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## What You Need to Know Before You Apply

### Before filling out the application:

1. Read this Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster Application Guide in full, AND
2. Consult with the [Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster Program Lead](#) or your [Regional Tourism Advisor](#) or to discuss your event proposal.

### Program Overview

The Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster program provides support to municipalities and organizations in Ontario for the hosting of large-scale, high-impact events that meet the ministry's definition of a Blockbuster Event.

### Definition of a Blockbuster Event

For the purposes of the program, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries defines a **Blockbuster event** as an event that is either:

- a major one-time national or international event in Ontario
- a major event that recurs infrequently in Ontario, i.e. an event that does not recur annually or biennially in Ontario but travels nationally or internationally to host destinations.

AND

- has cash operating expenses totaling \$1 million or more
- is of a size and scope sufficient to draw tourists to Ontario and generate significant economic impact for the province
- is of national and/or international prominence, attracting significant media exposure across Canada and/or globally.

The Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster program provides support for expenses related to: programming and production, media buys specifically targeting tourist markets, event security and accessibility services, all specific to the delivery of a Blockbuster event.

### Other Important Definitions

For the purposes of the program, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries defines:

- **A tourist** as an individual (including an Ontario resident) who travels 40 kilometres or more within Ontario (one-way) to attend an event or who crosses the Ontario border to attend an event in the province.
- **Fiscal year** as the period from April 1 of one calendar year to March 31 of the next calendar year.
- **Calendar year** as the one-year period that begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.
- **A rural event** is an event located in a community that meets either of the following criteria:
  - has a population of less than 100,000 people
  - has a population density of 100 people or less per square kilometre

Note: Ontario's urban municipalities comprise: Brampton, Mississauga, Markham, Ajax, Hamilton, Ottawa, Whitby, Oakville, St. Catharines, Richmond Hill, Guelph, Burlington, Thunder Bay, Cambridge, Vaughan, Barrie, Kitchener, Kingston, London, Oshawa, Toronto, Windsor, Milton and Waterloo.

- **A northern event** is an event located in the [Northern Ontario districts](#) of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay or Timiskaming.
- **Non-peak season** includes the period from October 1 – May 31.

## Program Objectives

The Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster program aims to support Blockbuster events that will:

1. Draw significant tourist attendance to Ontario and increase tourist expenditures
2. Increase Ontario's profile nationally and/or internationally through media and/or broadcast exposure
3. Provide significant economic impact and legacy development (including volunteer and leadership development) for the local community, the region and the province.

Events will be scored in part on their capacity to draw significant tourist attendance. Events that demonstrate, with reliable supporting evidence, a capacity to draw higher tourist numbers will score higher in the evaluation of performance metrics than events which draw fewer tourists. As a general guideline, a minimum of 10,000 tourists is expected.

## Program Priorities

Each application will be evaluated according to how well it demonstrates alignment with the Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster program objectives and priorities. The evaluation criteria are listed later in this guide under the section "Evaluation Process and Assessment Criteria".

Applicants are expected to demonstrate the following in their application:

- Strong organizational and leadership capacity, including a track record of producing successful large-scale events
- A solid rationale for the event's national and/or international drawing power, including the attraction of large numbers of tourists
- Significant media exposure for Ontario, including nationally and internationally
- Volunteer and leadership development opportunities arising from the event
- Legacy opportunities, i.e. longer-term positive outcomes and impact of the event for the local community and Ontario, including tangible outcomes
- Tourism/hospitality, business and community partnerships that encourage increased spending in Ontario and will extend the length of visitor stays in the host community/province.

## Eligibility Requirements

Applications which do not meet the following eligibility requirements will not be considered. Consult with the [Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster Program Lead](#) or your [Regional Tourism Advisor](#) to confirm applicant, event and expense eligibility.

## Eligible Applicant Organizations

Eligible applicant organizations must:

- Be legal entities and have been in existence for one year or longer as of the date of submission of the application
- Have a Canadian bank account at a Canadian financial institution conducting business in Ontario
- Not be in default of the terms and conditions of any grant or loan agreement with any ministry or agency of the Government of Ontario (e.g. Ontario Trillium Foundation).

Eligible applicants include:

1. Ontario municipalities that have identified hosting major events as part of their tourism strategy
2. for-profit or non-profit organizations (or groups of organizations) that have event management and/or hosting as part of their mandate.

If successful, the applicant organization will enter into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province. The Recipient must be the organization that will incur and pay the event expenses and report back to the ministry on use of the funds.

Eligible applicants need to demonstrate proven organizational ability, technical capacity and fiscal prudence to successfully host a Blockbuster event. This includes national and international event management experience and tourism business expertise.

