their inception. Based on previous Council direction, staff recommend these two events remain in the Legacy Event category.

Halifax Explosion Memorial & Menorah Lighting

The Halifax Explosion Memorial and Menorah Lighting have also been identified by staff as legacy events that would not meet the new criteria set forward in this report. However, they have been part of the annual event calendar for over 25 years. Both events have a regional reach with significant cultural connection to HRM and the community. Both ceremonies are important commemorations of community and our heritage. Although the events may not require the logistical efforts of our regional festivals, staff believe they bring community members to a central location from across the Province to honour these significant dates.

Additional Options for Municipal Support to Community Led Events

The Strength of Community Led Events

Community led events encourage residents and visitors to celebrate, collaborate, promote and become a part of HRM's special identity; they make HRM a more diverse, vibrant and interesting place to live, work, study, and visit. Volunteerism has always been a vital part of successful community events.

Local events often operate on tight budgets, and volunteers provide invaluable labor without financial compensation. This allows organizers to allocate limited funds toward other essentials like event infrastructure, entertainment, and promotion. When residents volunteer, they feel a deeper sense of ownership and pride in the event, this fosters a collective spirit and strengthens community bonds. The event becomes a reflection of the community's identity and values, making it more meaningful to everyone involved. This social capital is crucial for fostering trust and collaboration in the community, extending well beyond the event itself.

Increased funding to Regional Special Events Grant Program

An increase of \$225,000 to the Regional Special Events Grants program was included in the 2025/26 budget. This increase will see the Regional Special Events Grants expand from \$415,000 to \$640,000. This is the first increase to this fund in over a decade. This supports the increased financial pressure currently facing community led events, will support increasing the quality of events within HRM and allows for new events to receive funding. [The Regional Special Events Grants Program Review](#) information report was on the February 25, 2025 Regional Council agenda as an information item.

In Kind Services

HRM Events provides community led events that present to the Special Events Task Force a municipal point of contact or "Lead". Staff assigned as the "lead" review the logistics plan and provide guidance throughout the event process. The three Senior Coordinators currently assist 150 total events combined.

Staff will be conducting a full review of in-kind service support of events as outlined in the 2025/26 business plan. This review will include the amount of event fees and staff time used on multiple key services for events (e.g. Police Services, Transit fees, Road Closure and Signage, etc). The goal of this review will be to provide opportunities to better understand the municipal in-kind contribution to events and to explore the potential for increased supports for events within HRM. This report will be brought back to council and may impact future budgets.

Events Division Capacity and Jurisdictional Scan of Event Cities

Halifax's Event Division is part of the Canadian Municipal Event Alliance through the Creative Cities Network of Canada. This group represents multiple regions in charge of Events for their area. Through this group staff have learned that Halifax's current offerings of events exceeds the quantity of major hubs like Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver's event divisions. These regions do not have the capacity to host more Municipally Delivered events and rely on Community organizers to create events to grow their event ecosystem. Staff believe the calendar has evolved over the past 10 years from solely celebrating colonial civic holidays into an event plan that honours our historic cultures including Indigenous, Black, Celtic, and Acadian heritage. It's a calendar that also has diversified to focus on youth through progressive musical genres and is honouring our past through the Halifax Explosion Memorial service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The risks considered rate low in continuing the event calendar outlined in Table 2. There is potential reputational risk associated with continuing with legacy events that do not meet the proposed criteria. Organizers of other events could question why those events are municipally delivered events, while theirs are not. Legacy events may mean that staff and Council face ongoing pressure for case-by-case decisions.

The focus of the division is on creating regional scale events that attract residents and visitors from all over the municipality. If staff is focused on community events it could affect the time required to attract major events to the region and build upon the Events Strategy's vision of becoming a national leader in event hosting.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose to:

1. Transition Dartmouth Tree Lightning and Bedford Days by 2027/28, from Municipally Delivered Events to Community-Led Events;
If Council chooses this alternative, staff proposes a phased approach for transitioning Bedford Days and Dartmouth Tree Lighting into community led events. The two (2) programs would be transitioned from the Municipally Delivered Event program category over a two (2) year period. These programs would continue to receive municipal support services from the Special Events Task Force process and would be assigned a civic event lead. In 2027, as a result these events would have to be registered with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks or will be accepted by an existing non-for-profit organization and would follow the application process for grants in the same manner as other established community festivals. This would require an increase to the Community Events / Special Projects grant stream of \$40,000 in the 2027-28 budget.
2. Regional Council could choose to make revisions to the criteria for municipally delivered events or the calendar of municipally delivered events. If Council directs this, a staff report would be required.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39:

Section 79A

- (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if
- (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;
 - (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the *Emergency Management Act*; or
 - (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.

Administrative Order 2014-021-GOV – The Administrative Order on Regional Events Grants.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 – Municipally Delivered Events Overview 2025

Attachment 2 - 2025-2026 Community Led Events and Event Categories

Report Prepared by: Billy Comer, Manager Events, Parks & Recreation, 902.943.3810

Attachment 1

Municipally Delivered Events Overview 2025

Staff conducted a review of all Municipally delivered events. The following overview of each event offers a brief summary of the origin, attendance and purpose to host each event.

Event: Bedford Days

Date: June 28 - July 1

Locations: DeWolfe Park, Sunnyside Mall

Event Origin: Bedford Days was approved in the MDE Calendar at amalgamation, coming from the former town of Bedford. It was designated as the large-scale suburban event to remain in the Regional Calendar. A volunteer community committee was formed to develop programming, secure sponsorships, and act as local champions of the festival. HRM Events supports the event with one Senior Events Manager overseeing the event plan annually. The festival has been a legacy event since 1996 and was challenged for removal in 2015 at Regional Council, but was ultimately retained.

HRM Operating Budget: \$20,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$40,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: 10,000

Event: KANATA: HFX Canada Day

Date: July 1

Locations: Emera Oval, Grand Parade, Halifax Waterfront, Sullivans Pond, Public Gardens, Ferry Terminal Park, Alderney Landing

Event Origin: KANATA: HFX Canada Day was designed to celebrate Canada's national holiday with an emphasis on Indigenous storytelling, history, and reconciliation. The event includes live performances, cultural exhibits, and fireworks, aiming to provide an inclusive and educational experience while maintaining traditional festivities. Over the years Canada Day in Halifax

has been recognized as the most attended celebration in Atlantic Canada, hosting well over 100,000 people annually. The event has attracted international artists to the region including the most attended concert in Downtown history with Deadmau5 on the Commons (Canada 150 celebrations).

