



EIGHT NEW CULTURAL PROJECTS CHOSEN FOR 2025/2026 SUPPORT BY STRATFORD DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUND

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(STRATFORD, ON) The 2025/26 Stratford Destination Development Fund (DDF) received an enthusiastic response, with 23 applications submitted and over \$190,000 in funding requested. Given the high level of interest, the selection process was highly competitive. Ultimately, the committee approved funding for 8 cultural projects that promise to deliver impactful, year-round destination development opportunities—particularly during Stratford’s shoulder and winter seasons. All supported projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of May, 2026.

Established in 2015 through a collaborative investment from Regional Tourism Organization 4 (RTO4), the Downtown Stratford BIA, and Destination Stratford, the Stratford Destination Development Fund was created to support innovative, high-impact experiential projects that enhance Stratford’s appeal year-round. The fund prioritizes initiatives that are highly shareable and strategically aligned with Stratford’s cultural identity, with a particular focus on developing a year-round destination.

“The Stratford Destination Development Fund is designed to strengthen and enhance the quality of life within our community and grow a sustainable year-round visitor economy by supporting cultural experiences beyond the peak summer months,” said Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford. *“Stratford continues to lead with creativity and innovation, as reflected in the impressive range and quality of the 23 applications received this year and the 8 outstanding projects selected.”*

“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 *“RTO4 is happy to be back as a partner for the DDF in 2025. Over the years we’ve seen successful projects bring opportunities for such wonder and discovery to visitors and the community and ultimately become staple experiences within the city. Though a really competitive year for applications, we’re certain that of the projects selected they will surely continue to carry on this legacy.”*

The successful 2025 applications and projects include:

- Stratford Arts and Culture Collective - A Stratford Christmas 2025
- The Boathouse Stratford - Avon After Dark
- Stratford Winterfest - Stratford Winterfest 2026
- Stratford Film Festival - Film Festival & Monthly Film Series
- Stratford Concert Choir - The Big Sing Thing: The Music of The Beatles
- Stratford Summer Music - “Off-Season” Programming
- Stratford Perth Museum - Creatures of Light
- DigiWriting, Blue Moon Publishers and Heidi Sander - Poetic Art on the Move

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

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