

HERITAGE FAIR

**GUIDE FOR  
REGIONAL FAIR  
COORDINATORS**

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# **Introduction**

The Heritage Fair program encourages students to explore Canada's heritage and history in a fun and engaging learning environment. Students select a topic, decide on a key inquiry question, complete research, and summarize their findings through a format of their choice.

Since 2010, Canada's History Society has been the national charitable organization to support Heritage Fairs and the thousands of teachers, volunteers, and sponsors that come together annually to create a meaningful and transformational educational program for students throughout Canada.

This guide is designed to support anyone who is interested in starting, planning, and strengthening a regional Heritage Fair event.

Thank you to Carol White and the Ontario Heritage Fair Association for their leadership in creating this guide.

## **What are Regional Fairs?**

Regional Heritage Fairs are vibrant community celebrations where local schools, museums, historical associations, businesses, and the public come together to celebrate student work in history and heritage.

Heritage Fairs begin at the school level and may involve a single classroom or multiple grade levels. The schools then choose student projects to represent them at a regional Heritage Fair, using selection criteria provided by their regional organizing committee. At the Regional Heritage Fair, students engage with community members as they learn more about local heritage and share their research projects with

volunteer adjudicators and the public. This event enhances the students' learning experiences and sustains their interest in history and heritage after the event is over.

## **Regional Heritage Fair Components**

Each Regional Heritage Fair is unique; however, most have the following components:

- an opening ceremony to introduce the schedule and present important safety procedures for the day.
- 3-5 student rotations that include:
  - adjudication of student projects.
  - workshops, presentations and/or community display.
- a lunch break (could be one of the rotations).
- a closing or award ceremony.
- a public viewing.

Most regional Heritage Fairs are a one-day event; however, some may have a public viewing the evening before or hold a separate awards ceremony at a later date.

# Regional Fair Organizational Steps

## Goals

- Determine your goals for holding a regional Heritage Fair. Sample goals could include:
  - to increase awareness and understanding of your region's diverse history and heritage;
  - to give local students an opportunity to share their historical inquiries with a broader audience;
  - to bring together the educational and cultural communities in your region.

## Planning Committee

- Create a team to help achieve your goals and define key roles for each member. Please see **Appendix A** for common committee roles and responsibilities. Sub-committees are an efficient way to divide up the tasks necessary for a successful Heritage Fair. Depending on their time and commitment, committee members will usually participate on more than one sub-committee.

## Participants and Community Partners

- Identify different stakeholders and partners for achieving your goals, for example:
  - educational community (teachers, school boards, private schools, homeschool cooperatives, university faculties community colleges);

- historical and cultural community (historical societies, museums, historical sites, Indigenous and cultural groups);
- funding partners for both monetary and in-kind support (businesses, foundations, service clubs, cultural groups, individuals);
- volunteers (university and college departments, cultural organizations, retired teachers).

### **Fair Venue**

- Book a suitable venue for the Heritage Fair. It is important to book spaces early (up to a year in advance) if desired space is in a university, museum or popular public facility.
- Determine the format and needs of your event. Many regional Heritage Fairs use venues with accessible space for:
  - Opening and closing ceremonies;
  - Workshop/presentation rooms;
  - Student project displays and adjudication;
  - Hospitality room for judges and volunteers;
  - Additional areas like a registration desk, sponsor boards, lunch areas, lost and found, first aid, etc.
- Set a date for your fair to take place in April or early May.

### **Budget and Financial Support**

- Determine a budget for your event, taking into consideration expenses (venue rental, audio-visual equipment, honoraria, and

food, for example) and revenue sources (student fees, in-kind support, sponsorships and donations).

- Research options for seeking community-based in-kind and financial support and make this a top priority for all sub-committees. Examples can include:
  - School board(s), schools;
  - University faculties (teacher education, history, geography, cultural departments);
  - Community colleges;
  - Museums, historical and cultural groups;
  - Sponsors (Rotary and other service groups, local businesses);
  - Grant opportunities (civic or provincial/territorial grants or private foundations) .

## Planning Lists

- Develop a committee task list or task calendar using ideas from **Appendix A** and **Appendix B** of this guide. The examples provided are organized for a Heritage Fair that takes place in early May. You may adjust your planning document to reflect the components and timeline of your event.

## Committee Meetings

- Hold sub-committee meetings as needed and meet as a whole committee regularly to share progress, report successes and discuss solutions to challenges.

