## Background

Tourism Simcoe County (TSC) provides strategic and collaborative leadership to build, sustain and grow tourism in Simcoe County. TSC focuses on destination marketing and management by working closely with operators and tourism stakeholders in the region.

TSC has grouped work to respond to the needs of its stakeholders into five pillars:

1. **Leadership** and **Representation**
2. **Partnership** and **Collaboration**
3. **Product Development** and **Innovation**
4. **Marketing** and **Promotion**
5. **Research** and **Learning**

## Fund Objective

### The objective of the County of Simcoe Tourism, Culture and Sport Enhancement Fund is to support and enhance tourism, culture, and sport in Simcoe County through:

* Investing in initiatives that promote awareness, access, participation and appreciation of the diverse tourism, culture, and sport offerings within the County of Simcoe
* Encouraging industry collaboration and partnerships
* Enhancing the visitor experience by supporting innovative and accessible programming
* Contributing to the County of Simcoe’s overall economic health and sense of place

## Available Funding

### The funding envelope for the 2024 program is $400,000.

### Applicant organizations may submit **one application.**

* + Maximum application request - $10,000
    - Within marketing stream, no more than $5,000 will be awarded to photo/video
  + Maximum application request signage - $20,000

## Timing Overview

### Thursday, Feb 1, 2024 Fund applications open

Thursday, Feb 29, 2024 Fund applications close at 5pm, applications will not be accepted after

5 pm

May 1, 2024 Award letters distributed and funds flow to applicants

Jan 31, 2025 2024 Award letters expire if not returned signed

Post Report Due 30 days from project completion or April 15, 2025 whichever comes first

## Applicant Eligibility

This program is available to municipal corporations and not-for-profit organizations in the County of Simcoe. 75% of the proposed project must take place in one of the 16 County of Simcoe member municipalities.

## Applicant Contribution Requirements

### The County of Simcoe will fund up to 80% of eligible project costs.

## Reporting Requirements

A financial report for the project and copies of receipts for items paid for with this funding must be submitted within 30 days of completion of the project.

## Eligibility Criteria

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| --- | --- |
| *Eligible Applicants* | *Ineligible Applicants* |
| * Municipal corporations * Not-for-profit organizations   NOTE: 75% of the project must take place in one of the 16 County of Simcoe member municipalities | * Individuals * For-profit organizations and businesses * Political parties, initiatives, and candidates * Charitable, grant-making, and fundraising organizations * Faith-based organizations where activities require adherence to faith |

## Funding Streams

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Description & Requirements* | *Eligible Items* | *Ineligible Items* |
| Trails Infrastructure\*  Funding to support the fabrication and installation of trails and cycling infrastructure.  [APPLY HERE](https://forms.gle/11JcfxBKhuyUjRqp7) | * Bike racks * Bike repair stations * Benches * Trail gates | * Purchase of bicycles * Items not adhering to Cycle Simcoe specifications   *(found on page 8 of this document, schedule 1)* |
| Signage\*  Funding to support the fabrication and installation of permanent tourism-oriented signage.  Signage projects are large-scale capital projects, typically undertaken by municipalities.  [APPLY HERE](https://forms.gle/Kju7Hv6r9e6jXfYRA) | * Vehicular or pedestrian tourism wayfinding signage * Trailhead and trail signage * Interpretive and educational signage * Community header signage   *Signage design must adhere to*  [*RTO7 design specifications.*](https://www.rto7data.ca/RTO7Media/RTOFiles/RT07_signmanual_revMar2020_f9b23ff1-3fb4-4d84-aefe-86029b1f9d60.pdf) | * Annual fees for ‘TODS’ Tourism Oriented Directional Signage (blue highway signs) * Business signage * Rental of light-up or Curbex signage * Temporary lawn signage |
| Marketing  Funding to support tourism marketing campaigns  [APPLY HERE](https://forms.gle/YSRjXNs3HUseSEWi7) | * Digital advertising campaigns (google display, google search ads, banner advertising, etc.)   Social media campaigns   * Radio advertising * Television advertising * Print advertising * Influencers or bloggers * Professional Photo/video development (must be a registered business) | * Printing or distribution of visitor guides * Website development or enhancements * Consulting fees for strategies   Graphic design   * Amateur photography * Amateur videography |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| * *Description & Requirements* | * *Eligible Items* | * *Ineligible Items* |
| Public Art and Beautification  [APPLY HERE](https://forms.gle/N1utwhqvAV1DPZGy5) | * Interpretive signage for a project * Downtown beautification and green space enhancements * Public art projects * Murals * Artist expenses * Art materials expenses | * Capital infrastructure costs |
| Research  Funding to support fees related to Tourism research programs  [APPLY HERE](https://forms.gle/naUc4UVJcNVhxKek9) | * Visitor intercept surveys * Research analyst consultant * Environics Analytics consumer research study | * Staff costs * Equipment costs |
| Workforce Development  Funding to support hosting programs to engage and/or educate tourism, culture, or sport operators, which in turn will enhance the overall visitor experience  [APPLY HERE](https://forms.gle/fcHx35ft6zjZjqWy8) | * Speaker or venue fees, which would increase the exposure, reach, value, desirability, or attractiveness of the program/event * Partnership Product Tours | * Food and beverage costs |
| Sports Tourism  Bid funding to attract significant sporting events, which attract participants and spectators to travel to the host community with the intention of being involved in a sporting event, and generate the potential for overnight stays in Simcoe County  [APPLY HERE](https://forms.gle/qCcnD3M9URDGJD3a9) | * Cost to bid on hosting a sporting competition | * Any other costs other than bidding on a sporting event |