HRM Operating Budget: \$75,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$40,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: \$50,000

Event: Halifax-Dartmouth Natal Day

Date: August 1 - 4

Location: Halifax Waterfront, Dartmouth Waterfront, Sullivans Pond, Lake Banook, Public Gardens, Multiple Streets during the Parade and more

Event Origin: Natal Day is one of Halifax's longest-lasting celebrations, marking the founding of Halifax-Dartmouth with a long weekend of events, including parades, concerts, fireworks, and community activities. The event brings together both sides of the harbour in a joint celebration of civic pride. The African Nova Scotian Music Association's Freedom Festival is a highlight of the weekend, celebrating Emancipation Day through live music and community vendors all day long. This is

HRM Operating Budget: \$160,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$20,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: \$25,000

Event: Clam Harbour Beach Sandcastle Competition

Date: August 23

Location: Clam Harbour Beach

Event Origin: The Clam Harbour Beach Sandcastle Competition has been an annual tradition drawing artists, families, and competitors from across the region. This unique event transforms the beach into an artistic showcase of elaborate sand

sculptures, attracting thousands of spectators each year. It is one of the rural area's largest celebrations of the year and the most attended beach event annually in HRM.

HRM Operating Budget: \$60,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$6,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: \$10,000

Event: Hopscotch Festival

Date: October 16-18

Location: Lighthouse Arts Centre, Rogers Square, Grand Parade and various music venues

Event Origin: Created by the Municipality in 2010 alongside local artists to support a gap in youth based programming in the annual events calendar. the Hopscotch Festival is Halifax's premier hip-hop festival, designed to celebrate music, culture, live muralists and dancers. The event features concerts, workshops, and community engagement initiatives, fostering local talent and connecting Halifax to the international hip-hop scene. It has been a sold out event all fifteen years of its existence.

Allowing youth to celebrate together annually.

HRM Operating Budget: \$50,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$50,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: \$15,000

Event: TD Dartmouth Tree Lighting

Date: November 29

Location: Sullivans Pond, Alderney Landing

Event Origin: The Dartmouth Tree Lighting is a community-centered event that kicks off the holiday season with festive lights, entertainment, and family-friendly activities. It is a staple holiday tradition aimed at fostering local pride and bringing residents together in a shared celebration.

HRM Operating Budget: \$20,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$20,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: \$5,000

Event: Halifax Tree Lighting

Date: November 22

Location: Grand Parade

Event Origin: The Halifax Tree Lighting is a large-scale holiday event featuring performances, interactive activities, and the official lighting of the city's Christmas tree. The event attracts families and visitors, creating a festive atmosphere in the heart of the city. Annually featuring international childrens entertainers (ie Paw Patrol, Dora The Explorer, etc) the Halifax Tree Lighting has become a major tourist attraction and important part of kicking off Downtown Halifax's holiday shopping season.

HRM Operating Budget: \$40,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$5,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: \$5,000

Event: Halifax Explosion Memorial Service

Date: December 6

Location: Fort Needham, Bell Tower

Event Origin: This memorial service commemorates the Halifax Explosion of 1917, one of the most significant disasters in Canadian history. The event provides a space for reflection and remembrance, honoring the victims and first responders who played crucial roles in the aftermath.

HRM Operating Budget: \$5,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$0

External Sponsorship In-Kind: TBD

Event: Menorah Lighting

Date: TBD

Location: Grand Parade

Event Origin: The Menorah Lighting celebrates Hanukkah with a public ceremony that includes traditional blessings, music, and community participation. The event promotes cultural awareness and inclusivity within the broader Halifax community. The celebration continues in Halifax Hall for families to gather following the lighting of the Menorah.

HRM Operating Budget: \$10,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$0

External Sponsorship In-Kind: TBD

Event: New Year's Eve @ Grand Parade

Date: December 31

Location: Grand Parade

Event Origin: New Year's Eve at Grand Parade is Halifax's signature year-end celebration, featuring live entertainment, fireworks, and a vibrant atmosphere to ring in the new year. The event draws large crowds and is a key moment for the city's event calendar.

HRM Operating Budget: \$80,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$5,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: TBD

Event: Halifax-Dartmouth Summer Series

Date: June 21 – August 24

Location:

Event Origin: The Halifax-Dartmouth Summer Series is a collection of culturally diverse and community-focused events designed to celebrate the vibrancy of the region. This series includes National Indigenous Peoples Day, OPEN Streets Dartmouth, Desi Community Summer Fest, Emancipation Day, Acadian Day, a PRIDE event, a collaboration with the Jamaican Cultural Association, Vibrancy Fest, and the Sullivans Pond Summer Series. Each event within the series highlights unique cultural traditions, music, and artistic expression, fostering inclusivity and community engagement throughout the summer. The series provides a platform for our Export ready local talent, strengthens cultural awareness, and supports the growth of Halifax-Dartmouth as a hub for diverse celebrations.

HRM Operating Budget: \$250,000

External Sponsorship Cash: \$50,000

External Sponsorship In-Kind: \$25,000

C760-6933 SPECIAL EVENTS ANNUAL BUDGET (Estimated Expense + Revenue)

EVENT	Date	C760-6933 Annual Allocation	Estimated External Revenue (Sponsor, Grants, etc)
Halifax-Dartmouth SUMMER SERIES (National Indigenous Peoples Day, OPEN Streets Dartmouth, Desi Community Summer Fest, Emancipation Day, Acadian Day, PRIDE event, Jamaican Cultural Association collaboration, Vibrancy Fest and Sullivans Pond Summer Series)	June 21 – August 24	\$250,000	\$50,000
Bedford Days	June 28-July 1	\$20,000	\$40,000

KANATA: HFX Canada Day	July 1	\$75,000	\$40,000
Halifax-Dartmouth Natal Day	August 1 - 4	\$160,000	\$20,000
Clam Harbour Beach Sand Castle Competition	August 23	\$60,000	\$6000
Hopscotch Festival	October 16-18	\$50,000	\$50,000
Dartmouth Tree Lighting	November 29	\$20,000	\$20000
Halifax Tree Lighting	November 22	\$40,000	\$5000
Halifax Explosion Memorial Service	December 6	\$5,000	\$0
Menorah Lighting	TBD	\$10,000	\$0
New Years Eve @ Grand Parade	December 31	\$80,000	\$5000

Attachment 2

2025/2026 Regional Special Events Grants Official List of Community Led Events Community Celebrations, Significant Anniversaries, Cultural Showcases

The Following list breaks down the multiple Community Led Events that HRM funds through our events grant program. These events also receive support from the Special Events Task Force upon request.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

1. BACK TO SCHOOL FUN DAY

Organization: Greystone United Society
Date: August 23, 2025
Location: Greystone Subdivision Basketball Court and Community Open Space
Proposed Attendance: 250

Program Description: To wrap up the summer and prepare for the upcoming school year, various free children's activities such as bouncy castles, BBQ, arts and crafts table, face painting, slip and slide and a clown will be offered to bring the community together to meet and build relationships.

2. COMMUNITY PICNIC

Organization: Middle Musquodoboit Argicultural Society
Date: July 1, 2025
Location: Exhibition Grounds, Middle Musquodoboit
Proposed Attendance: 800

Program Description: A community picnic to celebrate Canada's Birthday. Celebration activities will include having local musicians performing throughout the day, free family photos, games for children, free cake and ice cream, and entertainment from the local community.

3. CONCERT IN THE PARK ACADIA HALL GRANDSTAGE

Organization: Woodbine Community Nova Scotia Non-Profit Society
Date: August 24, 2025
Location: 650 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville
Proposed Attendance: 500

Program Description: Free family evening concert with live local music performers that ends around dusk.

