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Item No. 9.1.1
Special Events Advisory Committee
August 13, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Special Events Advisory Committee
FROM: Brad Anguish, Commissioner of Operations
DATE: June 19, 2025
SUBJECT: 2025/2026 MLSER 2nd Intake Report

ORIGIN

Applications received pursuant to Administrative Order 2014-020-GOV - Respecting Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve Grants.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuant to Administrative Order 2014-020-GOV - Respecting Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve Grants (AO), this report summarizes the recommended Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve (MLSER) grant awards for the second 2025/2026 intake period for events occurring between October 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026, as well as two Major Hosting applications received during or near the second intake timeframe.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Special Events Advisory Committee recommend Halifax Regional Council approve total funding in the amount of \$175,000 from the Community and Events Reserve (Q621), as detailed in Table 1.

BACKGROUND

Funding for the MLSER grant awards is provided from the Community and Events Reserve (Q621) and withdrawals are approved by Regional Council, in accordance with the MLSER AO.

The MLSER AO governs four programs: Signature Events, Distinguished Events, New (Emerging) Events and Major Hosting Events. The MLSER AO also outlines the option for HRM to provide multiple year funding to the New (Emerging) and Signature Events to assist with the sustainability of events. The Signature Events program offers one intake every three years and is currently closed. There is an open intake for events applying to the Major Hosting Events program.

Both New (Emerging) and Distinguished Events programs offer two intakes per year. This first intake opened in the fall for applications to fund events taking place April 1 through to September 30, 2025. This

report outlines the recommended MLSER grant awards for applications submitted to the 2025/2026 second intake for events occurring between October 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. In addition, two Major Hosting Events are included in this report, as applications were received during or near the second intake timeframe.

DISCUSSION

Intake

There were three applications submitted during the 2025/2026 second intake. These applications include: one New (Emerging) Event and two Distinguished Events. Additionally, two Major Hosting Event applications received May 30 and June 4, 2025 are also included in this report.

Ineligible

Upon review of the applications, one event was deemed ineligible for funding as a potential New (Emerging) Event due to the low attendance, no hotel room nights (guaranteed or estimated), and low media and marketing promotion. Ultimately the Ubuntu- 5K Timed Run/Walk of the Nations and Collective Celebration is not considered a tourism event and the organization has been redirected to the Regional Special Events Grants funding program to apply when the intake opens next fiscal.

Eligible

Based upon the eligibility criteria, two Distinguished Events and two Major Hosting Events are deemed eligible for consideration. Information on the four eligible applications can be found in Attachment 1.

Evaluation

Applications are evaluated based on the degree of economic impact, multiple day visits from tourists, diversity of their programming, accessibility in planning and enhanced visibility to Halifax as a tourist destination.

- Economic impacts are assessed by applying an industry recognized economic assessment tool using basic parameters of an event that are translated into a full economic impact analysis.
- Tourism impacts are assessed based on room nights (guaranteed and estimated), along with seasonality and location (urban vs suburban vs rural).
- Media impacts (enhanced visibility of the municipality) are assessed using information outlined in proposed media plans representing live streaming, television broadcast and social media campaigns, as well as media expense budgeted.
- Support to multiple communities is assessed by reviewing accessibility in their planning and diversity and inclusion in their programming.
- Financial stewardship and governance of the event organization are assessed, as well as prestige the event offers to enhance Halifax’s reputation as a successful event destination.
- New (Emerging) and Major Hosting programs are assessed on funding commitments from other levels of government.

2025/2026 MLSER 2nd Intake Proposed Grant Awards

The 2025/2026 proposed MLSER 2nd intake funding recommendations include: two Distinguished Events and two Major Hosting Events. The recommended total funding amount of \$175,000 to fund four events is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: 2025/2026 MLSER 2nd Intake Proposed Grant Awards		
	2025/2026 Requested	2025/2026 Proposed
Distinguished Events		
2026 Karate Canada U21 & Senior National Championships	\$ 20,000	\$ 15,000
Taekwondo Canada National Championships	\$ 50,000	\$ 35,000
TOTAL Distinguished Events	\$ 70,000	\$ 50,000

Major Hosting Events		
Davis Cup World Group I tie – Canada vs Israel	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
The Gifts We Carry: Youth Empowerment Event Honouring Residential School Survivors	\$ 80,000	\$ 75,000
TOTAL Major Hosting Events	\$130,000	\$125,000
TOTAL 2025/2026 MLSER 2nd Intake Proposed Grant Awards		\$175,000

Funding Disbursement

Grant awards for applications that receive final approval by Regional Council will be dispersed according to a schedule outlined in the executed HRM Contribution Agreement, with up to twenty per cent being withheld until the completion of the event and submission of the final report. If the event does not take place, no grant award will be released.

