

Tourism, Culture and Sport Enhancement Fund – 2025 Guidelines

General Information

Experience 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 into five pillars, to respond to the needs of its stakeholders:

Leadership and Representation

Partnership and Collaboration

Product Development and Innovation

Marketing and Promotion

Research and Learning

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

GENERAL GUIDELINES

An applicant organization may submit **one application** per grant cycle

The funding envelope for the 2025 program is \$400,000.00

Applications to the Signage stream may request up to \$20,000.00 in funding

Applications to all other streams may request up to \$10,000.00 in funding

NOTE: No more than \$5,000 will be paid towards video development and no more than \$2,500 will be paid towards photo development within the Marketing stream.

The applicant must show that a minimum of 20% of the cost of the funded items is paid for by the applicant organization, meaning that the County of Simcoe may fund up to 80%. For example, if requesting \$10,000 in funds, the applicant must contribute a minimum of \$2,000 towards the funded items, for a \$12,000 initiative.

Grants will be awarded based on several factors, including the number of eligible applications received, alignment with Experience Simcoe County work plan, and available funding.

Eligibility Criteria

eligible applicants	ineligible applicants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Municipal corporations in the County of Simcoe ✓ Not-for-profit organizations providing services in the County of Simcoe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ 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

NOTE: The initiative must take place in one of the County of Simcoe’s 16 member municipalities; Adjala-Tosorontio, Bradford West-Gwillimbury, Clearview, Collingwood, Essa, Innisfil, Midland, New Tecumseth, Oro-Medonte, Penetanguishene, Ramara, Severn, Springwater, Tay, Tiny, and Wasaga Beach

Funding Streams & Application Links

description	eligible items	ineligible items
<p>Marketing Funding to support marketing efforts for tourism, culture and sport offerings, including festivals and special events.</p> <p>CLICK HERE TO APPLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Digital advertising campaigns (Google display ads and search ads, banner ads, etc.) ✓ Social media advertising campaigns (paid ads on Facebook, Instagram, etc.) ✓ Radio advertising ✓ Television advertising ✓ Influencer or blogger ✓ Professional photo and/or video development (must be a registered business) ✓ Billboards ✓ Graphic design ✓ Enhancements to existing website which encourage overnight visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Initial website development ✗ Printing or distribution of visitor guides ✗ Consultant fees for marketing strategies ✗ Amateur photography or videography ✗ Rental of Curbex signage

description	eligible items	ineligible items
<p>Public Art & Beautification Funding to support the enhancement and activation of vibrant downtowns, to enhance the visitor experience.</p> <p>CLICK HERE TO APPLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Downtown beautification and green space enhancements ✓ Public art creation and installation ✓ Murals ✓ Interpretive signage ✓ Artist fees and art materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Capital infrastructure and repair costs
<p>Trails & Cycling Infrastructure Funding to support the fabrication and installation of trails and cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>NOTE: Items must adhere to Cycle Simcoe branding. See Appendix for approved vendors and estimated costs.</p> <p>CLICK HERE TO APPLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bike racks ✓ Bike repair stations ✓ Water refill stations ✓ Benches ✓ Trail gates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Purchase of bicycles ✗ Items not adhering to Cycle Simcoe design and branding specifications
<p>Workforce Development Funding to support <u>hosting</u> programs to engage and/or educate tourism, culture or sport operators, which in turn will enhance the overall visitor experience.</p> <p>CLICK HERE TO APPLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Items which would increase the exposure, reach value, desirability, or attractiveness of the event ✓ Speaker fees ✓ Venue fees ✓ Fees associated to hosting a familiarization tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Internal staff costs
<p>Research Funding to support fees related to tourism research programs.</p> <p>CLICK HERE TO APPLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fees for research analyst ✓ Fees to conduct visitor intercept surveys ✓ Fees to conduct Environics Analytics consumer research study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Internal staff costs ✗ Equipment costs

