

2024 Events & Festivals Fund Program Guide

Tourism Cowichan

1) Program Overview

The Events & Festivals Fund invests in the creation and enhancement of events and festivals that attract visitors to the Cowichan Region and improves the region's competitive appeal as a preferred multi-night destination on Vancouver Island.

To qualify for funding, events or festivals must attract visitors from outside of the Cowichan Region and increase tourism visitation and spending by generating overnight stays in Cowichan. Tourism Cowichan encourages festivals and events that foster interest from new product sectors and new visitor demographics, particularly in the off-peak seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring).

Tourism Cowichan recently became a Biosphere Committed Destination and is interested in supporting festivals and events that incorporate sustainable practices to align with one or more of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). Tourism Cowichan also has a strong interest in supporting festivals and events that engage with local First Nations to highlight Indigenous culture and foster truth and reconciliation.

2) Program Goals

The Events & Festivals Fund will leverage marketing funds collected from the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) to:

- Increase visitation and overnight stays in the Cowichan Region;
- Increase the economic and social benefits that flow from tourism to residents of the Cowichan Region;
- Drive seasonal dispersion through the off-peak seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring);
- Position Cowichan as a preferred multi-night tourism destination; and
- Ensure that tourism makes meaningful contributions to the social, cultural, and/or environmental well-being of the Cowichan Region.

3) Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include tourism-related businesses, non-profit organizations, and Indigenous organizations in the Cowichan Region. Events and festivals must take place within the boundaries of the Cowichan Valley Regional District ([see full list of electoral areas and municipalities here](#)).

4) Activities and Expenses

4.1 Eligible Activities

Program funding is intended to support expanded **out-of-region marketing activities** primarily in short-haul target markets (BC, Alberta, and Washington). The use of funds can be divided into a number of marketing activities:

- **Advertising** – Print (e.g. newspaper, magazine), Radio, Television, Digital Display
- **Digital Promotion** – Paid Social Media, Search Engine Marketing, Blogs
- **Marketing Collateral** – Brochures, Rack Cards, Guides, Maps, Promotional Giveaways
- **Consumer-Focused Asset Development** – Photography, Video, Written Content, Event Website or Landing Page
- **Market Awareness** – Consumer Shows, Travel Media Relations
- **New Brand Development** – Design of new logos, re-branding of existing marketing materials

4.2 Ineligible Activities

- **General Administrative Costs** – Including staff salaries, wages and benefits, office expenses, rent, and other normal costs of business
- **Application Submission Costs** – Any costs associated with developing and submitting applications for funding
- **In-Region Marketing Costs** – Including advertising, promotion, development, or distribution of any marketing materials within the Cowichan region to target audience of local residents
- **Costs Associated with Developing Strategic Plans** – Includes new and existing events
- **Website** – Any maintenance, design and/or hosting that is not directly related to the festival or event

- **Travel Costs** – Other than to consumer shows
- **Capital Costs** – Including equipment or software purchases, any capital costs associated with marketing activities (such as vehicle leasing, brochure display racks), rental or lease of equipment or facilities
- **Contra or In-Kind Contributions** – Including but not limited to: accommodation, transportation, meeting space, admissions and passes, etc.
- Projects or activities already completed or expenses incurred prior to funding approval
- Other expenses deemed to be outside the scope of the Events & Festivals Fund

5) Funding

5.1 Terms of Funding

Applicants may apply to receive a **maximum funding contribution of \$10,000**. All funding received must be spent by the end of 2024 and not carried over into the following year.

Funding is contingent upon:

- a) Submission of a completed Application Form and signed Funding Agreement;
- b) The total amount of funds available; and
- c) Adherence with the Funding Agreement.

5.2 Funding Payment

If your application is approved, funding will be distributed in 2 payments:

- 80% payment will be made upon receipt of the signed Funding Agreement, your logo, and proof of liability insurance.
- 20% will be paid upon submission of approved receipts and a short final report.

Applicants **must provide copies of receipts** to support any funding claims.