## Eligible Events

To be eligible for Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster funding, the Blockbuster event must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Occur in the province of Ontario
- Be open to the public at large without membership in a club or group
- Meet the ministry's definition of a Blockbuster event

Applications that fail to meet any of the above eligibility requirements will be deemed ineligible.

## Ineligible Events

Ineligible Blockbuster events include:

- Events that are still in the bidding process
- Amateur sporting events that are receiving funding under the [Ontario Sport Hosting Program](#)
- Events that recur in Ontario on an annual or biennial basis
- Events that seek to attract only a special interest audience or recruit new members (e.g., religious or political gatherings and workshops)

- Trade fairs, events of a primarily commercial nature (e.g., consumer shows, symposia, conventions, meetings and conferences, seminars and clinics, etc.)

## **One Application per Event**

The Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries will consider only one application per event between the Celebrate Ontario programs (main and Blockbuster).

## **A Maximum of Two Applications per Organization**

The ministry will consider a maximum of two applications per organization through the Celebrate Ontario programs (main and Blockbuster). The two applications must be for separate events.

## **Funding Criteria**

### **Funding Support**

Applicants are eligible to apply **for up to a maximum of 20 per cent of eligible Blockbuster event cash operating expenses**. See the eligible expenses list below.

The value of in-kind expenses is not included in the determination of Blockbuster event cash operating expenses.

The operating expenses described must be for the Blockbuster event itself and not the operating expenses of the applicant organization.

Note: The ministry reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to fund or not fund a project submitted to the Blockbuster program. The decision to fund all or part of an applicant request will depend on its fit to the program priorities, assessment criteria and the availability of funds in the program.

There is no appeal process for unsuccessful applicants to the Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster program. Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to reach out to the [Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster Program Lead](#) if they have any questions.

## **Eligible Expenses**

Eligible Blockbuster funding requests must relate directly to specific expenditures incurred during the delivery of the proposed Blockbuster event and must not include costs that would have otherwise been incurred by the applicant (e.g., operational costs to run the host organization).

Applicants are expected to demonstrate how expenses associated with their proposed Blockbuster event will stimulate increased tourist attendance and tourist spending.

Expenses must be linked to programming activities and other services that are accessible to the public (i.e., not for expenses benefiting VIP's or invitation-only guests).

Eligible expenses include the following, providing they are directly related to delivery of the event. The list is not exhaustive.

### **Programming and Production**

- Performance and appearance fees paid to artists, musicians, other entertainers and presenters, including travel, accommodation and booking costs
- Programming costs, including interactive, experiential and/or accessible programming

- Production costs, including audio and visual support (e.g. rental of sound and lighting equipment and rental of event venue)
- Insurance for art works specific to a Blockbuster exhibit will be considered as an eligible production cost.

### **Media Buys to Tourist Markets**

- Media buys targeting Ontario audiences residing 40 kilometres or more from the event location
- Media buys targeting out-of-province tourists
  - Eligible media buys, in markets noted above, include:
    - Placement of targeted paid advertising (e.g., broadcast, digital, print, social)
    - Purchase of out-of-home advertising space (e.g., billboard, transit shelter space purchase)
    - Geo-targeted digital and social media advertising buys
    - Distribution costs for printed materials (printing costs are ineligible).

### **Other Eligible Expenses**, if not covered by other (e.g. municipal) funding:

- Event security
- Accessibility services and improvements to comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). Expenses must be directly associated with programming for the Blockbuster event (e.g. construction of temporary accessibility improvements for visitors such as ramping, accessible viewing areas, etc.)

### **Ineligible Expenses**

Expenses ineligible for the Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster program include the following items:

#### **Event Staffing/Administration**

- Administrative and overhead costs (e.g., rent, telephone and communication lines/services, insurance, computers, utilities, maintenance costs) and any other operational expenses related to an organization's ongoing activities
- Salaries, travel costs and expenses (meal, etc.) for permanent staff as well as for event/project staff.
- Hospitality costs, excluding those for artists, performers and presenters
- Volunteer costs, other than those specifically for training for the event
- Fees paid to consultants
- Event hosting licensing fees/bid fees
- Site and visitor services costs, other than Event security and Accessibility services and improvements to comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Permit and licensing fees
- Membership and subscription fees
- Translation costs
- Insurance costs (other than the exception listed above under eligible expenses)
- Legal, audit or interest fees

- Budget deficits.

