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## SDG Regional Tourism Grant

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Guidelines

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## Introduction

The Regional Tourism Grant Program (RTG) helps community organizations, and municipalities turn creative tourism projects into memorable experiences for visitors and residents alike. From unique events to innovative programs, this funding is your opportunity to showcase what makes Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry special, while boosting the local economy and attracting more visitors to the region.

This guide provides an overview of the program, including its purpose, eligibility requirements, and funding parameters.

While this guide provides key details, we encourage you to reach out to the SDG Tourism Team at [tourism@sdgcounties.ca](mailto:tourism@sdgcounties.ca) before submitting your application.

## Scope of the Program

Each year, as part of the annual budget process, SDG Counties Council will consider a financial commitment to the **SDG Regional Tourism Grant**. Any approved funds will then be made available to eligible organizations through the RTG program.

Guaranteed funding is only for the year in which the organization has applied and is not to be regarded as a commitment by SDG Counties to continue such assistance in future years.

## Definitions

**Visitor Destination:** An event or attraction that provides an experience for visitors from within and outside the region, with a demonstrated ability to attract visitation beyond its immediate local community.

**Community Organization:** Incorporated not-for-profit organization, organizations with charitable status, or an unincorporated group with not-for-profit goals and governance structure.

**Tourism and Hospitality Sector:** The tourism and hospitality category covers diverse sectors such as transportation, travel services, recreation and entertainment, accommodation and food and beverage services.

## Program Overview

As part of the initiative to support marketing efforts and increase the visibility of regional tourism assets, the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG Counties) wish to assist community organizations provide a diverse and rich experience to all visitors and residents.

The objectives of the Regional Tourism Grant Program are to:

- Increase the visibility of regional tourism assets
- Support tourism marketing and promotional initiatives
- Enhance the local economy through visitor attraction
- Encourage high-quality tourism products and experiences
- Ensure funding is distributed in a fair and transparent manner

Funding may be used to support the following:

**1. New Event Creation**

Support for the development and launch of new events or festivals that attract visitors to SDG Counties. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to, music festivals, cultural celebrations, or other unique experiences that showcase the region and encourage visitation.

**2. Existing Event Enhancements/Improvements**

Funding to enhance or expand existing events in order to increase their tourism impact. Examples include adding live entertainment, local food and beverage offerings, interactive programming, or other enhancements that attract visitors from outside the region and create a more memorable visitor experience.

**3. New Tourism Products/Experiences**

Support for the development of new or expanded tourism products and experiences that leverage the unique assets of SDG Counties. Examples include themed tours (e.g. heritage or haunted experiences), outdoor or nature-based activities (e.g. agri-tourism), or collaborative initiatives that enhance the overall visitor experience (e.g. culinary or trail-based experiences).

## Program Eligibility

**Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:**

- Applicants must be a community organization located in The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry whose primary focus is to attract visitors to the SDG Counties region.
- Municipalities within SDG Counties may be considered for funding for a tourism event or project that demonstrates a significant economic impact and attracts visitors from both within and outside SDG Counties.
- All funding must be for future projects. Retroactive funding will not be considered.
- Applicants must apply through an established organization.
- Repeat grants are only available to events that have complied with the reporting requirements of any previous grants.
- No financial grants will be considered unless specifically authorized by this policy. The County may impose any conditions it deems fit at its sole discretion.

**Ineligible Applicants**

The following are not eligible to receive funding through the Regional Tourism Grant:

- For-profit businesses and commercial enterprises.
- Agricultural societies or fair boards receiving an SDG Counties donation for their annual fair are not eligible for additional funding for the same event. They may apply for a separate and distinct tourism event or project that does not receive other financial support from SDG Counties.

## Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

All expenses must be relevant to the completion of the project and contracted through unaffiliated third-party vendors with no pecuniary interest in the completion of the project.

### Eligible Expenses

The following are examples of expenses that may be eligible under the Regional Tourism Grant. This list is not exhaustive, and other expenses may be considered if they directly support your approved project. If you have questions about a specific expense, please contact the SDG Tourism Team.

- Performers, speakers, or facilitators
- Venue or site rentals
- Temporary infrastructure/equipment rentals (e.g., tents, staging, AV equipment)
- Permits and insurance
- Marketing and advertising campaigns
- Creative design and production costs for marketing materials
- Professional photography and/or videography services
- Written content for websites, advertisements, blog posts, guides and itineraries
- Translation services
- Website integration or redesign
- SEO guidance and optimization
- AI integration for tourism tools or marketing
- Point-of-sale (POS) system updates

### Ineligible Expenses

- Grants or flow-through funding to other organizations
- Charitable fundraising
- Advocacy or donations to political parties or lobby groups
- Capital costs related to permanent structures or acquisitions
- Competition prizes, prize money, or payments to participants
- Previously incurred expenses
- Refundable portion of HST or other refundable expenses
- Expenses not directly related to the approved project
- In-kind donations
- Operational costs such as salaries and wages
- Alcohol and associated expenses (permit fees, police, fencing, etc.)
- Expenses for events or activities taking place outside SDG Counties

## Funding Levels and Payment Process

Regional Tourism Grant projects may receive up to **50%** of eligible project costs:

- Minimum contribution: **\$500**
- Maximum contribution: **\$5,000**

Funding will be distributed in two installments: fifty percent (50%) upon project approval, and the remaining fifty percent (50%) upon successful completion of the project and submission of the final report.

## Application and Review Process

- Applications will only be accepted online via <https://sdgcounties.grantplatform.com/>
- Only one application per organization per year may be submitted
- Applicants may apply in subsequent years; priority is given to first time applicants

Applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of:

- One (1) member of SDG Counties Council
- The Tourism Supervisor
- One additional SDG Counties staff member

All grants will be assessed in terms of the need for the project; cost effectiveness, financial viability, contribution to the quality of life for residents, potential to attract visitors to the region and community involvement/response.

## Accountability

- Prior to the disbursement of any RTG funds, all Grantees must complete a “Partnership Agreement”, which specifies the terms and conditions of the grant.
- Organizations awarded a grant will be held accountable for the expenditure of the funds in accordance with the stated objectives/plans. Grants in future years will be reviewed based on the past demonstrated fiscal responsibility of the applicants.
- Funds granted under this program must be used for the specific purposes outlined in the application. They are not transferable between projects or groups without prior approval of SDG Counties.

## Final Report

Final reports must be completed online via <https://sdgcounties.grantplatform.com/> within sixty (60) days of the events completion, and will cover:

- A description of the completed event
- A financial report listing all expenditures and revenues, and the use of the funds
- The signature of the Chair/President or chief officer of the organization
- Photos of the event that can be used by SDG Counties for promotional purposes

Failure to provide a completed "Final Report" as required by SDG Counties may result in future requests being denied.

## Recognition Requirements

The extent of recognition will be determined in relation to the level and nature of the funding and detailed in the partnership agreement. Recognition may include, but is not limited to:

- SDG Counties Tourism logo on appropriate signage
- Media releases and associated media opportunities
- Right to use the asset, service, event name, and logo for promotional purposes