4. CULTURAL DIVERSITY TRADITIONS

Organization: Focused 360 Youth Association
Date: April 3-7, 2025
Location: East Preston Recreation Centre and Lake Echo
Proposed Attendance: 25

Program Description: The upcoming cultural event will offer an interactive celebration of cultural diversity through two main activities: a cooking experience featuring traditional recipes from various cultures, and a paint expression session. Participants will have the chance to learn how to prepare authentic dishes from diverse cultures, deepening their appreciation for community traditions. Additionally, the paint night will encourage social interaction expression, allowing attendees to explore and express their cultural identities through art.

5. EAST DARTMOUTH COMMUNITY BBQ

Attachment 2

Organization: Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Halifax
Date: August 9, 2025
Location: Beazley Field
Proposed Attendance: 300

Program Description: A free, fun day filled with games, interactive sport demonstrations and numerous community service groups to provide information to attendees on programs offered, plus prizes and a BBQ.

6. FUNNY PAGES FESTIVAL

Organization: Funny Pages Festival Organization
Date: April 24-25, 2025
Location: Halifax Central Library
Proposed Attendance: 1,000

Program Description: Funny Pages Festival is dedicated to promoting the love of reading through humour. Canada's funniest authors will host fun and creative programming to elementary aged students throughout various interactive workshops and presentations and the opportunity to speak with the authors themselves.

7. NORTH BY NIGHT MARKET

Organization: North End Business Association
Date: June 13, July 11 and August 8, 2025
Location: 2037 Gottingen Street, Halifax
Proposed Attendance: 2,500

Program Description: North By Night Market is a recurring event which takes place on Gottingen Street the second Friday of the month from June to August celebrating the diverse and eclectic culture of the North End and Gottingen area. The purpose is to attract people to the North End, support and engage local businesses and their goods and showcase and support local musicians and artists. Planned activities includes a live music/DJ's, food and craft markets with vendors selling food, crafts, jewelry and more.

8. PEOPLE'S PARADE FOR LIFE ON EARTH

Organization: Ecology Action Centre
Date: April 26, 2025
Location: Halifax Waterfront Boardwalk
Proposed Attendance: 850

Program Description: The People's Parade for Life on Earth is a community parade on or around Earth Day, to build connections and uplift the fact that everyone has a place in the movement for life on Earth. People's Parade for Life on Earth is a parade that walks along the waterfront, ending at Peace & Friendship Park. Open to all to come together to bring their creativity and represent their community in whatever way they are inspired to do. The Parade is led and guided by Mi'kmaw Elders and Water Walkers, followed by elders and youth, drummers and choirs, drag performers and all others are welcome to join in the parade.

9. SCHOOL FARM DAY

Organization: Urban Farm Museum Society of Spryfield
Date: October 18, 2025
Location: 62 Rockingstone Road, Spryfield
Proposed Attendance: 150

Program Description: School Farm Day encourages students from local schools to visit our Urban Farm

Attachment 2

to meet other students, learn about the farm and enjoy a hands-on visit with farm animals, play heritage games, make crafts and celebrate the birthday of the Urban Farm Museum Society of Spryfield.

10. SPRING INTO SUMMER COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY

Organization: Greystone United Society
Date: July 6, 2025
Location: Greystone subdivision basketball court and open space
Proposed Attendance: 250

Program Description: The event will kick off the summer and bring the community together to participate in a fun, family day full of children's games, bouncy castles, arts and crafts tables, face painting, slip and slide and a free BBQ.

11. SPRYFIELD AREA FESTIVAL OF COLOURS

Organization: Spryfield Area Multicultural Society
Date: May 24, 2025
Location: Spryfield Lions Rink
Proposed Attendance: 600

Program Description: The Festival of Colours is a celebration of the arrival of spring, blossoming of love and triumph of good over evil. Festival activities include cultural music and dance, food and merchandise vendors and wearing of brightly coloured powder signifying positivity and love.

12. SUNSET MARKET

Organization: Sackville Business Association
Date: July 19, 2025
Location: Acadia Park
Proposed Attendance: 1,800

Program Description: Sunset Market will bring families and individuals together, build community relationships and make lasting memories. Activities include multicultural performances taking place on the main stage, while children enjoy the accessible playground and children's activities. Additionally, a maker's market will be onsite offering an array of vendors showcasing their products.

SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES

1. ST. PAUL'S 275TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION - CLOSING WEEKEND

Organization: St. Paul's Anglican Church
Date: June 6-8, 2025
Location: St. Paul's Church, 1749 Argyle Street, Halifax and Grand Parade
Proposed Attendance: 600

Program Description: The celebration begins Friday night in the church with a candlelight program and music concert. On Saturday an Open House will be held for visitors to see exhibits and learn the role St. Paul's Church has played in Halifax over the past 275 years supporting citizens in good and bad times. Saturday there will be a chance to learn about the connection St. Paul had with Jane Austen's brothers who were stationed in Halifax in the 1800's followed by a period menu and tea, with servers in period costumes in Grand Parade. Sunday's activities will begin with a church service following the 1662 Book of Common Prayer to replicate a service that would have been held in 1750 when the church was opened, followed by a picnic in Grand Parade. During the picnic there will be entertainment, music and period games.

Attachment 2

ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY EVENTS

1. AGRICOLA STREET HOLIDAY MARKET

Organization: North End Business Association
Date: November 14, 2025
Location: 2537 Agricola Street, Halifax
Proposed Attendance: 6,500

Program Description: This one-day free event celebrates the change of season and the upcoming holidays in a German-style winter market. The purpose is to attract people to the North End, support and engage the local businesses while providing a community building experience. Businesses host in store specials, provide hot chocolate and cider and family activities are offered along the street. This event provides local food makers, artisans, and crafts people with a holiday street-market venue to sell their goods. The event also showcases and supports local musicians and artists.

2. ANIMATION FESTIVAL OF HALIFAX

Organization: Carbon Arc Cinema Co-op Ltd.
Date: May 8-10, 2025
Location: Carbon Arc Cinema, Bus Stop Theatre, Wonder'neath Arts Society, Halifax Central Library
Proposed Attendance: 1,000

Program Description: The Animation Festival of Halifax is a celebration of animation in all its forms with a focus on Canadian short experimental animation. The festival features screening, panel discussions, artist's talks, workshops for all levels of experience, installations and networking events.

3. ATLANTIC JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

Organization: Atlantic Jewish Council
Date: November 20-23, 2025
Location: Cineplex Cinemas, Park Lane, Halifax and Pier 21
Proposed Attendance: 400

Program Description: The Atlantic Jewish Film festival (AJFF) is an annual four-day event featuring international films focusing on Jewish culture, heritage and themes. The AJFF provides an opportunity for audiences to explore the culture of a community seldom depicted on the big screen, while fostering an appreciation of arts and culture.