## Process

All documentation related to the administration of this program other than the submitted application should be submitted via email to [tourism@simcoe.ca](mailto:tourism@simcoe.ca)

## Submission

Applications for the 2023 Tourism, Culture and Sport Enhancement Fund will open on **Thursday, February 1, 2024** and close at end of day (5 pm), **Thursday, February 29, 2024**. A separate online application form has been created for each funding stream, using Google Forms.

Project post reports must be submitted within 30 days of project completion.

## Assessment

* All applications received by the application deadline will be evaluated by staff, using the criteria detailed in this document
* The Grant Program Task Force will review the funding recommendations provided by staff and adjust as appropriate
* These recommendations will be presented to Simcoe County Council for final approval
* All applicants will be informed of their results via email

## Payment

Where funds are awarded, 90% of the funding amount will be forwarded to the applicant upon receipt of the signed Award Letter and required banking information. The remaining 10% will be withheld and will be forwarded to the applicant upon receipt of the completed Post Report. Awards of $5,000 or less will be paid 100% upon receipt of award letter.

Funding recipients will be required to submit banking information for direct deposit of funds and may be required to submit additional supporting materials such as a marketing plan or insurance certificate before funds are released.

## Reporting

It is the funding recipient’s responsibility to submit their Post Report on time. There are three layers to the reporting deadline:

1. The Post Report must be submitted within 30 days of project completion and no later than April 15, 2025 (whichever comes first).
2. To be eligible for future funding, the Post Report must be received before a new application for funds is submitted.
3. To be eligible for future funding, all funded photo, video and research materials must be submitted to Tourism Simcoe County.

*In the absence of a post report, it is assumed that the awarded funds have gone unspent, and the organization will be ineligible for future funding until the reporting requirements have been fulfilled, confirming that the funds were spent on eligible project costs.*

## Branding Requirements

*NOTE: Funding will be compromised if these branding requirements are not followed.*

All funding recipients must adhere to the following four requirements:

1. Register to receive industry communications from Tourism Simcoe County
2. Follow @*experiencesimcoecounty* on Facebook and Instagram.
3. Tag @*experiencesimcoecounty* in all social media posts related to the funded initiative.
4. Use #*experiencesimcoecounty* on all social media posts related to the funded initiative.
5. Invite @experiencesimcoecounty as a collaborator on influencer and social media campaigns.
6. Add the Tourism Simcoe County logo on the website for the funded initiative, with a direct link to experience.simcoe.ca

Other:

1. Incorporate the Experience Simcoe County logo or tagline into all forms of media funded by this program.
2. Seek approval by a Tourism Simcoe County staff member prior to publishing all forms of media, to ensure that branding requirements are met.
3. All forms of media purchased through this stream must be submitted to Tourism Simcoe County with the final report.
4. Event organizers must submit event listing on the experience.simcoe.ca website.