- Hold a post-fair meeting to celebrate your successes, go over feedback from stakeholders and discuss future possibilities and strategies to overcome any challenges you faced.

## **Final Tips For A Successful Regional Fair**

- Don't be afraid to start small. A small, successful regional Heritage Fair can be expanded in subsequent years.
- Spreading out the tasks over a period of time makes accomplishing the tasks much easier.
- The organization you put in place in your first year is a framework for possible expansion and changes in the future.
- Feedback from all participants will help the committee set the direction for the future.
- Leverage your local resources and engage your community – the student work and energy of the day is inspiring; your partners will help spread the word of your great work!

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A: Sample Committee Roles and Tasks**

**Appendix B: Sample Committee Duties Chart**



## Appendix A: Sample Committee Roles and Tasks

*Sub-committee duties may have overlap and/or can be adjusted according to the format and features of your event.*

### **Chair – oversees all aspects of the Fair**

- serve as the public face of the Fair
- ensure the full committee meets on a regular basis
- create agendas and chair meetings of the full committee
- ensure meetings are conducted efficiently
- create and organize with committee members:
  - a treasurer to manage the finances of the Fair
  - a secretary to ensure timely dissemination of minutes and reports
  - membership and a chair for each sub-committee
  - a task timeline for completion of tasks
  - a flexible budget to guide fiscal responsibility
  - a feedback strategy to evaluate the successes and things to improve for future Fairs
  - a Risk Management Safety Binder that includes information necessary to ensure the safety of the participants in case of an emergency
- provide oversight of sub-committees to ensure planning on track
- serve as a signing authority for financial and legal transactions
- as required, prepare for signature and distribution of the Fair's correspondence and grant applications
- collate feedback collected by sub-committees and share in a post-Fair meeting
- work with secretary, treasurer and sub-committee chairs to produce an Annual Report

## **Treasurer**

- open a dedicated bank account for the Heritage Fair or have your school board, school, or museum, assign a dedicated budget line for the Heritage Fair
- serve as a signing officer for financial and legal transactions
- if the Heritage Fair has an independent bank account add two co-signers for payment cheques (usually the Chair and Secretary)
- create a flexible budget for the Heritage Fair by working with each committee on potential costs and update as needed
- keep accurate records using standard accounting practices and prepare a financial update at each full-committee meeting
- ensure all necessary payments are made in a timely manner
- serve as a member of or keep informed of the operations of the fund development committee
- complete final year financial report for all successful grants and the Heritage Fair's annual report

## **Secretary**

- record the minutes of full committee meetings
- distribute committee meeting minutes in a timely manner
- create and maintain up-to-date records detailing a listing of current contacts
- work with the chair and sub-committee chairs to prepare an annual report

## **Fund Development Committee**

- maintain a potential sponsor database
- create or update a donor package
- implement the fundraising plan – contact sponsors and complete grant applications

- Send all sponsors thank you letters and invite them to visit the Fair
- Send a final report and thank you following the event

## **Programming Committee**

### ***Pre-Fair***

- foster relationships and communicate on a regular basis with community partners to coordinate the yearly regional Fair program (e.g., student workshops, community exhibits, entertainment, special presentations, etc.) and explore new opportunities for local students
- liaise with workshop leaders and community participants to determine needs for tables, supplies, volunteers, parking and food requirements
- report needs to volunteer and logistics chairs
- work with logistic chair to assign rooms/spaces for Fair activities and create a layout map that includes location of all activities, washrooms and emergency exits
- work with other chairs to create rotation schedule for the day

## **Awards and Ceremonies Committee**

- update awards list
- organize sponsor awards and make prize purchases as needed
- plan the opening and award ceremonies:
  - book speakers, entertainment for ceremonies
  - arrange an emcee
  - write emcee script (including land acknowledgement, special announcements and safety information; schedule and rotation information for students)
- create schedule and MC script for the ceremonies and provide copies to the logistics chair and the adjudication chair

- work with adjudication committee to provide slideshow to accompany award ceremony script and provide recognition of sponsors and sponsors
- organize awards on stage and arrange for presenters
- work with adjudication chair to update script with award winners
- arrange seating for special guests and speakers and provide each with program
- thank all special guests and speakers at the end of the ceremony

### **Logistics Committee**

- book accessible venue
- work with programming and volunteer chairs to determine space, food, parking, supplies and technology requirements
- work with venue personnel to allocate spaces for ceremonies, workshops, presentations, adjudication, lunch area for students, judges' and committee rooms
- confirm with the programming committee and book tables and chairs (as needed)
- liaise with venue supplier to arrange for keys and access to required space
- purchase and organize food, beverages, and snacks for the day
- trouble-shoot throughout the day to ensure smooth operation of activities

### ***Post-Fair***

- communicate with venue supplier to thank and request feedback.

