



STRATFORD DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUND SELECTS 10 NEW CULTURAL EXPERIENCES TO SUPPORT IN 2024/25

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(STRATFORD, ON) The 2024/25 Stratford Destination Development Fund (DDF) received an overwhelmingly positive response with 24 applications totalling upwards of \$200,000 in requested funds. The selection process was extremely competitive, and the committee selected 10 cultural projects for funding contribution. The 2024/25 DDF surpassed the number of applications and funds requested from the previous year which had 17 applications and 7 selected experiences. The projects will focus on enabling compelling and impactful destination development projects in Stratford that are year-round or occur during shoulder / winter seasons. Supported projects are slated to occur before May 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 year-round. Successful applicants were selected to focus on shoulder and winter season destination development projects that are aligned with Stratford's cultural DNA.

"It was very tough going through the submissions this year as this community is filled with individuals with so many amazing ideas to bring visitors to Stratford in the shoulder season," said Jamie Pritchard, General Manager of Downtown Stratford BIA. *"So many of the submissions could have been successful but due to the volume and the creativity of those selected it just boiled down to the fact that not all were able to be included."*

Leigh Cove, Destination Project Manager with RTO4, added that *"after a great first year response to targeting shoulder season activations, Stratford has outdone itself in year two with even more ideas being submitted to the 2024 DDF. It's going to be wonderful to see the seasons "expand" as it were, and these developing events hopefully become signatures in the Stratford calendar throughout the year."*

"The 2024/25 Stratford Destination Development Fund focuses on projects that are outside of the busy summer season to continue building a thriving community and robust year-round visitor economy," said Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford. *"When it comes to being an innovative and creative community, Stratford's residents, businesses and cultural experience*

providers are second to none as demonstrated by the depth and breadth of the 24 applications and 10 selected projects.”

The successful 2024 applications include:

- **Stratford Summer Music** - Side-By-Side Series
- **Provocation Ideas Festival** - City of Dreamers
- **Stratford Arts and Culture Collective** - A Stratford Christmas 2024
- **SpringWorks Festival** - PuppetWorks! Cultural Activations
- **Playmakers! Theatre School** - Lantern Festival: Labrinth of the Seasons
- **Stratford Film Festival**
- **Stratford Walking Tours** - Historic and Hospitality
- **Gallery Stratford** - Malcolm Pate Exhibition
- **Stratford Winter Film Festival**
- **Stratford Country Club** - Glow Curling

The goals of the Stratford DDF include:

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

For more DDF details please visit: visitstratford.ca/ddf

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