Ontario

Experience Ontario 2027
Program and Application Overview

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming



Table of Contents

What You Need to Know Before You Apply 3
Before Filling Out the Application 3
Program Overview 3
NEW Legacy Events Points 3
Overall Program Objectives 4
Funding Priorities 4
Established Events Stream 4
Capacity Building Stream: 5
Allows eligible organizations to apply for funding for festivals or events that are being held in Ontario for the first time. New* events must meet the stream's specific eligibility criteria. 5
Number of Applications Permitted 5
Program Timelines: 6
Application Deadline 7
Definitions 8
Eligible Expenses for Established Events and Capacity Building Streams 12
Programming and Production 12
Marketing 12
Other 12
Ineligible Expenses for Established Events and Capacity Building Streams 13
Programming and Production 13
Marketing 13
Staffing and Administrative 13
Other 14
How To Apply 14
How Does This Impact Users? 14
General Best Practices 15
Application Requirements 16
Evaluation Process and Assessment Criteria 16
Acknowledgement 19
Successful Applications 19
Reporting Requirements and Accounting 20
Unexpected Circumstances 21
Appendix 1 22
Certificate of Insurance Instructions (not required at time of application) 22
Appendix 2 23
Tax Compliance Verification Instructions (not required at time of application) 23
Appendix 3 24
Good Standing with All Applicable Ontario Environmental and Labour Laws 24

What You Need to Know Before You Apply

Before Filling Out the Application

☐ Read the Experience Ontario 2027 Application Guide

☐ Consult with your Tourism Regional Advisor to discuss your festival or event plan to ensure it aligns with Experience Ontario or; email ExperienceOntario@ontario.ca with questions.

☐ Confirm you are registered with Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) and your:

- TPON Administrator is current.
- Organization's email address is correct.
- External Approvers are linked to the organization

Program Overview

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (MTCG) supports Ontario's economy and reputation as a top destination by growing tourism, attracting investment and investing in festivals and events across the province.

Experience Ontario 2027 provides support for festivals and events with a tourism economic impact to motivate visitors to discover Ontario, connect people with local experiences, and increase tourism spending.

Experience Ontario is a competitive program. Applications will be measured against program criteria. There is no guarantee of funding, including to past recipients.

Experience Ontario 2027 continues to offer the **Established Events** stream and the **Capacity Building** stream where new festivals or events are eligible to receive funding. The eligibility criteria for the **Capacity Building** stream differs from those of the Established Events stream. For detailed information on each stream, please see the relevant section below.

NEW Legacy Events Points

Legacy Events are long-standing festivals and events recognized for their cultural and economic significance in Ontario. To qualify for Legacy Event points, applicants must meet both of the following criteria:

1. The event has been held in the same region for **30 years or more**.

Note: Legacy Events have been in operation since at least 1996. Events that paused for one or two years due to COVID-19 may still be considered eligible, provided the event resumed following the pandemic.

2. The event achieved the minimum total attendance threshold at least once within the past three years, based on its budget tier.

TIER	TOTAL ATTENDEES
Tier 1 – Signature	500,000 +
Tier 2 – Emerging	250,000 +
Tier 3 – Community	100,000 +

Note: Total attendance includes local attendees as well as domestic and international visitors.

Legacy Event points are available only to applicants in the **Established Events Stream**.

The Ministry reserves the right to request supporting documentation to verify eligibility for Legacy Event points. This may include documentation confirming the event's length of operation and the methodology used to calculate total attendance.

Overall Program Objectives

Experience Ontario 2027 supports in-person festivals or events in Ontario that:

1. Offer programming that encourages people to travel, experience events in-person and celebrate Ontario.
2. Draw tourists and increase visitor spending through innovative programming in partnership with businesses and community partners.
3. Provide job opportunities for Ontarians in the tourism, culture and entertainment sectors.
4. Increase Ontario's profile through various media channels.

