

Top 10 Tips to Create a Cultural Passport for Culture Days



Creating a Cultural Passport for Culture Days is a great way to raise the profile of your events, keep people moving from activity to activity, and engage businesses and organizations that might not otherwise be participating in Culture Days.

A Culture Days Passport highlights a variety of activity stops during the Culture Days weekend. To create a passport, include:

- Information on each participating activity including location, day, time, a short description of what to expect, and a photo or the organization's logo
- An area for stamps beside each listing so attendees can get their passports stamped at each stop they visit
- A raffle ballot where passport holders can fill out their contact information for prize draws
- Culture Days brand [creative elements](#) and local sponsor logos

Many communities have run successful cultural passport programs for Culture Days. We asked Elizabeth Bender, Cultural Coordinator of Centre Wellington, and Jane Taylor, Program, Event & Communications Manager at the Aurora Cultural Centre, for their top tips!

1. Start early and designate a project lead

Regardless of the number of Culture Days activities taking part or the size of your community, creating a passport program requires planning and a great deal of coordination. It is a good idea to designate a lead person or a committee to spearhead the effort.

- **Set a registration deadline.** Have each participating activity finalize their event registration on the [Culture Days website](#) by a set date so that you have all the



information you need to create the passport and plenty of time to design, print and distribute it before Culture Days.

- Taking into account the Culture Days campaign timelines and summer holidays, we recommend **July 31st** as a registration deadline.

2. Work out a schedule

For a passport program to be successful the public needs time to be able to participate in multiple events and travel between them.

- Coordinate with activity organizers to ensure that events are not happening all at the same time or located too far away from each other.
- Examine the schedule for gaps and opportunities where you can invite additional artists and organizations to present activities – this will help create a natural flow between events.

3. Consider a theme

Be creative! Language that is trip, travel, or passport related can help create a fun atmosphere but other themes can work too.

- Create a sense of exclusivity or a feeling of special access, i.e. Use concert-related language and make the passport a “backstage pass”.
- Arrange your passport as a cultural bingo and create activity location signage that references games – “Do not pass GO without getting your passport stamped,” etc.
- Carry the theme through to all aspects of the program, i.e. use old suitcases to display passports at each location, create cultural passports that are the size of an actual passport, etc.

4. A map is a must!

A map helps the public locate all passport stops as well as providing other useful information like parking, public washrooms and local tourism/information centres that will ensure participants have a great day.



5. Use unique stamps at each location

Use different stamps at each stop so that people look forward to seeing what they will get next and will want to collect as many different stamps as possible. Consider matching the stamp to the stop - an apple for the farmers market, a paint brush for the studio tour, etc.

6. Incentivize!

A raffle provides great motivation for people to attend events and get their passports stamped. Create a prize pack consisting of items donated from local businesses and organizations. This is an excellent opportunity to engage businesses and organizations that are not otherwise participating in Culture Days.

- Consider creating a tear-away ballot that is easy to remove so people can keep their passports as a memento.
- Hold the draw at a wrap-up party to bring everyone together for a final celebration to conclude the weekend.
- Take your objectives into account when determining eligibility criteria. For example, do you want to encourage people to move between multiple sites? If so, how many stamps do they need to get on their passport to be eligible for the draw? Are you aiming to engage people who are new to participating in arts and cultural activities? If so, then a single stamp at one activity should qualify a participant to enter the draw, etc.

7. Get the word out

Once you have created your passport, it's time to promote the program and distribute them as widely as possible in your community.

- **Find a print sponsor.** Maximize the number of passports you produce by finding a sponsor to donate all or some of the printing costs of your passport. Acknowledge their donation through your communications channels, marketing materials and with a logo on the passport.
- **Find a media sponsor.** A media sponsor can promote the passport program and Culture Days through articles leading up to the event as well as distributing passports in the newspaper in an edition prior to the weekend. Approach your paper early as there are coordination, delivery and timing issues that require good communication with your paper. Be sure to acknowledge their support!



- **Provide each activity organizer with passports** to hand out. You can also distribute printed passports in high traffic locations throughout the community like the library, community centres, farmers market, etc. for the public to pick up in the weeks leading up to Culture Days.
- **Create an e-version of the passport** that will allow the public to print their own passports online.

8. Prepare your passport stops

- **Recruit volunteers.** Activity organizers will require extra support to distribute and stamp passports and to provide customer service to passport holders while they are running their Culture Days activity.
- **Provide each passport stop with a Culture Days Kit.** Include blank passports, signage, stamps and inkpads, pens, paper, a raffle ballot/passport drop box, and marketing materials from Culture Days including balloons, buttons, stickers, etc. Instructions sheets with contact information are also helpful for volunteers.
- **Encourage each activity organizer to set up a passport stop in a highly visible area.** A designated location to pick up, stamp, and drop off raffle ballots/passports will help the program run smoothly and keep distractions to a minimum for those running and participating in Culture Days activities.

9. Provide on-site support during the weekend

On the weekend check in with locations to ensure they are doing well, have sufficient passports and materials and are having fun. Consider enlisting some volunteers to help accomplish this task. Even in a smaller community this is a big job.

- Include direction signage between venues. Balloons, banners, and signage pointing to events will make it easy for travelers to get to each passport stop.
- Stamp more than passports! Kids love collecting different stamps on their hands
- Set up a drop-off point or arrange for pick-up of the Passport Drop Boxes from each site.
- Combine all the passports, and get a VIP to complete the prize draw at a final Culture Days event. This could be a representative from your media or printing sponsor, providing them with additional exposure for their support.



10. Wrap up!

- Follow up with prize winner(s) informing them of where they can collect their prizes.
- Count the Passports. This will allow you to create a benchmark for attendance, chart public participation year over year, and help determine the number of passports you will need for next year.
- Publically acknowledge your sponsors, volunteers, and everyone else who helped make the program possible. Follow up with thank you cards.
- Collect Culture Days Kits, solicit feedback from activity organizers and the public and share photos, success stories, and outcomes from the event through your communications channels and the media.

For inspiration, check out these past Culture Days Passports from [Aurora](#) and [Centre Wellington](#).

Submitted by Catherine McLeod of Ontario Culture Days, 2015 based on content and expertise provided by Elizabeth Bender, Cultural Coordinator of Township of Centre Wellington and Jane Taylor, Program, Event & Communications Manager at the Aurora Cultural Centre.