4. CANADA DAY DRUMMING HALIFAX

Organization: The Wave Placemaking
Date: July 1, 2025
Location: Dartmouth Ferry Terminal Park
Proposed Attendance: 10,000

Program Description: Canada Day Drumming Halifax celebrates unity, diversity, and community through the powerful and universal language of drumming. The centerpiece of Canada Day Drumming Halifax is the 6-minute national simultaneous drumming that takes place at 3:00pm AST connecting Halifax with over 150 cities across Canada. Thousands of participants drum simultaneously fostering a sense of national pride and solidarity. Leading up the drumming a 2.5 hour cultural performance showcase is offered where local multicultural performers from diverse backgrounds are invited to share their talents on stage including traditional drumming, contemporary music, folk dance, and cultural fusions. In addition to the main stage performances, the event will feature a food and craft market showcasing a variety of international cuisines and unique handcrafted items.

Attachment 2

5. CANADA DAY IN BEAVER BANK

Organization: Beaver Bank Kinsac Community Centre
Date: July 1, 2025
Location: 28 Kinsac Road, 1583 and 1701 Beaver Bank Road
Proposed Attendance: 2,500

Program Description: All events are free and are open to community members to come and celebrate Canada Day in Beavertown. The event encourages all residents to participate, contribute their different diversities to the event, and spread the message of what the country and community means to them. The celebration activities will include a pancake breakfast, family fair filled with fun games, bouncers and face painting, cake and fireworks.

6. CARIBBEAN DIASPORA MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATION

Organization: Jamaican Cultural Association of Nova Scotia
Date: July 27, 2025
Location: Ferry Terminal Park, Dartmouth
Proposed Attendance: 3,600

Program Description: The Caribbean Diaspora Multicultural Celebration is a one-day outdoor free event, open to the public. A wide variety of entertainment will be offered including musical performances from various genres (reggae, soca, calypso), singers and drummers, as well as cultural performances such as dance groups and spoken word artists. Educational displays and intergenerational games will be on site for all to enjoy.

7. CHRISTKINDL MARKET

Organization: Alderney Landing Facility Association
Date: December 5-7, 2025
Location: Alderney Landing
Proposed Attendance: 12,000

Program Description: Christkindl Market is a traditional German Christmas Market featuring fresh food, artisan gifts, and craft vendors. Free celebrations include live music from local bands and choirs, a carousel ride and craft table for the young attendees, a live singing Christmas tree with performances by local groups, hot cocoa and appearances by Santa and his elves.

8. DARTMOUTH OPEN STREET

Organization: Halifax Community Planning & Design Association
Date: TDB Sunday in June 2025
Location: Downtown Dartmouth (Portland Street from Alderney to Sullivans Pond)
Proposed Attendance: 10,000

Program Description: Open Street events encourage individuals to explore the streets of Dartmouth in new ways while providing a safe and comfortable environment for a wide variety of activities. The focus is not on closing streets but on making them accessible for different active transportation modes, local businesses, community gatherings, recreational activities, arts, culture, music, and food, catering to people of all ages and abilities. Planned activities include multiple stages throughout the street featuring performances by local musicians, dedicated children's area offering various fun activities and games, food trucks, all while crafters, makers, artists, and businesses showcase their work.

9. DIWALI CARNIVAL – FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Attachment 2

Organization: Indian Festivals Club of Nova Scotia
Date: October 10-12, 2025
Location: Olympic Hall Community Centre
Proposed Attendance: 12,000

Program Description: Diwali Carnival is a three-day event celebrating the Hindu festival of Diwali, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. Open to all and free to attend, the event brings the community together to share traditions through performances, food, and crafts. Attendees can enjoy traditional and modern dance performances such as folk, Bollywood fusion and classical, live music from local bands and cultural workshops. Cultural food vendors will offer authentic Indian and global Diwali options, while craft vendors, including henna artists and clothing designers showcase their art.

10. DOWNTOWN DARTMOUTH ICE FESTIVAL

Organization: Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission
Date: January 29 – February 3, 2026
Location: Downtown Dartmouth
Proposed Attendance: 65,000

Program Description: The Downtown Dartmouth Ice Festival is a free winter celebration including live music and ice carving and various outdoor winter activities for all to enjoy. Attendees can enjoy visiting over 30 ice sculptures displayed all over downtown Dartmouth, while listening to the live entertainment provided at various locations, as well as a street party, winter fun zones and children's activities.

11. EAST COAST KITE FESTIVAL

Organization: Atlantic Kite Festivals Society
Date: July 12-13, 2025
Location: Garrison Grounds, Citadel Hill
Proposed Attendance: 11,500

Program Description: The East Coast Kite Festival celebrates the art and culture of kite flying while fostering community connections. This free, family-friendly event invites participants to enjoy kite displays, create their own kites through interactive workshops, or purchase ready-made kites. Kite-making workshops, storytelling sessions and demonstrations will be offered to promote and educate the cultural significance of kite flying across diverse traditions.

12. EASTERN PASSAGE COW BAY SUMMER CARNIVAL

Organization: Eastern Passage Cow Bay Summer Carnival Association
Date: August 4-10, 2025
Location: Various locations in Eastern Passage
Proposed Attendance: 15,000

Program Description: The Eastern Passage-Cow Bay Summer Carnival attracts both residents and visitors of Halifax. The carnival includes a street parade, sand sculpture contest, children's parade, teddy bear picnic and many more fun-filled family-oriented events.

13. EID EL FITR

Organization: Muslim Youth & Community Centre Society
Date: April 1, 2025
Location: Glow Hall
Proposed Attendance: 1,200

Attachment 2

Program Description: Eid Al-Fitr holds profound significance for Muslims, marking the joyous conclusion of Ramadan and symbolizing gratitude, unity, and celebration. Eid Al-Fitr is a ticketed event that aims to bring families together in a vibrant, welcoming environment featuring cultural performances like Islamic nasheeds and storytelling that highlights the meaning and traditions of Eid. Children will have a dedicated play area filled with activities, including bouncing castles, slides, basketball hoops, and engaging games with prize. Interactive workshops will be offered such as henna art and Arabic calligraphy.

14. EIDUL ADHA FESTIVAL

Organization: Muslim Youth & Community Centre Society
Date: June 7, 2025
Location: HRM Park TBD
Proposed Attendance: 2,000

Program Description: Eidul Adha Festival is planned to be held outdoors and will be open to everyone to join in the celebration. Cultural performances planned include local henna, calligraphy and Arabesque artists. Amusement activities planned include bouncy castles, hoops, slides, ferris wheels, laser tags, go-rounds with prizes to be won. Food vendors from local restaurants from all cuisines including Arab, Pakistani, Bengali, Indian, Turkish, Italian and European are invited to sell a diverse range of culinary foods.

15. FIRE & WATER FESTIVAL

Organization: Alderney Landing Facility Association
Date: September 26-27, 2025
Location: Alderney Landing
Proposed Attendance: 5,500

Program Description: Fire & Water Festival is a two-day outdoor festival celebrating the cultural fabric of Nova Scotia featuring musical performances, dance, art installations, demonstrations and storytelling. The event is free to the general public to attend and highlights Mi'kmaq, Acadian, Celtic, African Nova Scotian, and Indian cultures.