## **Adjudication Committee**

### ***Pre-Fair***

- work with volunteer chair to communicate with judges
- update and distribute adjudication rubric and award list for teachers and judges
- prepare and organize judging forms
- work with program chair to prepare schedule for the day
- create map of project layout
- create master Excel recording forms
- report numbers of judges requiring food for lunch to logistics chair

### ***Fair Day***

- register judges as they arrive
- hold information session for judges to outline judging and reporting procedures plus any other information they might need
- assign judging assignments
- collect and collate completed judging forms
- supervise and problem solve adjudication process
- make final selection of Fair award winners
- collect and organize awards and certificates for awards ceremony

### ***Post-Fair***

- distribute awards charts to chair for distribution to stakeholders
- conduct post-Fair communication to thank judges and request feedback
- provide judging feedback to teachers

## **Registration and School Liaison Committee**

- contact and meet with school board officials to seek support for the Fair, e.g.:
  - distribution of school information packages
  - committee members
  - volunteers
- prepare a school information package that includes:
  - short description of “What is a Heritage Fair?”
  - invitation to take part for set grade groups
  - date, venue, times of the regional Heritage Fair
  - timelines for: teacher registration, school registration, school project allocations, project registration
  - curriculum connections
  - project formats
  - special programming or features of your regional Heritage Fair
  - contact information and website and social media
- distribute teacher packages to school board personnel for distribution to schools, by personal delivery or emails to private schools. Post on Fair website and social media
- send follow-up newsletters, emails, to registered teachers, board contacts, private schools and post on website and social media before first registration deadline
- use newsletters and emails to keep registered teachers up to date on information about student opportunities, registration procedures, and information about the regional Heritage Fair Day

### ***Fair Day***

- set-up and organize registration table;
- organize registration table volunteers and outline their duties for registering students and answering logistical questions;
- place Emergency Risk Management Binder in central location and making volunteers aware of its content:
  - Layout of all Fair activities
  - Emergency procedures
  - Identification of committee members with First Aid qualifications
  - Health concern data for volunteers and student participants
- provide students with health issues or no media requests with special arm band
- provide participating teachers with teacher packages – map of venue room/space allocations, day's schedule, washrooms, etc.
- collect any missing permission forms
- supervise registration table to ensure volunteers always available
- greet special guests and/or local media and provide them with relevant information

### ***Post-Fair***

- thank participating teachers and request feedback

### **Public Relations/Media**

- develop a communication plan for the Heritage Fair
- attend full committee meetings to confirm details of the Fair
- update website and social media (if available) as necessary

- review outgoing communication and promotional strategies regularly and make modifications to the media plan as necessary
- create and submit press releases to the local media
- provide feedback to the Chair for the annual report

## **Volunteers Committee**

### ***Pre-Fair***

- canvas a wide variety of community institutions, organizations and historical groups to advertise the Fair and volunteer opportunities
- inform past and potential new volunteers of the date of the Fair and request their registration and participation
- liaise with other committee chairs to determine volunteer requirements
- monitor volunteer email, respond to potential volunteers and assign volunteers to specific tasks
- record volunteers' health and dietary issues in the risk management binder and inform the Logistics Chair of any precautions that must be taken for catering, etc.
- communicate regularly with all volunteers to update Fair day developments and procedures

### ***Fair Day***

- greet all volunteers as they arrive and direct them to the appropriate areas

### ***Post-Fair***

- thank volunteers and request feedback



## Appendix B: Sample Committee Duties Chart

**Note:** This chart is based on a Fair occurring in early May and is meant only to be an example. Individual regional Fairs should produce their own chart based on their own Fair date and insert the tasks and timeline that will help the committee stay on track to hold a successful Fair.