### **Marketing (other than media buys to tourist markets)**

- Marketing creative, production, staff, or consulting costs
- Media buys in Ontario targeting in-province attendees who reside less than 40 kilometres from the event
- Printing of publications, production of television programming, digital assets, videos, DVDs, USB keys
- Mobile application and website development and upgrades
- Promotion-based activities, booking/packaging costs, media familiarization tours, hosting/payment to media/bloggers.

### **Other Ineligible Expenses**

- Audience surveys, research or economic impact studies
- Alcohol or cannabis-related products
- Capital costs (e.g., construction materials, motorized vehicles, land acquisition, purchase of: equipment, stages, fixed or portable seating, lighting structures, computers/notebooks, depreciable assets)
- Capital repayments
- Repayments to other funding programs
- Competition prizes, prize money, and monies paid to competition participants as well as awards, trophies and medals
- Any costs for gifts, gratuities, honoraria, or other items of personal benefit
- Harmonized Sales Tax or refundable expenses (e.g., security deposits)
- Any costs incurred for events held outside Ontario
- Any expenses that will be covered by in-kind revenues or in-kind services
- Any costs related to transactions by organizations directly affiliated with the applicant or between enterprises under common ownership or control.
- Any expenses not directly paid by the Recipient organization (i.e. by the organization directly receiving the Blockbuster funding)

### **Evaluation Process and Assessment Criteria**

Once a complete Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster application has been submitted in the Transfer Payment Ontario System, it will be evaluated.

Do not include websites or non-mandatory attachments for reference purposes in your application. Websites and non-mandatory attachments will not be reviewed as part of the evaluation process.

Applications that meet the eligibility and mandatory application requirements will be scored in accordance with the following assessment criteria:

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Section in Application Form</b>	<b>Scoring Weight</b>
Organizational Capacity	E + Financial Statements	20%
Event Information and Alignment with Program Objectives & Priorities	G + sections H, J, K, L (Event Cash Budget) + Marketing Plan + Economic Impact Report	30%*
Full Marketing Plan, including Tourism Marketing Plan	H + Marketing Plan	10%
Partnerships	I	10%
Impact: Performance Measures + Tracking of Results	J, K + Economic Impact Report	25%
Event Budget	L	5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

\*Rural or northern events, or events that take place over the non-peak season, will be allocated 5 points in the evaluation. Refer to the definitions of each presented at the beginning of the Guide.

Applications will be evaluated, through a standard set of program criteria, on how well they demonstrate the following:

- Strong organizational and leadership capacity with proven ability to deliver the event, including a track record of having produced successful large-scale events and reported on outcomes
- Solid financial health of the organization
- A detailed event description, including programming, activities and visitor services
- Solid risk management plan for the event
- A strong rationale for the event's national and/or international drawing power, including the attraction of large numbers of tourists
- Strong economic impact in Ontario, including support for jobs within the province
- Volunteer and leadership development opportunities
- Legacy opportunities, i.e. longer-term positive outcomes and impact of the event for the local community and Ontario (could also extend further)
- A robust marketing plan with demonstrated outreach to tourist markets
- Significant media exposure for the event and for Ontario, including nationally and internationally
- Confirmed tourism, business and community partnerships that encourage increased spending in Ontario and extended length of visitor stays in the host community/province
- A well-balanced and detailed event budget providing evidence of diverse cash revenue sources (including applicant-generated, private-sector and earned revenue).
- Contributions to rural, northern and non-peak season development.

## How to Apply?

Transfer Payment Ontario provides you with one-window access to information about funding opportunities that are available to you, how to apply for funding and how to check the status of your submission.

Transfer Payment Ontario makes applying for funding opportunities easy. Enter your organization's information once and it will remain safe and secure, ready for you to access any time you want to apply for funding – regardless of whether you're applying for one or multiple funding opportunities.

The first step is to create, or access, your ONE-key account and ID. ONE-key is used for secure access to the Government of Ontario system. If you do not already have a ONE-key account, creating an account may take up to five days, so begin the process early.

To get started, read more about [How to Submit for Funding](#).

## Submission Checklist: Mandatory Documents

For an application to be considered complete and eligible for assessment, all mandatory documents listed below must be attached to your file in the Transfer Payment Ontario System.

1. **Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster Application Form** — completed, electronically signed and dated
2. **Incorporation documents** for your organization in the Transfer Payment Ontario System. If your organization is already registered in TPON but does not have incorporation papers attached to your organization's profile, please log into TPON and attach them under your organizational attachments. This requirement does not apply to municipalities.
3. **Applicant organization's most recent, audited financial statements** — final versions, prepared by a Chartered Public Accountant. The statements must include: income statement, balance sheet and the notes and opinion of the auditor.
4. **An economic assessment report** that estimates the event's economic impact to Ontario, such as the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries' [Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model \(TREIM\)](#) or a third-party economic impact report.