16. FLAVOURS OF INDIA

Organization: Indian Festivals Club of Nova Scotia
Date: August 16-18, 2025
Location: Citadel Hill
Proposed Attendance: 6,000

Program Description: Flavours of India Festival (FKA India Fest) will feature food vendors offering a wide array of authentic Indian dishes, cultural vendors showcasing traditional arts, crafts, clothing, and jewelry, kids' activities to create a family-friendly atmosphere and live performances of traditional and contemporary Indian music, dance, and storytelling, celebrating the diversity of Indian artistry.

17. GOTTINGEN FESTIVAL

Organization: North End Business Association
Date: July 12, 2025
Location: Gottingen Street, Halifax
Proposed Attendance: 5,000

Program Description: This free, street-wide annual event is open to all to attend to celebrate Gottingen Street and the cultural communities in the North End. An all-day live concert will be offered on an outdoor stage showcasing local musicians, poets and dancers. Additional planned activities include a kid's zone, artist demonstrations and interactive art activities.

Attachment 2

18. GROU TYME ACADIAN DAY FESTIVAL

Organization: Conseil Communautaire du Grand-Havre
Date: August 15, 2025
Location: TBD
Proposed Attendance: 3,500

Program Description: Created in 2016 under the name Festival Quinzou, the festival is now called Festival Grou Tyme: a celebration of National Acadian Day. The festival kicks off with a flag raising ceremony, various games and cultural workshops for children throughout the day and ending with an evening show. Grou Tyme offers its stage to talented Francophone artists, both emerging and established, while creating a welcoming environment for youth, seniors, and newcomers alike.

19. HALIFAX COUNTY EXHIBITION

Organization: Middle Musquodoboit Agricultural Society
Date: August 13-16, 2025
Location: 190 Exhibition Grounds Road, Middle Musquodoboit
Proposed Attendance: 14,000

Program Description: The Halifax County Exhibition has existed for more than 140 years and celebrates the rural component of Halifax Regional Municipality. The event brings together farmers and artisans to highlight their livestock including, dairy, draft and light horses, poultry, Christmas trees and wreaths, handcrafts, homecrafts, flowers, photography and vegetables. The 4-H component of the Halifax County Exhibition is a highlight during the 4 days. Additionally, a large number of vendors along with Maritime Amusements are another attraction for many patrons.

20. HALIFAX GREEK FEST

Organization: St. George's Greek Orthodox Church
Date: June 12-15, 2025
Location: St. George's Greek Orthodox Church and Community Centre, Halifax
Proposed Attendance: 10,000

Program Description: The Halifax Greek Festival is held every year on the second weekend of June to celebrate diversity and inclusion, bringing together people of all ages to promote Greek culture. Festival highlights include Greek dances performed by local youth, live music and a variety of traditional Greek meals and desserts. Visitors can also enjoy guided church tours and family-friendly activities.

21. HALIFAX OPEN STREET

Organization: Halifax Community Planning & Design Association
Date: Sunday in September 2025 (TBD)
Location: Downtown Halifax (Agricola Street from Cunard to Almon Street)
Proposed Attendance: 9,000

Program Description: Open Street HFX invite you to experience the streets of Halifax differently whether you're walking, biking, or exploring. Halifax Open Street closes Agricola Street from Cunard Street to Almon Street transforming the area into a lively cultural hub with artistic performances, live music, children's games, local food vendors, and craft market stalls. Community information stations offer insights into the neighborhood, while shops extend onto the sidewalks, adding to the festive atmosphere. Free workshops enrich the public space, fostering creativity and community engagement. This event welcomes people of

Attachment 2

all ages, creating unforgettable memories.

22. HALIFAX SALSA & BACHATA FESTIVAL

Organization: 4473338 NOVA SCOTIA LIMITED
Date: August 14-17, 2025
Location: Halifax Waterfront, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Argyle Street, Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel & Pacifico
Proposed Attendance: 3,000

Program Description: The 7th annual Halifax Salsa & Bachata Festival is a four-day Afro-Latin dance festival showcasing cultural richness and artistic excellence, offering a variety of engaging activities including live Latin music, street and outdoor dancing, art exhibitions, dance competitions and performances, workshops and masterclasses, as well as an Afro-Latin-inspired street market.

23. KELOOSE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Organization: Keloose Association
Date: August 15-17, 2025
Location: Lakeview, Fall River and Windsor Junction
Proposed Attendance: 3,000

Program Description: For three days in August, Keloose Community Celebration will draw people from all around Lakeview, Windsor Junction and Fall River for family fun and entertainment. The event features softball tournaments, skateboard competitions, parades, dances, beach activities, scavenger hunts, community market, pancake breakfast, magic shows, movie night, live music and 5 and 10KM marathons.

24. LAKE AND SHORE DAYS

Organization: Porters Lake Community Services Association
Date: August 13-17, 2025
Location: Porter's Lake Community Centre
Proposed Attendance: 2,000

Program Description: Lake and Shore Days is a multi-day, summer event for all ages. Activities will include trivia, street parade, washer toss tournament, concert, picnic, car show, boat parade and fireworks.

25. LIGHT UP BEDFORD PARADE

Organization: Light Up Bedford Parade Society
Date: November 16, 2025
Location: DeWolf Park to Bedford Place Mall
Proposed Attendance: 15,000

Program Description: The Light Up Bedford Parade is a community parade travelling from DeWolf Park along the Bedford Highway and finishes at Bedford Place Mall. It comprises of a series of decorated floats with Santa travelling on the last float. The intent is to kick off the holiday season, bring joy and excitement to the residents of Bedford and surrounding communities, and promote community spirit, while collecting donations for the Food Bank and letters to Santa.

26. MOTHER GOOSE FESTIVAL

Organization: Alderney Landing Facility Association
Date: August 2, 2025

Attachment 2

Location: Dartmouth Ferry Terminal Park
Proposed Attendance: 3,500

Program Description: The Mother Goose Festival is an annual, free family-friendly event on the Dartmouth Waterfront. Activities include live theatre, puppetry, petting zoo, arts and crafts, storytelling and games with prizes.

27. NAVRATRI - DANDIYA GARBA NIGHTS – FESTIVAL OF DANCE

Organization: Indian Festivals Club of Nova Scotia
Date: September 19-21, 2025
Location: BMO Soccer Center
Proposed Attendance: 6,000

Program Description: Navratri is a cultural celebration rooted in Indian traditions. In Halifax, the local community will celebrate with a dance festival: Navratri Dandiya & Garba Nights. Participants will experience an immersive cultural journey through dance, workshops, and interactive activities, fostering inclusivity and cultural understanding.

28. NEWCOMER WELCOME BBQ

Organization: Welcoming Intercultural Newcomers Association
Date: July 5, 2025
Location: Garrison Grounds
Proposed Attendance: 2,000

Program Description: Newcomer Welcome BBQ will bring together a diverse group of participants to promote community spirit by showcasing residents' heritage, culture, local achievements and neighborhoods. The event will offer a range of entertainment including various cultural performances of music, dance and art, food stations featuring a variety of international cuisines to celebrate culinary diversity, interactive workshops, family friendly games, crafts, and storytelling sessions, as well as community resources booths on local services and support for newcomers.