description	eligible items	ineligible items
<p>Sports Tourism Funding to support a bid to attract a significant sporting event.</p> <p>A “<i>significant sporting event</i>” attracts participants and/or spectators to travel to the host community with the intention of being involved in a sporting event and generate potential for overnight stays in Simcoe County.</p> <p>CLICK HERE TO APPLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cost to bid on a significant sporting event or competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ All other costs associated
<p>Signage Funding to support the fabrication and installation of <u>permanent</u> tourism-oriented signage.</p> <p>Signage projects are large-scale capital projects, typically undertaken by municipalities.</p> <p>NOTE: Signage design <u>must</u> adhere to RTO7 specifications</p> <p>CLICK HERE TO APPLY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vehicular or pedestrian tourism wayfinding signage ✓ Trailhead and trail signage ✓ Interpretive and educational signage ✓ Community header signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Business signage ✗ Annual fees for ‘TODS’ Tourism Oriented Directional Signage (blue highway signs) ✗ Temporary lawn signage ✗ Rental of Curbex signage ✗ Digital signage and displays ✗ Items not adhering to RTO7 design specifications

Some initiatives may be eligible for additional funding from Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7). Refer to our [Partner Resources](#) page for more information.

Process

All documentation related to the administration of this program should be submitted via email to brianne.harris@simcoe.ca

KEY DATES

Guidelines published	Friday, January 10, 2025
Deadline to submit an application	Friday, February 14, 2025 at 5:00pm
Notification of Results	Mid-April
NEW! Expiration of funding offer * If the signed award letter is not received by this date, the offer of funds will expire	October 1, 2025
Deadline to submit Final Report * If the final report is not received by this date, the balance payment will be withheld	Within 30 days of project completion and no later than April 15, 2026, whichever comes first

SUBMISSION

Applications for the 2025 Tourism, Culture and Sport Enhancement Fund will be accepted from Friday, January 10, 2025 until 5:00pm on Friday, February 14, 2025.

Applications are submitted using Google Forms. Applicants DO NOT require a Google Account to apply.

A separate online application form has been created for each funding stream. The link to each application form can be found in the Funding Streams chart above.

ASSESSMENT

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

PAYMENT

Where funds are awarded in the amount of \$5,000.00 or less, the amount will be paid in full to the funding recipient upon receipt of the signed Award Letter and required banking information.

Where funds are awarded in the amount of \$5,001.00 or more, the amount will be paid in two installments; 90% upon receipt of the signed Award Letter and required banking information and the remaining 10% upon receipt of the completed Final Report.

NOTE: In the event that the Final Report is not received by the published deadline, the balance payment will be withheld.

REPORTING

The Final Report must be submitted within 30 days of project completion and no later than April 15, 2026 (whichever comes first). It is the funding recipient’s responsibility to submit their Final Report on time.

The Final Report includes:

- The Final Report document, including an itemized financial report.
- Receipts for each item purchased with funding from this program, as submitted in the application.
- All photos, videos and research materials paid for with funding from this program.

In the absence of any of the above listed items, the balance payment will be withheld and the funding recipient will be ineligible for future funding until all reporting requirements have been fulfilled, confirming that the funds were spent on eligible project costs.

To be eligible to apply for funding in 2026, the Final Report must be received before a new application for funds is submitted.

Branding Requirements

Funding will be compromised if the branding requirements outlined below are not followed.

Funding recipients are required to seek approval by Experience Simcoe County staff prior to publishing all forms of media funded by this program, to ensure that branding requirements are met.

PROJECT	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
All	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Register to receive Experience Simcoe County's industry communication newsletter. 2. Follow @<i>experiencesimcoecounty</i> on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. 3. Tag @<i>experiencesimcoecounty</i> in all social media posts related to the funded initiative. 4. Use #<i>experiencesimcoecounty</i> on all social media posts related to the funded initiative. 5. Add the Experience Simcoe County logo on the website for the funded initiative, with a direct link to experience.simcoe.ca 6. All photos and videos funded by this program must be submitted to Experience Simcoe County with the Final Report.

