



STRATFORD DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUND RETURNS FOR ITS NINTH YEAR WITH A FOCUS ON FUNDING SHOULDER AND WINTER SEASON CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

For Immediate Release: March 28, 2024

(STRATFORD, ON) Now entering its ninth successful year, the 2024/25 Stratford Destination Development Fund (DDF) will focus on enabling compelling and impactful destination development projects in Stratford that are year-round or occur during shoulder / winter seasons. Supported projects will be slated to occur before May 31, 2024, or from October 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

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. The selected projects directly align with Stratford's cultural DNA and will strengthen the experiences and storytelling opportunities for both residents and visitors. DDF partners are delighted with the passionate and creative applications received in previous years and look forward to reviewing upcoming 2024/25 applications.

"Stratford is famous as a cultural destination during the summer months, but there are incredible cultural experiences to be enjoyed by locals and visitors throughout the year. The Destination Development Fund is focused on supporting and enabling additional opportunities for our community, specifically during the shoulder and winter seasons. We're looking forward to seeing the creative ideas and projects proposed for 2024/25!"

– Zac Gribble, Executive Director, Destination Stratford

"The BIA is pleased to be working with the Destination Development Fund again this year. We need to continue to build opportunities to bring visitors to Stratford during the shoulder season when the Theatres are dark for the winter. Activities that focus on this will see our downtown business benefit from the off-season traffic."

– Jamie Pritchard, General Manager, Downtown Stratford BIA.

The goals of the Stratford DDF include:

- Increasing the number of sustainable and high-quality cultural experiences during the shoulder and winter seasons (including creative displays / programming during Lights On Stratford).
- Providing opportunities for destination storytelling and visitor generated content.
- Strengthening the network of destination stakeholders taking an active role in our tourism future.

Organizations eligible for funding include:

- Tourism enterprises and businesses (as individual organizations or as a consortium) with interests in arts & culture, heritage, agri-culinary, sports, meetings & conventions, etc.
- Festivals and Events.
- For-profit or non-profit organizations.

Applicants can apply for a range of support for new tourism-related experiences, enhancements to existing tourism-related experiences (in-person or digital, projects that improve the visitor experience), and/or storytelling (capturing of content – photo/video and/or social media).

Projects must be implemented during a shoulder season or winter (be year-round or occur at any point within April, 2024 – May 31, 2024 and/or October 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025).

Applications are open through to May 1, 2024 (and on a rolling basis thereafter if not fully allocated). The minimum fund request is \$500 and maximum is \$10,000.

APPLICATION FORM LAUNCHING MARCH 28, 2024

Last year's 2023 DDF received a positive response with 17 applications of which 7 cultural projects were selected. The successful 2023 applications included:

- Stratford Winterfest - **Stratford Winterfest**
- Provocation Ideas Festival - **The Promise and Perils of Technology**
- Hermione Presents ~ SpringWorks Festivals (HPSWF) - **Cultural Activations**
- Stratford Arts and Culture Collective - **A Stratford Christmas**
- Communities in Bloom - **Lighting up the Waterfall in Confederation Park**
- Stratford Summer Music - **Winter Bach 2.0 and Family Friendly St. Patrick's Day**
- Stratford Winter Film Festival Inc. - **Stratford Winter Film Festival**

For more DDF details and to apply, please see visitstratford.ca/ddf.

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