29. NORTH PRESTON DAYS

Organization: Women With A Vision
Date: July 21-23, 2025
Location: North Preston Community Centre
Proposed Attendance: 900

Program Description: North Preston Days is an annual community event offering various free activities for all to enjoy. The festivities begin with a free breakfast at the North Preston Community Centre, a festive parade through North Preston, a community BBQ and many family friendly activities. Additionally, a platform will be provided to showcase local talent, including artists, musicians and performers promoting community development and well-being.

30. NORTHERN LIGHTS LANTERN FESTIVAL

Organization: Northern Lights Lantern Festival Society
Date: August 9, 2025
Location: Merv Sullivan Park
Proposed Attendance: 7,000

Program Description: The Northern Lights Lantern Festival is an annual free day of fun and creativity for all ages, where old friends run into each other and new friends are made. The festival is a celebration of the vibrancy and diversity of Halifax's North End. The festival program includes a free community BBQ,

Attachment 2

bouncy castles, face painting, craft table, live entertainment, children's games and fireworks.

31. NOVA SCOTIA POWER HOLIDAY PARADE OF LIGHTS

Organization: Holiday Parade of Lights Society
Date: December 8, 2024
Location: Downtown Halifax
Proposed Attendance: 65,000

Program Description: The annual Holiday Parade of Lights is a celebration of the holiday season and brings people throughout the municipality together to view festive floats, marching bands, dancers, a display of Christmas lights and music and a visit from Santa Claus. Each year, the Parade draws thousands of spectators to downtown Halifax and Eastlink TV televises the event for those who may not be able to make it in person.

32. PEGGY'S COVE AREA FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

Organization: Peggy's Cove Area Art Society
Date: July 12-19, 2025
Location: Various locations
Proposed Attendance: 5,500

Program Description: Peggy's Cove Area Festival of the Arts is an annual series of events that brings together local artists, artisans, community members, volunteers and seasonal visitors in a celebration of creativity and culture. Activities include a ticketed opening night reception at Hubbard's Barn featuring local art and fine crafts, door prizes, refreshments and live musical entertainment. Free activities include Paint Peggy's Cove: an event where 35 artists interact with residents and visitors while painting outdoors in the village of Peggy's Cove, a children's art tent will provide free creative activities and studio tours showcasing the work of over 70 artists, in 45 locations around the region.

33. PIRATE FESTIVAL

Organization: Fisherman's Cove Development Association
Date: August 22-24, 2025
Location: 4 Government Wharf Road, Eastern Passage
Proposed Attendance: 5,000

Program Description: Fisherman's Cove Pirate Festival is a 3-day pirate themed festival featuring live music, various children's games, activities and pirates. Families are encouraged to dress up in pirate costumes.

34. REJIGGED FESTIVAL

Organization: New Trad Society
Date: October 23-26, 2025
Location: St. Andrews Church stage
Proposed Attendance: 450

Program Description: ReJigged is a festival of "new trad" music, dance and culture celebrating new traditions in Celtic music, dance and other art forms. ReJigged's programming fosters artistic innovation and constructive collaboration in the performing arts, through workshops, sessions and concerts for HRM's many communities of musicians, dancers and fans of Celtic culture a single, new creative voice and venue for these kinds of explorations. ReJigged features a performance program, with intimate "session" style showcases, concerts and a traditional ceilidh dance. Additionally, a multi-day education program is offered

Attachment 2

providing a range of hands-on workshops featuring instruction in dance, traditional musical instruments, song, spoken language and visual arts led by internationally recognized instructors.

35. SACKVILLE CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Organization: Sackville Business Association
Date: November 29, 2025
Location: Acadia Park
Proposed Attendance: 4,000

Program Description: The Sackville Christmas Tree Lighting is a free event for all ages to kick off the holiday season. The event offers live music featuring Josh Lake Band, hot chocolate, holiday treats, a special visit from Santa himself and the magical lighting of the Christmas tree.

36. SACKVILLE PATRIOT DAYS

Organization: Sackville Community Development Association
Date: June 20 - July 1, 2025
Location: Various locations in Lower and Middle Sackville
Proposed Attendance: 10,000

Program Description: Patriot Days is a weeklong set of free events around Canada Day. Traditionally the same events will be offered including a community dog walk, an outdoor concert featuring local artists, a fireworks display, street parade and the teddy bear picnic. In partnership with other organizations, additional events will be offered this year including activities at Springfield Lake such as a family fun day, dance party, community ball tournament, adult dance, as well as an outdoor movie at St. Francis By The Lakes Church.

37. SACKVILLE SNOW DAYS

Organization: Sackville Business Association
Date: February 13-16, 2026
Location: Various locations in Sackville
Proposed Attendance: 8,000

Program Description: Sackville Snow Days is an annual winter event that runs during the February long weekend. Community groups, organizations, businesses and volunteers come together to create a weekend of fun activities all around Sackville. Activities planned include skating, sledding, curling, a parade, contests, live music, pancake breakfast, movies on the big screen, a paint night and more. The event concludes with fireworks show.

38. SPRYFIELD DAYS FESTIVAL

Organization: Spryfield District Business Commission
Date: July 12-13, 2025
Location: Spryfield (various locations)
Proposed Attendance: 5,000

Program Description: Spryfield Days is an annual festival to celebrate the community and provide opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures to come out for a fun day of free activities. The festival features two fun filled days of activities with bouncy castles, face painting, games, a family fun run, entertainment, a magic show, the cardboard duct tape boat races on Long Lake, strawberry shortcake at the Spryfield Urban Farm and more.

39. SPRYFIELD SANTA CLAUS PARADE

Attachment 2

Organization: Spryfield District Business Commission
Date: November 30, 2025
Location: Herring Cove Road, Spryfield
Proposed Attendance: 8,000

Program Description: The Spryfield Santa Claus Parade is an annual, free, daytime parade filled with floats, marchers, musicians, twirlers and lots of festive entertainment ending with a sighting of Santa, Mrs. Claus and their reindeer.

40. ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Organization: St. Patrick's Day Parade Society
Date: March 15, 2026
Location: Halifax
Attendance: 4,000

Program Description: The annual Halifax St. Patrick's Day Parade celebrates Halifax's Irish history, culture and community. Groups of all ethnicities, gender identities, and abilities are invited to participate in the parade as walkers, entering a float, or as viewers watching and enjoying the parade.

41. TRUNK 7 MUSIC FESTIVAL

Organization: Trunk 7 Music Festival Association
Date: July 18-19, 2025
Location: Porters Lake Superstore parking lot
Proposed Attendance: 1,000

Program Description: Trunk 7 Music Festival is a music and art festival featuring the musical and artistic talent of the Eastern Shore community of all ages with many music genres represented. Trunk 7 Music Festival provides support, opportunities and exposure for diverse talent of all ages and genres in rural communities on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia.

