Town Council
Regular Meeting
Agenda Item 6.a.

Agenda Item: **Resolution 25-G-36 to amend the Community Cultural Festivals Donation Policy Statement**

Meeting Date: July 15, 2025

Category: General

Prepared by: Marjorie Sloan, Finance Director

Description:
Following a discussion at the Town Council Work Session on July 8, 2025, staff has submitted proposed changes to amend the existing Community Cultural Festivals Donation Policy. The revisions reflect Council's discussion to:

- Allow organizations to remain eligible for donations through the program for the same event beyond its first year;
- Define conditions under which a non-profit organization could be considered for a subsequent event donation within the fiscal year;
- Require post-event statistical reporting; and
- Describe and clarify the use of donated town services for events.

Background:
The Community Cultural Festivals Policy Statement was originally adopted by the Herndon Town Council on October 23, 2023 (Resolution 23-G-72) to support the development of community-oriented cultural events hosted by non-profit and not-for-profit organizations with the Town of Herndon. The policy provides a framework for the equitable distribution of Town funds to encourage new events that reflect Herndon's community. It was first amended on January 9, 2024 (Resolution 24-G-01).

A second amendment was adopted on July 16, 2024 (Resolution 24-G-41), increasing the maximum donation amount per event from $10,000 to $15,000, or 50% of the total event budget -whichever is less-for first year applicants. This change was intended to enhance initial support for new events under this policy and align with Town Council priorities to encourage new events.

Since the program's launch in mid-FY 2024, the Town has awarded $68,007 in cash donations to non-profit organizations in support of events held within the town. This figure does not include any support services that may have been provided by the Town. The attached FY 2025 Report includes the events that qualified for funding under the policy. During the FY 2026 budget process, the Town Council requested that staff

review the existing policy and develop proposed revisions that would allow eligible organizations to request funding for recurring events beyond the first year. The resulting draft policy amendment introduces a tiered funding model to support the growth and sustainability of returning events while gradually reducing their reliance on public funding. The proposed amendment also includes revisions as discussed by Council during the July 8, 2025, work session. Under the proposed structure:

- First-year applicants may receive up to 50% of the event budget, with a maximum donation ($15,000);
- Second-year applicants may receive up to 25% of the event budget, with a maximum donation ($7,500); and
- Third-year applicants may receive up to 12% of the event budget, with a maximum donation ($3,750).

This proposed revision reflects the Council's intent to support the sustainability of successful events while gradually reducing reliance on Town funding in subsequent years.

Timing Impact:
The Town Council approved $60,000 in the FY 2026 Adopted Budget for the Community Cultural Festivals Donation Program. If the Town Council amends the donation policy, the changes will go into effect upon adoption and the policy will be applied to future eligible events.

Strategic Plan Related Goals:
Thriving Community: Goal 3 - Honor the Diversity of the Town; Objective 3.2 - Leverage Town resources to provide programs and amenities that serve the Town's diverse cultural and demographic populations.

Strategic Focus Area:
Thriving Community

Fiscal Impact:
As part of the FY 2026 Adopted Budget, the Town Council appropriated $60,000 to support Community Cultural Festivals through this donation program. These funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Legal Impact:
Donations must be in accordance with Va. Code Sec. 15.2-953.

Staff Recommendation/Next Steps:
Staff recommends approval of the proposed resolution to amend the policy.

Attachments:

1. Resolution (Proposed)
2. Amended Policy Statement (Proposed)
3. Amended Policy Statement (DRAFT)