

YORK REGION TOURISM FUND ("YRTF")

Application Guidelines

2026

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About the Fund

The York Region Tourism Fund, established in 2022, aims to enhance tourism across York Region by encouraging visitations and participations at local events. The Fund also encourages strong partnerships between players in York Region tourism sector.

Fund Objectives

Consideration will be given to new projects that meet the following objective:

- Delivery of events, product packages and thematic campaigns that support tourism arts and culture in York Region

Available Funding

Funds of up to Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) (CAD) per project will be available to support community-based tourism events. Funding requests will be considered and allocated based on evaluation from the Fund Review Committee on a first come, first-serve basis. The number of organizations selected will be determined by the strength of applicant pool and the availability of funding. Funding must be used to complement and leverage other resources (cash and in-kind support such as donations, volunteers) to support the project.

Funding Term

Funds for each project will be allocated for a term, from March 2026 to December 31, 2026. There is no funding available for multi-year projects. **Projects must be delivered within the allotted timeframe.**

Eligibility

Registered charitable organizations and non-profit/not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for this fund. This includes but is not limited to, local municipalities, business improvement areas, chambers of commerce, boards of trade, destination marketing organizations, arts associations, community groups, etc.

Organizations must meet the following criteria in order to receive funding:

- Have a mandate that benefits the Region's residents and/or business communities
- Operate within the boundaries of York Region and provide services to residents/businesses of the Region
- Be incorporated as a not-for-profit/non-profit organization or registered as charity by the Canada Revenue Agency for the purposes of the *Income Tax Act* (Canada).
- Be governed by a Board of Directors that has been democratically elected and has remained active in the last few months

- Have established and documented financial management systems in place
- Have evidence of insurance coverage acceptable to the Region
- Comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code in hiring practices and in the provision of all services
- Comply with relevant federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations including *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as amended
- Evidence of good standing with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) in the form of a valid WSIB clearance certificate
- Not be in unresolved litigation with the Region or affiliated with an entity engaged in unresolved litigation with the Region. “Unresolved litigation” means any unresolved dispute between the Region and any other party or related party adverse in interest, including third party and cross-claims, where a legal proceeding has been commenced for an injunction, a mandatory order, a declaration, or the recovery of money

Collaborations between organizations is encouraged. **At least one partner must meet the eligibility criteria.**

Organizations must **submit only one application form**. Collaborative applications with two or more eligible organizations will be considered, however only one organization must serve as the applicant. Collaborative proposals should clearly define roles of each organization and any funding amounts to be transferred by the applicant to the collaborator.

Ineligible Organizations

The following organizations are not eligible for funding:

- For-profit organizations
- Organizations acting in the capacity of a funding body, fundraising drives or events
- Organizations that have political affiliations
- Building managers and property owners
- Individual residents
- Grant making organizations

Eligible Project Costs

Project budget requested for funding can not exceed Five Thousand Dollar (\$5,000.00) (CAD). Funding can only be used for eligible **direct personnel and non-personnel project costs** for the proposed project. Eligible projects will be funded up to 50 per cent of the total costs of the project to a maximum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) (CAD).

Direct personnel and non-personnel project costs:

Direct personnel costs for delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project:

- Management and coordination – up to 50% of staff salaries for time allocated to the proposed project

Direct non-personnel costs:

- Purchased services from contractors or consultants specifically relating to the delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project (i.e. communication, translation etc.)
- Supplies and materials purchased or rented to use in the delivery of the project

Restricted and Ineligible costs

- Applications will not be considered for the following:
 - Purchase of property
 - Religious or political activities or proselytizing
 - Event sponsorships and fund-raising activities
- Funds must **not** be used to support overhead and administration costs (e.g. accounting, legal fees, rent, utilities, etc.)
- Up to 50% of the funding request may be used for direct personnel costs for any project related position, including Project Management/Coordination staff time
- Funding must be used to complement and leverage other resources (cash and in-kind support such as donations, volunteers), with a minimum of 50% of eligible direct personnel and non-personnel costs required for the project funded by other resources. Applicants are required to identify all funding sources in their project budget in their application

The Application Process

The application process includes two stages:

1. The Preliminary Application form must be completed, saved and submitted to edo@york.ca for review. Region staff will review these applications and the most suitable applicants from the pool, as determined by the Region in its sole discretion, will then be invited to submit a Detailed Application
2. The Detailed Application will be sent directly to shortlisted applicants to be completed and submitted for review by the Fund Review Committee

Please note:

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the coordinator of the York Region Tourism at edo@york.ca before applying, to discuss the proposed project and application process
- Incomplete applications will be disqualified
- Each applicant can only submit one application per year. If more than one application is submitted by the same applicant, only the application submitted first will be reviewed

How to Apply - Preliminary Application

The Preliminary Application form involves completing the following:

Section 1: Contact Information

Organization/Community Group

Provide the name and contact details of your charity or non-profit/not-for-profit organization.

Project Lead Contact

Provide the name and contact details of the individual that will be your organization's key contact and project lead for this project.

Signing Authority Contact

Provide the name and contact details of the person from your organization who has signing authority for legal documents related to this application and proposed project.

All contact information will be used for funding application purposes only.

Section 2: Project Information

Provide a title/name for the proposed project; the specific location(s) where the project will take place; and the start and end date of the project. All approved projects are expected to be completed by December 31, 2026.

Section 3: Project Overview

This section should provide an overview of your proposed project.

This should include:

- A. *Project Goal* – state what you hope to accomplish by the end of this project.
- B. *Project Objectives* – outline the SMART objectives that your project will aim to meet as you move towards the ultimate project goal.
- C. *Target Audience* – identify the specific community or group you hope to impact through the proposed project. Define that target audience by highlighting relevant characteristics of this group, including but not limited to demographics, values, attitudes and behaviours, geographic area(s) of the target audience. Additionally, provide the number of people that will be impacted by your project.

Section 4: Project Delivery

The answers in this section should clearly explain why your organization/community group is well-suited to deliver this project. Here you will also explain how the project will be delivered by identifying who else is working with you and what their role in the project will be. You will also be required to outline the proposed work plan (a summarized version) by listing the key steps required to carry out your project.

A. *What skills, expertise, experience and accomplishments make your community group/organization well-suited to deliver this project?* For this question, consider the following:

- What is the mandate of your organization/community group?
- What are the goals and objectives of your organization?
- What are some of the current or past programs/services your organization/community group or members of staff have provided and/or delivered to local communities?
- What are some community-based projects, past grant/funding awards or other special accomplishments that could help with your delivery of this project?
- Do your staff members have any special skills or experiences that would help ensure project success?

B. *Identify all stakeholders in the proposed project and how each of them will be involved in its delivery.* Define the following groups and explain the specific role each group will play in your project:

- Your group/organization
- Your target audience/community – highlight general details, number of people, any characteristics, behaviours or barriers that could help or hinder the project
- Local municipality and York Region
- If applicable, any other organizations or partners that you will work with to help deliver the project. This would include groups or individuals who could influence the success of your project

Section 5: Project Impact

Explain the potential impacts and outcomes of your proposed project, how your group/organization expects to measure and quantify these impacts and how those results satisfy the objectives of the YRTF program.

A. *What are the intended impacts and/or outcomes of the proposed project?* Outline the expected results of your proposed project. The project outcomes should be specific, measurable and relevant to the project and the objectives of the YRTF program. Include anticipated short and long-term results.

B. *How will your group/organization measure (quantitatively and/or qualitatively) these impacts and/or outcomes?* Explain how you will monitor and evaluate the success of the project's delivery. Discuss the different methods, strategies and techniques you will use to capture both qualitative and quantitative data.

- C. *How do the intended impacts and or/outcomes align with the objectives of the York Region Tourism Fund?* Describe how the intended outcomes of your project satisfy one or more of the core objectives of the York Region Tourism Fund as outlined in the 'Fund Objectives' section of this Application Guidelines document.
- D. *What are the potential risks to this project and how will these risks be mitigated?* Identify the potential issues that would threaten the delivery and success of the project. Highlight the steps that will be taken to lessen these risks.