Post Event Reporting

Events that receive MLSER funding are required to submit a final event report including a detailed finalized budget as part of the funding process within 120 days of the conclusion of the event describing the impact of the funding received from the municipality, as well as outline the success and challenges associated with the event.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Reserve budget, the funding available in Community and Events Reserve (Q621) with no additional increased withdrawal required.

Budget Summary: Community and Events Reserve, Q621

Opening Reserve Balance, as of April 1, 2025	\$7,565,296
Contribution 2025/2026	\$3,524,160
Operating Withdrawals 2025/2026	(\$2,423,476)
Capital Withdrawals 2025/2026	(\$ 628,168)
Projected Net Available Balance 2025/2026	\$8,037,812

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate low. To reach this conclusion, consideration was given to financial and reputational risks. A contribution agreement, using HRM’s standard form of contribution agreement, will be negotiated between the event organizers and the Municipality prior to the release of funding. The agreements will include details regarding the rights and benefits outlined including media coverage and advertising opportunities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Information regarding program eligibility and applicant timelines are posted on the HRM website. Corporate Communications promoted the open intake throughout of the municipality’s social media platforms and released a PSA. Communication is ongoing with program clients on the status of events. The Special Events Advisory Committee includes members of the public.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVE

The Special Events Advisory Committee may choose to make a different recommendation to Halifax Regional Council with respect to a particular event grant application or recommend that Halifax Regional Council amend the value of the award.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

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

29A(5) The marketing levy collected pursuant to this Section may be only used by the Council to promote tourism.

79A(1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

Administrative Order 2014-020-GOV – Respecting Marketing Levy Special Event Reserve Grants

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: 2025/2026 MLSER 2nd Intake Applicants Event Information

Report Prepared by: Shari Dillman, Event Grants Administrator, 902.497.3729

2025/2026 MLSER 2nd Intake Applicants Event Information

Eligible Events

Upon review of the applications, four events were deemed eligible for funding and their information is presented below.

DISTINGUISHED EVENTS

1. **Event:** 2026 Karate Canada U21 & Senior National Championships
Date: February 20-22, 2026
Location: TBD
Organization: Karate Nova Scotia
Grant requested: \$20,000
Past Grant: n/a

	Budget	Attendance	Outside HRM	Room Nights	Event Impact
Estimate	\$58,510	725	609	1,280	\$825,021

Athletes from across Canada will come together to compete for the U21 and Senior Karate Canada National Championship titles. The event will showcase individual kata (forms), individual kumite (sparring), and team kata competitions. Participants will include athletes in both the U21 division (ages 18 to 20) and the Senior division (ages 18 and older). This championship also serves as a qualifying event for the 2026 Senior Pan American Karate Championships scheduled in May 2026. The event expects to attract approximately 250 athletes, plus coaches, officials, and spectators from across Canada. The event will require 40 volunteers delivering 1,200 volunteer hours.

Media Impact: Karate Nova Scotia plans to leverage existing provincial and territorial sport organization social media platforms, as well as those from local karate clubs to spread awareness of the event. Email distribution lists will be used to share detailed event information with the broader community. Plans include reaching out to local radio and television stations to promote the event to the wider public.