42. WORLD OCEAN DAY

Organization: Oceans North Conservation Society
Date: June 8, 2025
Location: Halifax Waterfront
Proposed Attendance: 2,500

Program Description: To celebrate Nova Scotia; Canada's ocean playground on World Ocean Day, a free, open to the public, family-friendly outdoor event will be hosted on Halifax's waterfront. The day will be filled with various interactive and educational activities and prizes, including touch tanks and mermaid sightings.

CULTURAL EVENTS & SHOWCASES

Tier 1

1. AFRIFEST

Organization: Africa Festival of Arts & Culture Society
Date: July 17-20, 2025
Location: Sackville Landing
Proposed Attendance: 6,500

Attachment 2

Program Description: The annual AFRIFEST showcases fine and performing arts showcasing the culture of people of African descent. Artists who participate in the festival are Diasporas from Nigeria, Cameroon, Guinea, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Gambia, Zambia, Togo, Congo, Uganda, Mali, Somalia, Eritrean, Ethiopia, Burundi, Sierra Leone, the Caribbean and African Nova Scotia community. Their artistic works include drumming, dancing, jazz, hip-hop, gospel, spoken-word and more.

2. AFTERWORDS LITERARY FESTIVAL

Organization: AfterWords Literary Festival Organisation
Date: November 1-9, 2025
Location: The Bus Stop Theatre, The Carleton, Halifax Central Library, the Black Cultural Centre, Cafe Lara and more
Proposed Attendance: 2,300

Program Description: The 7th annual AfterWords Literary Festival will bring more than 50 Canadian and international authors together in Halifax for a series of readings, conversations, panel discussions and workshops for readers of all ages at various venues throughout Halifax including an open-house style Kids' Day at Halifax Central Library.

3. ATLANTIC CANADIAN IRISH DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Organization: Atlantic Canadian Irish Dance Championships Society
Date: April 26-27, 2025
Location: Westin Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax
Proposed Attendance: 500

Program Description: The 4th annual Atlantic Canadian Irish Dance Championship will attract over 250 competitive Irish dancers (and their families) each day from all over Canada and the United States in a bid to advance their standing and win a title. Seven competition levels are offered and dancers compete according to their level, age and individual dance. Ages 4 to 60 and beyond can compete. Irish dance competitions are judged by qualified adjudicators (some international) and accompanied by live music performed by local and national musicians. Over the course of the weekend, participants and spectators can expect to experience an Irish dance competition rooted in long-standing traditions of displays of top caliber Irish dancing by participants of all ages and live Celtic music.

4. BLACK HISTORY MONTH ACTIVITIES

Organization: Africa Festival of Arts & Culture Society
Date: February 9-14, 2026
Location: Various locations within HRM
Proposed Attendance: 7,300

Program Description: Africa Festival of Arts and Culture Society promote and recognize the contributions of people of African Descent to the development of Nova Scotia, Canada and the World. Black History Month activities will include a series of events that are free to attend, except the ticketed Closing Black History Month Cultural Presentation.

5. EAST COAST UKRAINIAN FESTIVAL

Organization: East Coast Ukrainian Association
Date: September 28, 2025
Location: Steele Wheels Motor Museum
Proposed Attendance: 2,500

Program Description: The East Coast Ukrainian Festival will feature live music performance by a Ukrainian pop-jazz band ShockolaD that recently relocated from Ukraine. Additional activities include:

Attachment 2

visual storytelling through immersive videos on 6 large screens, acrobatic performances, Ukrainian food cuisine, authentic art and craft objects by local Ukrainian artisans and vendors, workshops and children activities.

6. EVERYSEEKER FESTIVAL

Organization: OBEY Convention Music & Arts Society
Date: June 16-19, 2025
Location: Various music venue locations throughout Halifax
Proposed Attendance: 2,000

Program Description: EVERYSEEKER Festival presents 20+ events across four days at historic and alternative venues throughout peninsular Halifax showcasing contemporary music and sound from local, national and international talents. Programming across genres, identities and mediums and providing over half of its program free to the public, EVERYSEEKER aims to gather communities and spark excitement across ages, interests and income brackets.

7. FRANCOFEST FESTIVAL

Organization: Conseil Communautaire du Grand-Havre
Date: October 23 – November 1, 2025
Location: Alderney Landing Theatre, Ecole du Carrefour and Sanctuary Arts Centre
Proposed Attendance: 9,000

Program Description: FrancoFest is an annual, local festival organized each year in October honoring and celebrating the cultural diversity of the Francophone and Francophile groups that make up the Halifax Regional Municipality. FrancoFest offers 10 days of activities including music performances, theatre productions, literary events, cinema screenings and a book fair, offering something for all ages and interests.

8. HALIFAX GANESH FESTIVAL

Organization: Atlantic Club of Ganesh Festival
Date: August 27, 2025
Location: Garrison Grounds
Proposed Attendance: 17,000

Program Description: Halifax Ganesh Festival is a spiritual gathering celebrating Lord Ganesha uniting the community in joy, devotion, and festivity. Planned activities include cultural performances, workshops and activities such as rangoli art and traditional crafts, kids' activities including games, storytelling sessions about Lord Ganesha and art competitions, festive food stalls and vendors featuring handmade crafts, décor, and spiritual items, as well as a Ganesh Visarjan Ceremony.

9. HALIFAX INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS FESTIVAL

Organization: Halifax Independent Filmmakers Festival Society
Date: May 28-31, 2025
Location: The Bus Stop Theatre
Proposed Attendance: 600

Program Description: Halifax Independent Filmmakers Festival is an established 4-day festival that presents films from Atlantic Canada and around the world including feature film screenings, short film screenings, receptions, expanded cinema installations, VR presentations, daytime masterclasses with visiting filmmakers and one-on-one meetings between local filmmakers and guest programmers from international festivals.

Attachment 2

10. IRI-JI (NEW YAM) FESTIVAL

Organization: Ndi Igbo Cultural Association, NS
Date: August 23, 2025
Location: Tremont Plateau Park
Proposed Attendance: 560

Program Description: The Iri-Ji Festival celebrates Igbo culture and heritage in Nova Scotia, promoting culturalism and community engagement. Planned arts and culture activities include craft exhibitions, literary reviews, film screenings, keynote speaker, panels and workshops on heritage preservation. The main celebration includes a traditional church service, choir performances as well as a communal potluck and a friendly football match.

11. MAYWORKS FESTIVAL OF WORKING PEOPLE & THE ARTS

Organization: Mayworks Halifax Festival Society
Date: May 1-14, 2025
Location: Bus Stop Theatre, Breaking Circus and various locations in downtown Halifax and Dartmouth
Proposed Attendance: 1,725

Program Description: Mayworks Festival of Working People & The Arts annually celebrates International Workers' Day (May 1st) through a 14 day festival. The festival celebrates and recognizes the working people in Nova Scotia through various artistic events, including theatre, dance, visual art, film music and more.

12. OutFest

Organization: Page1 Theatre Society
Date: April 21-27, 2025
Location: The Bus Stop Theatre, Rad Storm, The Carleton, The Convention Centre
Proposed Attendance: 1,300

Program Description: OutFest is a queer theatre festival showcasing local, regional and national artists. Theatre and dance performances will take place at The Bus Stop Theatre, music performances at The Carleton and the open stage will take place at Rad Storm for artists who create in mediums other than theatre or dance. Additional activities include a crafters market at The Convention Centre, an opening night dinner at Stardust (a local LGBTQ+ restaurant), a Comedy Stage and two training opportunities for artists.

