



## THE STRATFORD DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUND SELECTS 8 CULTURALLY DIVERSE EXPERIENCES TO LAUNCH IN 2023/2024

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(STRATFORD, ON) The Stratford Destination Development Fund (DDF) received an overwhelmingly positive response in applications with 17 submissions totalling over \$500,000 in projects with \$114,100 requested of the allotted \$35,000 DDF. The selection process was extremely competitive, and the committee appointed 8 cultural projects for funding contribution. Projects will occur within the months of October 2023 to May 2024.

The Stratford Destination Development Fund was established with investment from Regional Tourism Organization 4 (RT04), Downtown Stratford BIA and Destination Stratford to enable and support experiential projects that are highly shareable and have high impact on the destination. Successful applicants were selected to focus on shoulder and winter season destination development projects that are aligned with Stratford's cultural DNA.

*“The 2023 Stratford Destination Development Fund represents a major shift by focussing only on projects that were outside of the busy summer season,”* said Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford. *“We're thrilled with the quality and creativity of the applications and can't wait to see all of the new cultural activation take place during our shoulder and winter seasons.”*

*“The quality and variety of the submissions were remarkable, which made it very difficult to narrow down the choices,”* said Jamie Pritchard, General Manager of Downtown Stratford BIA. *“All submissions were very deserving and presented a strong case to receive funding. Our city is flowing with businesses and businesspeople with the vision to help animate our city.”*

Leigh Cove, Destination Project Manager with RTO4, added that *“it's exciting to begin trying something different with DDF this year in focussing on non-peak season activations. And the response from the community was fantastic. Stratford has made great strides in diversifying its experience offerings and RTO4 is a proud supporter of its regional destinations implementing projects that improve their tourism sustainability.”*

The successful 2023 applications selected for co-investment include:

- **Stratford Winterfest** - Stratford Winterfest
- **Provocation Ideas Festival** - The Promise and Perils of Technology
- **Hermione Presents ~ SpringWorks Festivals (HPSWF)** - SpringWorks~PuppetWorks! Cultural Activations
- **Stratford Arts and Culture Collective** - A Stratford Christmas (working title)
- **Communities in Bloom** - Lighting up the Waterfall in Confederation Park

- **Stratford Summer Music** - Royal Canadian AirFarce, 50th Anniversary World in a Weekend in Winter Concert and Comedy Night
- **Pazzo Co** - Stratford Plugged In Concert Series
- **Stratford Winter Film Festival Inc.** - Stratford Winter Film Festival

The goals of the Stratford DDF include:

- Increasing the number of sustainable and high-quality visitor-focused experiences during the shoulder and winter seasons.
- Providing opportunities for destination storytelling and visitor generated content creation.
- Strengthening the network of destination stakeholders taking an active role in our tourism future.

For more DDF details please visit: [visitstratford.ca/ddf](http://visitstratford.ca/ddf)

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