Social Media Advertising	Use #experiencesimcoecounty in organic and paid ads AND Tag @experiencesimcoecounty in organic posts
Influencer or Blogger	Invite @experiencesimcoecounty as a collaborator on Instagram
Print Advertising	Include the Experience Simcoe County logo OR Include printed tagline "... another reason to visit Simcoe County"
Radio	Include "... another reason to visit Simcoe County" in the script OR Include verbal mention of Experience Simcoe County's financial support
Television	Include the Experience Simcoe County logo OR Include "... another reason to visit Simcoe County" in the script OR Include verbal mention of Experience Simcoe County's financial support
Video Development	Display the Experience Simcoe County logo at the end of the video
Workshops and Meetings	Verbal mention of Experience Simcoe County's financial contribution at an appropriate moment during the workshop or meeting AND Include the Experience Simcoe County logo on supporting materials
Festivals and Events	Submit event details to the free events directory at experience.simcoe.ca

EXPERIENCE SIMCOE COUNTY LOGO SUITE

The Experience Simcoe County and Cycle Simcoe logo suites are available for download on our website, on the [Partner Resources](#) page.

SUPPORT

For support with this program, contact Brianne Harris at brianne.harris@simcoe.ca

Appendix 1 | Trails & Cycling Infrastructure

PURPOSE

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

For support with Trails & Cycling Infrastructure projects and applications, contact Travis MacIver at travis.maciver@simcoe.ca

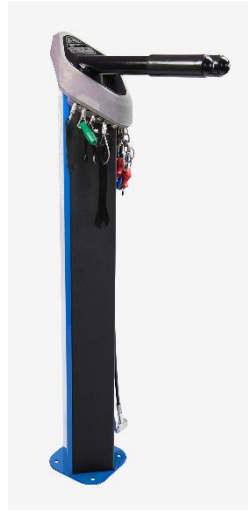
eligible items see photos below	approximate pricing includes item & shipping, before HST does not include cost of installation	supplier details
Bike Racks BR-146 5-bike rack option in polyester powder blue	\$1,444.00 (\$894+ ~\$550 shipping)	<i>Blue Imp</i> www.blueimp.com
Benches PK-151B Vinyl-coating in blue	\$1,109.00 (\$729 + ~\$380 shipping)	<i>Blue Imp</i> www.blueimp.com
Bike Pump Replacement <i>*To replace the current broken pumps on existing repair stations (installed on concrete)</i>	\$1,409.98 (\$1109.98 + \$300 shipping)	<i>halt inc.</i> https://www.halt-inc.com/home
Bike Repair Stations Option 1 – Greenspoke Powder coated in Royal Blue Option 2 – Saris Deluxe Public Work Stand in Blue [26347BLU] Both options include the station, repair tools and pump	\$4,264.60 (\$4084.6 + \$180 shipping) \$2,110.00 (\$1610 + \$500 shipping)	<i>Greenspoke</i> https://gogreenspoken.com/ <i>Saris Infrastructure - Distributed by halt inc.</i> https://www.halt-inc.com/home

<p>E-Bike Charging Station</p>	<p>\$2949.99 (\$2149.99 + \$800 shipping)</p>	<p>Saris Infrastructure - Distributed by halt inc. https://www.halt-inc.com/home</p>
<p>Water refill stations Preferred Option ‘Elkay lk4400bf outdoor exh20 bottle filling station pedestal’</p> <p>Additional Options ‘Haws model 1920’ exterior vandal resistant wall-mount bottle filler ‘Haws model 1210s’ wall-mount indoor ada bottle filler</p>	<p>\$9,700.00 for each</p> <p>\$2,200.00 for each</p> <p>\$2,800.00 for each</p> <p>\$2,300.00 for each UV Filter (need to be NSF/ANSI55A)</p>	<p><i>Elkay</i> www.elkay.com</p> <p><i>Haws</i> www.haws.com</p>
<p>Trail Gates</p>	<p>Three quotes required</p>	<p>Supplier of your choice</p>

See photos on next page



Water Station
[Elkay]



Saris - Deluxe
Public Work Stand



Greenspoke Repair Station



BlueIMP - Bike Rack



Outdoor Bike Pump [26246]



E-Bike Charging Station



BlueIMP - Bench

Appendix 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	Place accessible parking spaces 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.
Staff and volunteer training	Ensure staff and volunteers are trained on your accessibility features.
Promotion of accessibility features	Inform people about your accessibility features in the same places that you promote your event or initiative.

Feedback

Collect feedback before, during and after the event or initiative.

Additional resources: [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)
[Festival & Events Accessibility Guide](#)
[CNIB Clear print Accessibility Guidelines](#)