

2026/2027 Tourism Investment Fund Guidelines

Stream 1: Destination Attraction

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 Destination Attraction Stream provides direct support to organizations hosting events in Burlington that generate overnight stays and contribute to the local visitor economy.

Intake Period 1: Summer & Fall Peak Season

Application Deadline: March 31, 2026

Eligible Event Dates: May 1 – October 31, 2026

Intake Period 2: Winter & Shoulder Season

Application Deadline: September 30, 2026

Eligible Event Dates: November 1, 2026 – April 30, 2027

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.

Applications are reviewed on a competitive basis within each intake period. Meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee funding, as applications are evaluated relative to other submissions received for the same intake.

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. Supported events must generate a minimum of 20 hotel night stays in Burlington-based accommodations. Applicants may submit more than one application under the same organization, provided each application is for an event that is distinct in nature and subject to available funding. Applicants seeking funding for events that have been supported through this program in previous years must demonstrate a year-over-year increase in economic and tourism impact, such as growth in programming, hotel 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.

All supported initiatives must take place within Burlington city limits.

Priorities

Funding is limited and allocated on a competitive basis within each intake period, subject to available budget. Meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee funding, as applications are assessed relative to other submissions received during the same intake.

Priority consideration may be given to applications that demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Strong overnight visitation, including mid-week or multi-night stays, and audiences traveling 40 km or more
- Events held across diverse locations in Burlington, not solely dependent on the downtown core
- Conferences, AGMs, or similar meetings more than one day in length, across any sector
- Sporting or leisure events that attract visitors
- Legacy outcomes, such as equipment purchases retained by a Burlington organization, hosting clinics, or using the event to grow a sport or hobby locally
- Inclusive and accessible programming, supported by strong local partnerships
- Alignment with the [Destination Stewardship Plan](#), including events that strengthen Burlington's priority tourism experiences and assets.
- Potential for event continuity, expansion, or future hosting in Burlington
- For returning applicants, demonstrated year-over-year improvements in tourism, economic, or community impact (e.g., increased room nights, attendance, programming, or geographic reach)

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.

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.

The following criteria will be used as part of BEDT's evaluation matrix to assess and compare applications received within each intake period.

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. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. **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.

6. **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.

7. **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 highly recommended.

8. **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.