Important note: All visitation numbers submitted in TREIM or other economic calculator must ONLY include tourists, i.e. Ontarians residing 40 km or more from the event site and all out-of-province visitors. Local Ontario visitors (within 40 km) should not be included in the TREIM or other economic impact calculators.

5. **Marketing Plan** that identifies marketing tactics (including media buys, reach and costs) linked to specific target markets (geographic and demographic), timing and, if applicable, frequency. The marketing plan should align with the projected attendance numbers for the event.

## Marketing Plan

Submit your full marketing plan for the event as a separate mandatory document to this application (this is item five in the Mandatory Application Documents list above.)

In your full Marketing Plan attachment, detail your event marketing plan to:

1. Local Ontario visitors
2. Tourists.

Reminder:

- A local Ontario visitor is an individual residing in the province and who is travelling less than 40 km (one-way) within Ontario to attend the event.
- A Tourist is an individual who travels 40 km or more (one-way) within Ontario to attend the event or who comes from outside Ontario to attend the event.

Include the following information:

- Targeted Visitor or Tourist Profile (gender, age, interest, income, single/family, etc.)
- Marketing Geographic Focus (specify cities, provinces/states, countries)
- Marketing Tactic (e.g., TV, radio, newspaper, Facebook geo-targeted, etc.) and Media Reach numbers
- Run Dates of Marketing Initiative (can also include frequency)
- Cash Expense (\$)
- In-Kind (Value in \$)

Note: In your Event Budget Table (Section L of your Application Form), include only the **cash** marketing expenses, no in-kind.

## Application Submission and Deadline

Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster complete applications must be received **at least four months** prior to the Blockbuster event start date. There is otherwise no set deadline.

Applications must be submitted using the Transfer Payment Ontario System.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your application has been successfully submitted.

If you do not receive email confirmation of your grant submission within 24 hours, please contact Transfer Payment Client Service at [TPONCC@ontario.ca](mailto:TPONCC@ontario.ca) or at 416-325-6691 or toll free at 1-855-216-3090.

Once the ministry has received the complete application, further information may be requested, if needed, before the application is evaluated.

All funding decisions are made by the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

Once a decision has been rendered on an application, the applicant organization will be notified of the funding decision.

## Technical Support

Technical questions related to the Transfer Payment Ontario web portal must be directed to Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) Client Care.

Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EST)

- Telephone: 416-325-6691 or 1-855-216-3090
- TTY/Teletypewriter (for the hearing impaired): 416-325-3408 / Toll Free: 1-800-268-7095
- Email: [TPONCC@ontario.ca](mailto:TPONCC@ontario.ca)

## Recipient Obligations

### Acknowledgement

Applicants are expected to comply with the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) (the “Code”) and all other applicable laws. Failure to comply with the letter and spirit of the Code will render the applicant ineligible for a grant and, in the event a grant is made, liable to repay the grant in its entirety at the request of the ministry.

Applicants should be aware that Government of Ontario institutions are bound by the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#), R.S.O. 1990, c.F.31, as amended from time to time, and that any information provided to them in connection with your Celebrate Ontario application may be subject to disclosure in accordance with that Act. Applicants are advised that the names and addresses of organizations receiving grants, the amount of the grant awards, and the purpose for which grants are awarded is information made available to the public.

### Successful Applications

If your application is successful, you will be required to:

- Sign a Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) with the ministry outlining the terms and conditions for receiving funding
- Carry at least \$2 million commercial general liability insurance coverage for the duration of the TPA and add “Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario, her ministers, agents, appointees and employees” as the additional insured on this coverage before the TPA can be executed (refer to the **Example of Certificate of Insurance, Appendix 1**, in this guide for an example)
- Report back to the ministry within 90 days following the event on the use of funds, service deliverables and outcomes achieved using the Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster final report form
- Permit the province to verify/audit information submitted (at the discretion of the province) to ensure that it is complete and accurate and that funds were used for the purpose(s) intended
- Agree that if the funds were not used, or will not be used for the intended purpose(s), if specified services were not delivered, or if the intended outcomes were not achieved, the province has the right at a future date to recover parts or all of the funds transferred
- Obtain prior written consent from the ministry for any change to the Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster event/project once funding is approved
- Acknowledge Ontario's support in electronic and print media as part of a visibility campaign, and in a form and manner directed by the province.

The ministry expects all grant recipients to comply with all federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations (e.g., environmental approvals, zoning by-laws, human rights, animal welfare, accessibility).

