

## Tourism Investment Fund Guidelines

Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT) is committed to supporting and growing the economic and social benefits generated by hosting events in the community. The Tourism Investment Fund provides direct support to organizations hosting events in Burlington that generate overnight stays and contribute to the local visitor economy.

### Timing

Applications are accepted year-round. As a four-season destination, Burlington welcomes events in all months; however, priority will be given to those that take place during the off-peak season (November to April) and generate mid-week hotel stays.

*Note: BEDT does not co-organize or manage events directly.*

### Funding

BEDT provides direct funding to eligible organizations to help offset costs and support event success. Funding is intended to supplement other revenue sources and is not designed to cover full event expenses or generate profit for the applicant.

*The BEDT concierge service is available to all event organizers to help facilitate connections with local partners and vendors, and to curate unique Burlington experiences for attendees. BEDT staff may provide ad hoc promotional support, including features in newsletters, listings on the tourism website, and social media promotion, based on availability and relevance.*

### Eligible Applicants

Both non-profit and for-profit organizations are eligible to apply. Events must generate a minimum of 20 hotel night stays in Burlington-based hotels. Applicants may only apply for 1 grant per calendar year. If you are applying in subsequent years, the application must demonstrate a significant additional economic and tourism impact year over year, showing growth in areas such as programming, room nights, or attendance.

### Eligible Events

- Regional, provincial, national, or international tournaments, events, or festivals that attract visitors.
- Multi-day conferences, symposiums, annual general meetings (AGMs), or similar gatherings that encourage overnight stays.

### Priorities

The following activations will be prioritized:

- free indoor or outdoor inclusive events organized in non-peak seasons, in particular events that engage and welcome equity-deserving communities;
- conferences, AGMs or similar meetings more than one day long across any sector;
- sporting or leisure events;

- events with the ability to leave a legacy such as through the purchase of equipment left to a Burlington organization, hosting of a clinic, use of the event to grow a sport or hobby locally, for example; and
- the possibility of continuing the event or hosting additional events in the future.

*Note: All funding decisions by Burlington Economic Development and Tourism are final.*

### **Requirements of Funding Recipients**

Fund recipients must sign an agreement with BEDT accepting the fund's terms and conditions which include:

- Acknowledgement of BEDT on the organization's/event's website, social media and all promotional materials related to the event
- Distribution (digital and/or hard copy) of BEDT promotional materials to attendees
- Providing BEDT with at least three (3) high-resolution photos of the event for use in current and/or future marketing efforts
- Providing space at the event for a BEDT display, tent or other promotional opportunity
- Tickets and/or invitations to the event
- Collecting tracking data

### **Final Report**

Fund recipients must submit a final report to BEDT within 60 days after the completion of the event that includes:

- Confirmation of room nights: Written confirmation from Burlington accommodations on the total number of room nights generated.
- Event Attendance: Total number of attendees and the percentage who traveled more than 40km one way.
- Economic Impact: Clear details on local sourcing and partnerships that contributed to the event's economic impact.
- Community Impact: Summary of any community-focused initiatives or outcomes resulting from the event.
- Marketing Recognition: Sample marketing materials showing how Burlington and BEDT were recognized in promotions.
- Survey Results: Summary of tourism-related survey results, including feedback on event impact, attendee satisfaction, and the event's influence on local tourism.

### **Tourism Investment Fund Criteria**

Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT) supports events that generate overnight stays, drive local economic impact, and position Burlington as a year-round destination. Eligible events must occur within Burlington city limits and can include festivals, conferences, sporting competitions, and tourism-focused leisure activities.

1. **Destination Promotion**

Applicants must explain why Burlington is the ideal location and how the event promotes the city before, during, and after. Proposals should highlight destination branding, marketing efforts, and the long-term benefits to Burlington’s tourism image and economy.

2. **Season & Location**

Priority is given to events held during the shoulder season (Nov–Apr) and those taking place outside of the downtown core or incorporating multiple locations across Burlington.

3. **Audience & Overnight Visits**

Applicants must provide a clear target audience profile, including anticipated attendance, geographic reach (especially 40km+ travelers), and projected hotel room nights (minimum 20). A tracking method must be in place to confirm room nights.

4. **Marketing & Branding**

Events must visibly promote the Burlington and/or BEDT brand across digital, print, and onsite channels. Include logo placements, web/social visibility, and media exposure plans.

5. **Partnerships**

Proposals should demonstrate confirmed or pending partnerships with sponsors, local businesses, or community organizations. Multiple and high-value partnerships are encouraged. BEDT should not be the sole or exclusive funding source—diverse support strengthens the overall proposal and project sustainability.

6. **Economic & Community Impact**

Events should support the local economy through local vendor sourcing, spinoff activities (e.g., dinners, tours), and community engagement. Initiatives that create lasting value - such as donations, clinics, or capacity building - are strongly encouraged.

7. **Sustainability & Accessibility**

Organizers must integrate environmentally sustainable practices (e.g., waste reduction, local sourcing) and ensure accessibility for all attendees. Equity, inclusion, and measurable outreach to underserved communities should be reflected in the planning.

8. **Data Collection**

Applicants must outline how they will collect and share data on event performance, tourism impact, attendee satisfaction, and spending. Surveys, registration insights, and post-event evaluations are recommended.

9. **Event Continuity**

Preference is given to events with long-term potential - either as annual fixtures or with plans for future growth or spin-offs in Burlington.