If an applicant fails to provide copies of receipts within the required 60 days, the final payment of 20% of the funds will not be released and may result in future applications being rejected. Flexibility in this process may be acceptable in extraordinary situations. Tourism Cowichan will require the return of any unspent funds or funds spent on ineligible activities.

6) Application Procedures

6.1 Application Submission

Applications will only be received electronically via email using the Application Form provided.

Completed applications **must be submitted via email** to kenzie@tourismcowichan.com. All applicants will receive a notification of the receipt of their application.

For events taking place before August 31, 2024, **application submissions must be received by January 15, 2024** to be eligible for funding. A second intake for events taking place between September 1–December 31, 2024 will open in April 2024.

6.2 Evaluation Process

Applications will be evaluated by a Funding Committee comprised of members of the Tourism Cowichan Board of Directors, Tourism Cowichan staff, and 4VI staff. The Funding Committee will have the final decision on any application. Applicants may be contacted by the Funding Committee to either clarify or consider changes to their application to better meet program requirements and criteria.

The decision of the Funding Committee is final and not subject to appeal. Applicants declined for funding this year are welcome to submit an application in any subsequent years this program remains available.

The Funding Committee reserves the right to select and approve applications which best meet the objectives and requirements of the program and demonstrate the greatest potential to meet program goals.

Applications will be evaluated using a rubric which is weighted as follows:

- 1) Increase visitation and overnight stays in the Cowichan Region (30%)
- 2) Increase the economic and social benefits that flow from tourism to Cowichan residents (30%)
- 3) Drive seasonal dispersion through the off-peak seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring) (15%)
- 4) Position Cowichan as a preferred multi-night tourism destination by fostering interest from new product sectors and new visitor demographics (15%)

- 5) Engagement with local First Nations to highlight Indigenous culture and foster truth and reconciliation (5%)
- 6) Alignment with sustainable practices (e.g. one of more of the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (5%)

6.3 Funding Notifications and Funding Agreement (Contract)

Tourism Cowichan will issue a funding notification by email once a decision has been reached. The notification will state one of the following:

- The request for funding has been approved in full.
- The request for funding has been partially approved (the amount of approved funding will be specified).
- The request for funding has been denied.

Funding decisions will be reached by January 31, 2024 and Tourism Cowichan will notify all applicants shortly thereafter.

Successful Applicants must:

- a) Commit to a formal signed contract, known as a Funding Agreement, which outlines the obligations of Tourism Cowichan and the Applicant.
- b) Provide a high-resolution version of your organization's logo and accompanying guidelines to be used for any Tourism Cowichan promotional activity for your event/festival.
- c) Provide a copy of your liability insurance. Tourism Cowichan requires that all funded festivals and events purchase a minimum \$2,000,000 in liability insurance and list Tourism Cowichan Society as an additional insured.
- d) Agree to give recognition to Tourism Cowichan's funding support by displaying the Tourism Cowichan logo where appropriate.

6.4 Program Execution Changes

Any significant changes to the application will need to be approved by the Funding Committee.

6.5 Reporting

Recipients **must provide copies of receipts** for expenses that equal the total amount of funds approved by Tourism Cowichan. Receipts must only be for products or services that fall within the eligible out-of-region marketing activities. Recipients must also complete a short final report relating to the number of participants and attendees at their event. The report template will be provided by Tourism Cowichan.

All copies of receipts **must be submitted no later than 60 days** after event completion in order to receive a final payment of funding.

6.6 Event Cancellation Policy

If your event is cancelled, for any reason, any funds not yet spent **must be returned within 30 days** of the cancellation announcement. Eligible marketing costs incurred prior to cancellation will still be processed upon submission of copies of receipts and completion of final report.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the Events & Festivals Fund, please contact:

Kenzie Knight
Tourism Development Specialist
kenzie@tourismcowichan.com
(250) 667-8558

For more information about Tourism Cowichan Society, please visit the [Stakeholder Information](#) page.

Tourism Cowichan gratefully acknowledges that we live, work, and play on the traditional unceded territories of the Quw'utsun, Malahat, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, Lyackson, Pauquachin, Ditidaht & Pacheedaht Peoples.