The Experience Simcoe County logo can be downloaded from our website at: <https://experience.simcoe.ca/resources>

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| EXAMPLES | MEDIA | MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS |
| ***Digital Marketing*** | Use #experiencesimcoecounty in organic and paid ads **AND**  Tag @experiencesimcoecounty in organic posts |
| ***Print Advertising*** | Include the Experience Simcoe County logo **OR**  Include printed tagline “… another reason to visit Simcoe County” |
| ***Radio Advertising*** | Include “… another reason to visit Simcoe County” **OR**  Include verbal mention of Tourism Simcoe County’s financial support |
| ***Television Advertising*** | Include the Experience Simcoe County logo **OR**  Include tagline “… another reason to visit Simcoe County” |
| ***Video Development*** | Include the Experience Simcoe County logo |

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# Schedule 1 | Trails Infrastructure Criteria

For support with Trails Infrastructure projects and applications,

contact Brendan Matheson at [cyclesimcoe@simcoe.ca](mailto:cyclesimcoe@simcoe.ca)

## Purpose

Tourism Simcoe County promotes Simcoe County as a first-class destination with the goal of encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more while here. By adding bike racks and repair stations along trails and at cycling-friendly businesses, we continue to develop Simcoe County as a cycling destination of choice.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Eligible Items | Supplier Details | Pricing  \*Subject to change  \*\*Installation is not included |
| Bike Racks | Blue Imp  [www.blueimp.com](http://www.blueimp.com) | $567.00 for each 5-bike Z rack  $870.00 for each 8-bike Z rack |
| Bike Repair Stations  Each features the station, repair tools and pump | Orders are placed by the applicant, contact Tourism Simcoe County for vendor options | $2,200.00 each |
| Benches | Orders are placed by the applicant. Contact Tourism Simcoe County options | Three quotes required |
| Gates | Orders are placed by the applicant. Contact Tourism Simcoe County options | Three quotes required |

 

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# Schedule 2 | Age-Friendly and Accessibility Criteria

The County of Simcoe endeavors to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities to ensure that everyone has access to the County’s goods, services, and facilities.

We respectfully request that recipients of the Tourism, Culture and Sport Enhancement Fund consider that their initiative or facility be designed with accessibility in mind.

The following accessible features should be considered:

**ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES** – placed close to venue entries and exits, accessible toilets, pay stations and lifts/ramps.

**PATHS OF TRAVEL –** provide wide, even, slip-resistant paths, without steps or barriers.

**STAGES AND SEATING –** provide a ramp for your stage, and ensure it is visible for someone watching from accessible seating or from a wheelchair.

**FOOD SERVICES AND PUBLIC EATING AREAS –** design food areas so that someone who needs mobility support can easily navigate them. Provide options for people using wheeled mobility devices.

**WASHROOMS AND TEMPORARY TOILETS –** provide accessible toilets or washrooms at level ground level, away from crowds and sound systems.

**REST AREAS AND WEATHER SHELTERS** – offer quiet areas and shelter from wind, rain, sun, etc.

**SIGNAGE** – provide high-contrast signs in high and low positions, and make sure signs use sans serif fonts that are readable in all lighting conditions.

**SUPPORT STAFF** – are permitted wherever the person they support goes. Post admission fees in the same place where general admission information is found.

**SERVICE ANIMALS** – are permitted to accompany a person with a disability, to all areas available to the public.

**TRAINING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS** – ensure staff and volunteers are trained on your accessibility features.

**PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES** – Inform people about your accessibility features in the same places that you promote your event or initiative.

**ASK FOR FEEDBACK** – Collect feedback before, during and after the event or initiative.

Additional resources: [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11) (AODA)

[Festival & Events Accessibility Guide](http://chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https:/accessibilitycanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Festivals-and-Events-Guide-EN.pdf)

[CNIB Clear print Accessibility Guidelines](http://chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https:/cnib.ca/sites/default/files/2018-07/CNIB%20Clear%20Print%20Guide.pdf)