

Community Use Plan | The Music Hall

Introduction

The Music Hall Alliance (the Alliance) is a not-for-profit music presenter and venue operator that will call the New Vision Church in downtown Hamilton its home. The Alliance will manage this multifaceted historic space as a performance and music hall to serve the needs of the local and regional creative communities. The Alliance is leasing space from the New Vision Church, a congregation of the United Church of Canada. With funding assistance from the City of Hamilton for required capital improvements, this facility will become an iconic location for live music presentation, creative performance, cultural and community gathering.

Functions of the Music Hall

The Music Hall (TMH) is first and foremost a performance and gathering space in Hamilton's downtown core. It is the Alliance's mission to operate this performance space as a self-sustaining music and performing arts venue which will provide opportunities for the local music industry and music patrons to come together; to support musicians and creative industries; to celebrate 'all things music' in Hamilton.

The Music Hall also functions as a safe space for marginalized communities. The Alliance needs to balance the financial sustainability of TMH with accessibility of the space by local communities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all community members, especially those from marginalized and equity-deserving groups, have fair and equitable access to community resources and services.

This policy aligns with the funding agreement with the City of Hamilton and aims to provide the lowest possible fee rates to avoid exclusion.

Providing access to community resources and services to all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status, race, gender, sexual orientation, abilities or other marginalized status, is very important to TMH. It is also important to ensure that fee structures are designed to be as inclusive and accessible as possible. TMH will promote EDI in all aspects of the operations including space rental and program offerings.

TMH will also function as a safe space for defined marginalized communities. The Alliance, as the operator of the space, needs to balance the financial sustainability of TMH with accessibility of the space by local communities.

How the Music Hall will serve its communities

As a music and performing arts venue, TMH will rent space to performers, promoters, presenters and various groups and organizations. The rental fees and associated charges will be scaled depending on the ability of the groups and individuals to afford the space. The Alliance must be able to function in a self-sustainable manner to make capital improvements to the leased space over time to improve the experience in the space and to keep the facility operationally sustainable in the long term.

To this end, the Alliance will:

- Operate a successful and sustainable live music and performing arts venue.
- Use the leased space to support and engage with equity deserving groups and those who experience marginality.
- Create rental policies and procedures including renting space to groups who do not promote racist, discriminatory, prejudicial or hateful views.
- Support and encourage community engagement, recognizing that equity deserving and marginalized groups often have a lack of infrastructure and can be under-resourced.
- Work closely with equity deserving and marginalized communities to build through outreach campaigns and promotional materials including information on active outreach strategies the TMH website.
- Partner with various community groups and the City of Hamilton to promote the Music Hall's various available spaces for community uses. For example, work with the Tourism & Culture Division to support the city's music strategy and other live music venues; work with the Planning & Economic Development Division to support downtown revitalization and the downtown entertainment precinct development; collaborate with the Healthy and Safe Communities Division and equity deserving groups to provide space and programming.
- Create outreach programs including presentations/information sessions to promote the use of the space, targeting other community/media organizations, Ontario Arts Council, Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association (ACCA), local radio exposure, Instagram Live, Cable 14, CHCH, Hamilton City Magazine and the Hamilton Spectator.

- Improve visibility of TMH as a safe, inclusive and accessible space by programming an annual recognition event or award of excellence in music performance. (e.g., the Hamilton Arts Council has an annual BIPOC music festival series).
- Support equity deserving groups in presenting unique cultural events. For example, ACCA Fabulicious music and food event.
- In concert with New Vision's congregation, welcome newcomers to Canada and encourage them to use TMH spaces.
- Promote intercultural ministry and cross-cultural relationship building by developing collaborative initiatives such as an intercultural choir or other initiatives.
- Create rental policies using an EDI framework to ensure accessibility and safety for all.
- Create a scaled rental policy for marginalized and equity deserving groups and charities to address their financial challenges.
- Create a metric to track space usage by equity deserving groups and marginalized communities.
- Consider creating an "artist in residency" program focusing on BIPOC and other marginalized communities.
- Create opportunities for aspiring individuals and independent creators through programming, training, job shadowing and the development of co-working space.

Specifics - Fee Structure

Equitable Fee Rates: Fees for rental of space will be set at the lowest possible rates to ensure affordability and accessibility for marginalized and equity-deserving groups.

Sliding Scale Fees: Implement a sliding scale fee structure based on individual or group income and financial capacity. This ensures that those with lower incomes pay reduced rates.

Subsidies and Scholarships: Provide subsidies and scholarships to equity deserving groups and marginalized groups who demonstrate financial need (future service delivery goal).

Transparent Criteria: Clearly outline the criteria and process for applying for reduced fees, subsidies, or scholarships to ensure transparency and accessibility.

Identify black-out periods that are high demand times that will be unavailable at discounted rates (i.e., peak and non-peak time slots).

Work with local service providers (e.g., caterers, equipment suppliers, event rental suppliers etc.) to provide/broker a full range of services/options for TMH event presenters.

Consider applying an equity framework in working with contractors and suppliers.

Create a rate sheet for the various spaces in TMH for both for-profit and not-for-profit users. This rate sheet will include an administrative fee, rental fee, janitorial fee plus other costs as required. For community groups, fees will be discounted as much as possible without jeopardizing the sustainability of the Music Hall.

Discounted fees will also apply to City of Hamilton uses in accordance with the funding agreement. For example, TMH recently quoted a rate to the City's Planning and Economic Development Division of \$200 per day for the main sanctuary space plus \$200 to cover custodial staff including setting up of chairs and basic cleaning.