13. STAGES THEATRE FESTIVAL

Organization: Eastern Front Theatre Society
Date: June 4-8, 2025
Location: Alderney Landing
Proposed Attendance: 1,750

Program Description: STAGES Theatre Festival is an annual Dartmouth event showcasing professional theatre and theatre-adjacent productions that value the voices of the underrepresented, providing audiences with engaging new ways to experience theatre. Offerings include, interactive work, outdoor performances, installation pieces, innovative theatre for young audiences and theatrical work that incorporates multiple disciplines. The festival has grown to include an Industry Series of professional development and a Family Stage Series of work for all ages.

Tier 2

14. HALIFAX BLACK FILM FESTIVAL

Attachment 2

Organization: Halifax Black Film Festival
Date: February 20-24, 2026
Location: Halifax Central Library and Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane (streamed digitally)
Proposed Attendance: 12,000

Program Description: The Halifax Black Film Festival (HBFF) is an arts and cultural event dedicated to celebrating Black stories, artists, and audiences. Founded to amplify Black voices in film and media, HBFF provides a platform for filmmakers and creatives from Halifax, Canada, and around the world to share their work, engage in dialogue, and foster connections. Programming offered include 50 online film screenings, an opening night red carpet experience and networking event and up to 10 in-person screenings at Cineplex Park Lane, followed by Q&A sessions where filmmakers engage with HBFF audiences directly. Additionally, six panels/workshops will be offered for industry professionals and community discussion, featuring 30 local Black artists/professionals/community leaders (4 in-person panels held at Halifax Public Libraries, and 2 online panels will be streamed on Facebook).

15. HALIFAX FRINGE FESTIVAL

Organization: Atlantic Fringe Festival Society
Date: August 27- September 8, 2025
Location: various locations in Halifax and Dartmouth
Proposed Attendance: 12,000

Program Description: The Halifax Fringe Festival is an annual performing arts festival presenting an accessible, unjuried and uncensored festival. The Fringe includes theatre, music, circus, dance, comedy, education, and more. For 12 days using 10+ venues across Halifax and Dartmouth the festival will offer 65+ productions performing over 350 individual performances.

16. HALIFAX HIGHLAND GAMES & SCOTTISH FESTIVAL

Organization: Halifax Highland Games and Scottish Festival
Date: July 5, 2025
Location: Halifax North Commons
Proposed Attendance: 10,000

Program Description: The Halifax Highland Games celebrates centuries of Scottish heritage in Nova Scotia, dating back to the mid 1800's and officially running from 1984 to 2009. By reviving the games, organizers aim to honour this heritage and ensure its continuity for years to come. The Highland Games will take place on the Halifax Commons and is free for the public to attend. Games featured include highland dancing, piping, drumming, pipe bands, and Scottish heavyweight athletics. Additionally, an entertainment tent with live Celtic music featuring all aspects of Scottish arts and culture, historical exhibits on Halifax's Scottish heritage and children's programming will be offered.

17. MOSAIC INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Organization: The Halifax Experience Foundation
Date: September 20-21, 2025
Location: Downtown Halifax TBD
Proposed Attendance: 3,000

Program Description: Mosaic International Festival of Arts and Culture is two-day event that kicks off with a vibrant parade where various cultural organizations will present their traditions through music, dance and art. This festival will also feature an array of performances by local, regional, and international artists. The festival not only serves as a platform to exhibit Halifax's cultural richness but also creates a space for cross-cultural exchange and celebration.

18. NOCTURNE: ART AT NIGHT FESTIVAL

Attachment 2

Organization: Nocturne: Art at Night Society
Date: October 16-19, 2025
Location: Various Halifax and Dartmouth locations

Program Description: Nocturne: Art at Night Festival is a free, independent, contemporary art festival that brings art and energy to the streets of Halifax and Dartmouth showcasing and celebrating the visual arts scene. Projects that Nocturne hosts are regularly placed in everyday public spaces and non-traditional art venues like alleyways, sides of building, swimming pools, sidewalks, and more to engage people of all ages, backgrounds and experiences.

19. NOVA MULTIFEST

Organization: Nova Multifest Society
Date: July 25-27, 2025
Location: Alderney Landing
Proposed Attendance: 30,000

Program Description: For three days, Nova MultiFest will celebrate Nova Scotia's multiculturalism and diversity, offering a wide range of free activities for people of all ages and backgrounds. The event will feature an array of cultural expressions, including art, music, dance, food, and learning sessions, all presented in a relaxed, celebratory atmosphere.

20. PRISMATIC ARTS FESTIVAL

Organization: Prismatic Arts Society
Date: September 26 – October 5, 2025
Location: Neptune Theatre, The Carleton, Dalhousie Arts Centre, The Bus Stop Theatre, Alderney Landing and more
Proposed Attendance: 11,000

Program Description: The Prismatic Arts Festival will take place over 10 days at various venues across HRM, featuring professional local, national, and international Indigenous artists and artists of colour with works in theatre, music, dance, visual art, film, circus, media art, spoken word, and more. The festival also hosts an artist-centric industry series each year, bringing together artists, industry professionals, and audiences alike for open dialogue, learning, and connection.

21. SCOTIA FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

Organization: Scotia Festival of Music / Scotia Chamber Players
Date: May 26 – June 8, 2025
Location: Dalhousie Arts Centre
Proposed Attendance: 3,600

Program Description: Scotia Festival of Music consists of many kinds of events, both ticketed and free to the public to attend. Masterclasses, outreach concerts offered to schools and young artist noon concerts are all free to the public to attend. The highlight of the festival is the ticketed mainstage concerts that will feature nightly concerts of chamber music by world-class soloists, as well as the Young Artist program for 40 talented young musicians from across North America and beyond. This program offers masterclasses, chamber music coaching, private lessons, classes in performance techniques, workshops, and opportunities to perform.

22. TASTE ASIA FOOD & CULTURE FESTIVAL

Organization: The Wave Placemaking
Date: May 16-19, 2025

Attachment 2

Location: Halifax Waterfront

Proposed Attendance: 24,000

Program Description: Taste Asia is an annual, free outdoor sensory celebration of Asian flavors, arts, and culture, featuring food, craft vendors, cultural performances, and a Demo Kitchen. This unique program gives local chefs and food businesses the opportunity to showcase their creativity, experimenting with the theme of Asian flavours and sharing their culinary stories with a broad audience. Along with the food flavour of Asia, an entertainment stage will be dedicated for emerging multicultural artists to perform traditional music, dance, and contemporary acts, representing various Asian cultures. Alongside food vendors, a section of the festival will be dedicated to showcasing handmade crafts and cultural artifacts. This market will provide local Asian artisans and businesses with a platform to share their creativity and connect with the broader community. The festival will also include interactive booths and exhibits where attendees can engage with cultural displays, participate in traditional activities, and learn about the heritage of different Asian communities.