	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
<b>Chair</b> (chair regular mtgs. and monitor progress of all committees)	Confirm Fair details  Organize Committees and Committee Chairs  Set up task and budget charts		Set up schedule for regular full committee meetings  Set agendas and chair meetings throughout the entire Fair season  Arrange for minute-taking and distribution			Register with Canada's History to receive resources and awards	Check progress of committees  Create evaluation strategy for students, teachers, presenters, volunteers	Create and share task sheet for Fair day	Final check-in with all areas of Fair just before Fair Day  Distribute and collect feedback surveys, etc. from appropriate committee chairs	Final report for partners  Review of Fair with full committee
<b>Fund Development</b> (monthly financial reports at mtgs.)	Present financial statement and budget  Apply for grants	Update sponsor list  Create donor package/ funding plan	Implement fundraising plan				Monitor funding and give funding report at each full committee meeting to ensure budget numbers are achievable. Work with committees to adjust budgets if needed.		Work with Chair and all committees to make sure all payments are issued	Provide financial report to Chair  Thank donors

Programming	Confirm Fair details	Determine community groups to approach	Approach community groups with a "Save-the-Date"	Communicate Fair details and deliver workshop template to be filled out. (E.g., tables and chairs needed, special requirements/ materials needed)	All activities planned and finalized.  Confirm rooms/materials.	Give final details to community groups for Fair day	Provide feedback to Chair
						Welcome presenters and direct them to appropriate areas	Thank community groups and presenters
						Organize volunteers for rotational movement of teachers and students	
						Facilitate completion of feedback surveys from community groups and presenters	
Awards and Ceremonies		Confirm Provincial/Territorial/National Awards	Confirm local awards	Invite special guests and sponsors to present awards	Present welcome and safety speech at opening	Thank-you to award presenters, volunteers	
				Invite past alumni students to be MCs (French and English depending on participants)	Organize awards for closing, script for MCs, slideshow if required		
				Arrange Indigenous welcome and land acknowledgement	Coordinate with adjudication chair		

Logistics	Confirm Fair details. Set max numbers for projects and students.	Check inventory, purchase supplies, print documents, explore food options  In coordination with programming committee set up the schedule for the day (timing, rotations)	Book food vendor, confirm room availability, tables/chairs	Rent or purchase remaining supplies	Create project map, book specific rooms for workshops	Hospitality, set-up for Fair  Confirm all technology needs met  Supervise takedown and clean-up of Fair	Provide feedback to Chair for final report  Thank partners
Adjudication	Review and make changes to judging / awards/permission forms	Work with registration committee to ensure all forms available to participating teachers and students via schools, website, etc.	Make certificates, order medals, plaques, if needed.  Work with other committees to find English and French adjudicators (Sources: school board staff, retired teachers, historical groups, university and community college teachers and students, cultural groups, etc.)		Collect awards from donors. Plan awards ceremony script with team. Select special judges.	Give judging info to volunteer judges before Fair Day  Hold orientation session for judges to review judging process  Supervise judging process and selection of award winners  Distribute and collect feedback surveys, etc. from judges	Provide feedback and list of awards winners to Chair

<b>Registration</b>  <b>School Liaison</b>  (ongoing contact with teachers)	Give all dates and a tentative timeline to teachers  Revise Teacher's Package	Send out Teacher's Package  Ensure online registration updated on website	Registration for Pre-Fair and teacher workshops as needed  Prepare lists of participants for workshop leaders	Advertise and prepare for teacher workshops and info sessions  Ensure Teacher's Package updated	Confirm participating teachers  Print and fill in certificates for awards	Confirm Student projects with Adjudication Chair	Set up registration table to greet and direct presenters, teachers, students, adjudicators, public visitors, special guests  Distribute maps and organize volunteers  Distribute and collect feedback surveys, etc. from teachers and students	Provide feedback and school stats to Chair
<b>Public Relations/ Media</b>	Confirm Fair details.	Create media plan for the Fair  Update Fair website and social media (if available) as necessary  Review outgoing communication and promotional strategies regularly and make modifications to the media plan as necessary			Ramp up promotion of Fair		Create and submit press releases	Provide feedback to Chair
<b>Volunteers</b>	Review last year's volunteer numbers if available	Speak with committee heads to discuss volunteer #s needed for the Fair	Determine recruitment targets and locations. Make connections if needed.	Ensure website and forms are ready for registration. Begin recruitment.	Recruitment. Schedule.		Communicate info and schedules to volunteers in advance  Coordinate registration table and group leaders	Thank volunteers  Provide feedback to Chair