2. **Event:** Taekwondo Canada National Championships
Date: February 4-8, 2026
Location: Halifax Convention Centre
Organization: Taekwondo Canada
Grant requested: \$50,000
Past Grant: n/a

	Budget	Attendance	Outside HRM	Room Nights	Event Impact
Estimate	\$250,000	1,804	1,673	1,400	\$2,821,300

The Taekwondo Canada National Championships is a premier martial arts competition held over five days. The Championships will feature elite athletes from across Canada competing in various divisions including kyorugi (sparring) and poomsae (forms) and serve as a qualification event for national team selection. In addition, the event will include seminars led by international masters, opening and closing ceremonies and demonstrations of traditional Korean drumming and synchronized martial arts. The event expects to draw approximately 800 competitors plus coaches, officials, and spectators from across Canada. The event will require 50 volunteers delivering 1,500 volunteer hours.

Media Impact: Taekwondo Canada's marketing strategy will use various digital channels, as well as traditional print and radio to reach both participants and spectators. Digitally, a comprehensive social media campaign is planned using Instagram, Facebook and Twitter with targeted ads, as well as sending newsletters via email to provincial taekwondo associations and club databases. Posters and flyers will be printed and distributed to martial arts studios, community centers, and sports facilities for event promotion, as well as targeted spots on local sports radio programs. The Championship matches will be live streamed

on Taekwondo Canada's website and YouTube channel, in addition to partnering with regional sports networks for television event coverage.

MAJOR HOSTING EVENTS

- 3. Event:** Davis Cup World Group I tie
Date: September 12-13, 2025
Location: Scotiabank Centre
Organization: Canadian Tennis Association (Tennis Canada)
Grant requested: \$50,000
Past Grant: n/a

	Budget	Attendance	Outside HRM	Room Nights	Event Impact
Estimate	\$896,000	7,685	2,361	1,813	\$2,804,549

The Davis Cup is the largest sanctioned annual international men's team competition in the sport of tennis with 160 countries competing for the title. On September 12 and 13, the Davis Cup comes to Halifax. The tie will determine which of the two nations will compete in next year's Davis Cup Qualifiers in the World Cup of Tennis. It is estimated 7,500 spectators are expected to attend the Davis Cup World Group I tie in Halifax. The event will require 50 volunteers delivering 1,000 volunteer hours.

Media Impact: The Canadian Tennis Association will focus marketing efforts on various digital platforms to promote the event. As well, leading up to the event, focus will turn to media activities such as press conferences and news releases. The Canadian Tennis Association is currently examining options to live stream the event.

- 4. Event:** The Gifts We Carry: Youth Empowerment Event Honouring Residential School Survivors
Date: September 18, 2025
Location: Scotiabank Centre
Organization: The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
Grant requested: \$80,000
Past Grant: n/a

	Budget	Attendance	Outside HRM	Room Nights	Event Impact
Estimate	\$1,600,000	5,441	1,591	196	\$2,788,754

The Youth Empowerment Event is a national gathering, as part of Truth and Reconciliation Week 2025. This large-scale, educational gathering is free to attend in person for 5,000 students and educators from schools across Nova Scotia. Indigenous educational leaders and artists will engage and educate youth about truth telling, cultural prides and reconciliation. The event will feature a series of performances by Mi'kmaw, Métis, and Inuit artists, youth speakers and powerful testimonies from residential school survivors. Inspirational youth will lead interviews and storytelling segments with survivors from across the country, creating intergenerational moments of learning and reflection. Pre-event activities include a community breakfast for elders, survivors, leadership, and key stakeholders. Throughout the day, exhibits and interactive installations will be set up at both the Scotiabank Centre and Grand Parade, where the Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre will host a sacred fire and cultural activities. Following the live event, additional educational workshops will be offered to participating schools. The event will require 110 volunteers delivering 6,600 volunteer hours.

Media Impact: A national school and educator engagement marketing plan will be implemented to promote a hybrid experience that combines in-person with nationwide virtual participation to offer equitable access for students and educators in all provinces and territories to participate. To achieve this, The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation will partner with all provincial and territorial departments of education to promote the event across Canada, equip the participating schools with access to live-streamed sessions

and an interactive event portal, while providing printable and online learning guides, and digital reflection activities to extend learning opportunities before and after the event. The event will be live streamed via YouTube for students and educators (grades 1-12) to be able to participate remotely. In addition to the school engagement marketing plan, various digital platforms (Facebook, Instagram) will be used to promote the event as well as media partnerships with CBC and APTN.