## Reporting Requirements and Accounting

In addition to completing the Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster program final report form, successful applicants will be expected to provide the following materials as part of the mandatory post-event reporting process:

1. A Confirmation of Actual Event Expenses document (a template will be provided by the ministry)
2. A summary of all invoices for Blockbuster-funded costs associated with your event. The summary should include the invoice date and expense amount (not including tax), the payee and a specific description of each expense
3. An economic assessment report that provides the event's actual economic impact to Ontario (e.g., the ministry's [Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model \[TREIM\]](#) or a third-party economic impact report)
4. Any other reports and publications produced as part of your event, including media summaries, visitor surveys and event results presentation, that support the actual performance metrics reported in your final report
5. Audited financial statement that includes the statement of revenues\* and expenditures for the event and an auditor's opinion of assurance prepared by a third-party Licensed Public Chartered Professional Accountant. The auditor must confirm the Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster funded expenses and provide an opinion on the eligibility of these expenses

\*Including note of the Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster grant amount.

6. Any other details that may be requested by the Province.

Failure to provide a complete final report may result in the retention of the final grant payment, and recovery of all or a portion of funding may be requested. Failure to meet any reporting requirements may impact an organization's ability to receive future funding.

## APPENDIX 1

### Example – Certificate of Insurance

- All successful applicants are required to carry at least \$2 million commercial general liability insurance coverage before the legal grant agreement can be executed. Recipients are required to carry the insurance for the full validity period of the Transfer Payment Agreement (effective date of TPA to 150 days post event).
- It is mandatory that “Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario, her ministers, agents, appointees and employees” be added as an additional insured.
- The insurer must have a secure A.M. Best rating of B+ or greater, or the equivalent.

The items below have been numbered to correspond with the example insurance certificate on the following page. A certificate of insurance must:

1. State that the insured party is the recipient organization with whom the ministry has contracted. This is important since a policy will only respond to cover the Named Insured on the policy
2. Identify the dates of coverage. The dates must correspond with the TPA’s effective date and end on, or after, the TPA’s expiration date.
3. Identify the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries as an additional insured, represented in the following language, “Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario, her ministers, agents, appointees and employees.” This phrase should appear on the certificate face under a memo heading or special note box
4. Identify the type (a) and amount (b) of coverage (Commercial General Liability insurance is listed and is on an occurrence basis for \$2 million). The policy must include:
  - i. Third party bodily injury
  - ii. Personal injury
  - iii. Property damage
  - iv. A cross-liability clause
  - vi. Contractual liability coverage.
5. Include a statement that the certificate holder (the ministry) will be notified of any cancellation or material change within 30 days
6. Include the signature of an authorized insurance representative
7. List the ministry as the Certificate Holder and include the ministry’s mailing address in this section of the policy.

<b>Name and address to whom issued</b>  <b>Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries</b> <b>Heritage, Tourism and Culture Division</b> <b>Investment and Development Office</b> <b>400 University Avenue, 5th Floor</b> (7) <b>Toronto ON M7A 2R9</b>	<b>Name and address of Insured</b> (1)
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Type of Insurance (4a)	Insurer	Policy Number	Expiration Date	Coverages	Limits of Liability
<b>Commercial General Liability</b> Including: • Non-Owned *Automobile • Blanket Contractual Liability • Products and Completed Operations • Cross Liability and Severability of interests clause • Personal Injury • Employers Liability or WSIB Clearance	Insurance Company of Canada		October 1, 2021 (2)	Inclusive Limits Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability	Each occurrence or Accident: \$2,000,000  General Aggregate: \$2,000,000  (4b)
Automobile	Company of Canada		October 1, 2021	Inclusive Limits Bodily Injury and Property Damage Liability	Each accident: \$2,000,000 • Accident Benefits • Self Insured for Physical Damage
Errors & Omissions	Company of Canada		December 2, 2021	Wrongful Acts committed in the performance of or failure to perform	\$2,000,000 per claim and Aggregate Claims Made

(3) **Additional Insured:** Her Majesty the Queen in right of Ontario, her ministers, agents, appointees and employees. Subject to the Terms, Conditions and Exclusions of the above Noted Policies

(5) **\*\*Evidence of Insurance only\*\*Cancellation:** Should any the policies described herein be cancelled before the expiration date thereof, the insurer(s) affording coverage will endeavour to mail 30-days written notice to the Certificate Holder named herein, but failure to mail such notice shall impose no obligation or liability of any kind upon either the Insurer(s) affording coverage, its agents or representatives.

**Issued at:** Toronto, Ontario

**Date:** February 10, 2021

**Signature:** (6)