Section 6: Budget Projection

Provide a preliminary evaluation of your proposed project budget. This is the sum of your funding request (up to a maximum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00)) through the York Region Tourism Fund and any other funding sources your group/organization may be directing towards this project. Other funding sources refer to monetary donations, other grants or funding your group/organization has been awarded for the proposed project or any financial contributions from any project partners that may be working with you. You should have additional funding sources of a minimum of 50% of eligible costs, as described under Eligible Project Costs above. Therefore, your total project budget should be the sum of your funding request and all other funding sources.

- i. Other funding sources do not have to be confirmed at the time of the submission of the Preliminary Application. If you have or think you may have other funding sources, please indicate the agency or provider, the amount (approximate value if unknown) and whether or not the funding source has already been confirmed or is expected (i.e. your group/organization is in the process of applying/has applied and you are awaiting a decision). However, if you are invited by the Region, in its sole discretion, to submit a Detailed Application, the other funding sources must be confirmed at the time of the submission of the Detailed Application. If the other funding sources are not confirmed at that time, your invitation to submit a Detailed Application will be withdrawn.
- ii. List any in-kind donations or support that will be directed towards the project. In-kind contributions are the cash equivalent of goods or services (e.g. volunteer time) donated to the project. Only list in-kind donations or support that are confirmed at the time of submission of the Preliminary Application.
- iii. Provide a breakdown of your proposed budget for each of the listed budget categories. Briefly outline the associated actions, activities and/or items that would fall into that category. Where the total dollar amount is unknown, please estimate the amount to the best of your ability. Fill out the funding request, other funding sources (if applicable) and total project budget columns accordingly.

If a certain budget category does not apply to your budget, enter N/A in the description. You may also add other budget categories as needed for your specific project.

Submitting the Preliminary Application

- Preliminary Application Submission Deadline: a minimum of two months prior to the event .
- Please complete the application form, save as .pdf and email a copy to: edo@york.ca
- HARD COPY SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please do not send a printed version of your application
- If the Region determines that a Preliminary Application is incomplete, the Region may reject the application in its sole discretion. The Region is not required to seek clarification or further information from any applicants.
- The Region accepts no responsibility for any reason whatsoever, including computer system failures of either the Applicant or the Region's service provider, if the Applicant is unable to submit its Preliminary Application before the Preliminary Application Submission Deadline, and the Applicant agrees that the Region shall have no liability for delays caused by internet/network traffic, degraded operation or failure of any computer system element, including, but not limited to, any computer system, power supply, telephone or data connection or system or software or browser of any type whatsoever.
- It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that it can access and exchange data with the Region's service provider's computer systems electronically and that it allows sufficient time to successfully access and share data with the Region's service provider's computer systems, having regard to the possibility of delays caused by internet/network traffic. Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring that they plan their access to the Region's service provider's computer/servers, so that the Applicants can reach the Region's service provider's computers/servers, and submit their Preliminary Applications, before the Preliminary Application Submission Deadline.

Next steps:

- York Region staff will review the Preliminary Applications and notify the applicants selected to proceed to Step 2 - Detailed Application Stage. Applicants moving on to the next stage will be notified via email.
- Please note that an invitation to move on to the Detailed Application stage is not a guarantee of funding.
- All funding is subject to availability in the Region's budget, as the Region determines in its sole discretion.
- The Region reserves the right to reject any or all Detailed Applications. In addition, the Region also reserves the right to approve a lower funding amount than the amount requested in any or all Detailed Applications.

Important Points to Note

Role of the Fund Recipient

Successful funding recipients will be required to submit a final report and evaluation of their project within two weeks of the end of the event/initiative. Evaluations will determine whether funding recipients have:

- Adhered to the project plans submitted during the application phase; and
- Made progress towards or achieved the York Region Tourism Fund goals and objectives

Funding recipients will be provided with standardized reporting requirements and will be required to enter into a written agreement in form and content satisfactory to the Region in its sole discretion as a condition of funding.; the Region will cancel the funding approval and will not advance funds to any recipient who refuses to enter into such an agreement. Funding recipients will also be asked to provide photos or video documentation of their project activities.

Acknowledgement of Funding

Funding recipients must acknowledge the financial assistance provided by York Region in program materials and signage, including any promotional materials used in project activities. This requirement will be discussed in greater detail after a funding decision is made and incorporated into the above-mentioned agreement.