

Cultural Drivers of Tourism Incentive Program

Introduction:

Creating a strong relationship between tourism and culture helps destinations become more attractive and competitive as locations in which to live, visit, work and invest.

The Region of Waterloo recognizes Cultural amenities such as museums, concerts, festivals and events have a positive impact on tourism demand, increasing the profile of our community nationally and internationally. Cultural organizations play an important role in attracting and extending overnight stays in the Region, increasing the economic yield of visitors, encouraging repeat visits, and enhancing the image of the Region as a year-round destination.

Tourism can support and strengthen cultural heritage, cultural production and creativity. The Region of Waterloo recognizes this synergistic relationship between tourism and culture, and the way in which they have together become major drivers of destination attractiveness and competitiveness.

This incentive program aims to develop Waterloo Region's cultural assets that create local distinctiveness to increase comparative advantages in an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace. The incentive program provides formula funding to eligible organizations based on the number of tourists attending eligible public programs and events in the Region.

Purpose:

- To provide funding to arts, cultural and heritage organizations in recognition of their role in attracting and extending tourist stays to the Region. This support will strengthen the arts, culture and heritage sectors to further enrich the lives of residents and attract visitors to Waterloo Region
- To create a competitive business-supportive community to help attract, retain and grow employers, talent and investment in the community
- To encourage local cultural organizations to consider how their programming can be leveraged to increase tourism in Waterloo Region
- To foster a relationship between the hospitality industry and cultural heritage/arts organizations based on their mutual growth potential
- To encourage the collection and sharing of data to identify areas of strength and potential growth

Budget:

The budget for this program is set by Council during the annual Plan and Budget process. This program is funded from the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) Reserve. The objective of the MAT is to enhance, promote, build and strengthen the local tourism economy, and increase overnight accommodation metrics.

Eligibility:

To be **eligible** for funding, your organization must:

- be a registered non-profit or not-for-profit organization in good standing
- provide arts¹, culture and/or heritage² programming - governance documents must clearly demonstrate how the applicant organization supports artistic, creative and/or heritage practices
- be based within the geographic area known as Waterloo Region
- operate as a stand-alone organization at arm's length from municipalities, commercial enterprises or schools
- demonstrate adherence to good governance principles, effective administration practices and commitment to fiscal responsibility and stability in the judgment of the Region of Waterloo
- be in good standing with the Region of Waterloo with no outstanding reporting requirements
- have been in operation for at least **one** full year prior to the deadline
- be the primary producer of the eligible activity (below)
- a member in good standing with [Explore Waterloo Region](#)

¹ Art includes: Performing arts (music, dance, theatre, spoken word, circus arts, improvisation); Visual arts (two/three-dimensional art and fine craft), drawing, painting, photography, sculpture in all media, exhibits, site-specific or temporary installation; Literary arts (poetry, prose, storytelling, fiction, literary non-fiction, screenwriting and playwriting); Media/New Media (film, video, and digital arts).

² Culture and Heritage includes museums, collections, archives, heritage buildings and sites, as well as activities and expression, which explore, interpret and celebrate human diversity and human and natural history through interpretation, storytelling, narratives, traditions and skill.

Meeting of eligibility requirements in no way obligates Regional Council to approve funding to an organization.

The following entities are **ineligible** for this funding:

- Individuals
- Municipal, provincial or federal departments
- Health, social service, religious or sports organizations
- Library boards
- For-profit organizations and commercial enterprises
- Venues and roadhouses
- Private clubs or service clubs
- Trade guilds, trade unions or professional associations
- Schools, training institutions and universities
- Organizations that receive **operating** funding under another Region of Waterloo grant program
- Organizations that engage exclusively in competition-based activities

Eligible Activities

Public programs, performances, exhibits, festivals and events where arts and cultural presentations are the primary reason and are:

- available to the public through season tickets, casual sales or free admission
- presented within the boundaries of Waterloo Region
- presented between May 1 and April 30 immediately prior to deadline

Ineligible Activities

- pre-recorded events for distribution through online channels or resources
- repeat presentation of previous live streamed events
- activities related to conferences or workshops
- entertainment or social events, including but not limited to:
 - fundraisers
 - trade fairs/conventions

- community dances
- student union cabarets
- sporting events that **do not have arts or cultural heritage as a significant component**

Application Deadline: The end of June each year.

- applicants may submit only one application to the Region of Waterloo each year
- incomplete applications will not be accepted

Submission Criteria:

Applications can be submitted using the [online form](#).

1. Applicant contact information, including:
 - a. the organization's registered name, registration number, and date of registration
 - b. name and email address of contact person
 - c. mailing address
2. Complete the [Cultural Drivers of Tourism Worksheet](#)
3. the organization's most recent board-approved annual financial statement

Applicants may be asked for additional information.

The Region of Waterloo reserves the right to request documentation and metrics of funded projects for the purposes of council reports, communications, etc.

The Region of Waterloo reserves the right to audit any application to verify the information provided.

Incentive Assessment Process:

This program's funding budget is established annually by Region of Waterloo Council as part of the annual plan and budget process.

Available funds are equitably distributed to all eligible applicants according to a formula. The formula is based on the number of visitors or audience members from at least 40 km away attending your organization's eligible activities (exhibits, performances, programs or events)³.

³ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport defines "tourist trip" as an "out-of-town" trip 40 km one-way from the traveller's home.

1. Each organization's total annual tourists is divided by the sum of total annual tourists for all eligible applicants.
2. That number is then multiplied by this funding opportunity's budget to determine each applicant's eligible funding allocation.
3. Incentive allocations are capped at a maximum of three per cent of an organization's annual operating budget.

Region of Waterloo staff evaluate applications according to the program eligibility criteria and prepare recommendations to the Region of Waterloo Council for approval.

Funding is not assured for any application. All decisions are final.

For organizations that have previously received ongoing operating funding from the Region: The calculated eligible incentive amount changes from their previous amount, this will be phased in over a period of three years. The first year they will receive their most recent funding amount, the following year they will receive a reduction or increase of 50 per cent of the difference, and in the final year will receive their calculated eligible incentive amount.

Funding Acknowledgement:

Whenever possible, the Region of Waterloo is to be acknowledged for its financial support in any publicity prepared in relation to public programs/projects, including electronic and print material. Guidelines on acknowledgement will be provided to incentive recipients at time of assessment result notification.

Reporting:

This incentive funding is calculated based on activity in the previous year. All relevant material will be collected in the application process. Reporting is not required.

Applicants are encouraged to track the demographics of their audience to assist with metrics for future applications.