TIP

*Review the **application guidelines** and ensure you have a **Ontario.ca** account registered with TPON **EARLY** to ensure adequate time to complete your Experience Ontario application.*

Funding Priorities

Established Events Stream

The maximum funding amount for the Experience Ontario 2027 Established Events Stream is determined through a three-tier model based on the organization's previous year's actual festival or event cash expense total:

Tier 1 – Signature	Tourism festivals or events with total event cash expenses of $1 million or greater will be eligible for up to 50% of eligible cash expenses up to a maximum of $125,000.
Tier 2 – Emerging	Tourism festivals or events with total event cash expenses between $250,000 and $999,999 will be eligible for up to 50% of eligible cash expenses up to a maximum $55,000.
Tier 3 - Community	Tourism festivals or events with total event cash expenses of less than $250,000 will be eligible for up to 50% of eligible cash expenses up to a maximum of $20,000.

- The total event cash expenses described must be for the event itself, **not** the operating expenses of the applicant organization.
- The value of in-kind expenses is not included in the determination of the event's total event cash expenses.
- Funding formulas and maximums will be re-calculated during final reporting and refunds will be required, should maximum funding amounts be reduced.

Capacity Building Stream:

Allows eligible organizations to apply for funding for festivals or events that are being held in Ontario for the first time. New* events must meet the stream's specific eligibility criteria.

- Eligible applicants can apply for up to 50% of eligible cash expenses, up to a maximum of $10,000 per eligible organization.
- This stream is intended for eligible organizations producing a festival or event for the first time (i.e. events that have not been produced previously in Ontario).
- Applicants under this stream are not required to report on previous year's cash expenditures.
- Applicants must submit a short business case demonstrating the feasibility of the festival or event. The business case must include:
  - ✓ The value proposition of the festival or event (what makes it unique or valuable).
  - ✓ The governance structure of the organizing team.
  - ✓ The anticipated impact of the event.
  - ✓ An implementation plan.

*New events are defined as those that have not been produced previously in Ontario and have not previously applied for the Experience Ontario program (or any previous iteration of the program). Rebranded or modified versions of existing or previous events are not eligible

For more information, see the **Eligible Expense** list, and **Evaluation Process and Assessment Criteria**.

Number of Applications Permitted

The Experience Ontario program will allow an eligible organization to submit up to two (2) applications* for this year's program intake: a maximum of one submission to the Established Events stream and a maximum of one submission for the Capacity Building stream. Both events must meet the eligibility requirements of the respective stream, and events must be separate and distinct from one another.

*Only one organization in a group of affiliated organizations is eligible to submit a maximum of two applications for this year's program intake.

An affiliated organization is one of two corporations that are related to, or associated or affiliated with, each other in one of the following ways:

- One of the corporations controls the other corporation directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever (e.g., parent corporation).

- Either corporation is controlled directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever, by the same business, individual, or group of individuals or businesses. (e.g., subsidiary, parent, shared principle shareholders).
- The corporations are otherwise affiliates of one another under applicable corporations' legislation.

Corporations established directly by legislation are not affiliates of one another even if they are affiliated with one another as described above.

Multiple location events are eligible as one event ONLY where the programming is offered and marketed as part of a consolidated festival or event and where the experience includes visitation to several locations over the defined consecutive days (e.g., Harvest Festival with multiple farm locations).

Program Timelines:

For Experience Ontario 2027, program timelines are the same for both the Established Events and Capacity Building streams.

Item	Time Frame	Notes
Application Intake	**November 18, 2026**	• New applicants must create an Ontario.ca Account. **This may take up to five business days.** You can create your account prior to the application intake period if you don't already have one. Plan accordingly to meet the program's deadline.
Virtual Information Sessions/Webinars	**#1. Thursday November 19, 2026, 10:00am to 11:00am (English)** **#2. Tuesday November 24, 2026, 6:00pm – 7:00pm (English)** **#3. Wednesday November 25, 2:00pm -3:00pm (French)**	• Experience Ontario 2027 - Information Session #1 • Experience Ontario 2027 - Information Session #2 • Expérience Ontario 2027 - séance d'information #3 **NOTE: All webinars are held virtually via Teams**
Application Deadline	**December 16, 2026**	• Tourism Regional Advisors are available prior to and during the application period for program consultations. • For TPON and technical inquiries, Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care is available to respond to questions about the TPON. • Applicants are responsible for submitting complete applications before the application deadline.

Evaluation Period	**January – Spring 2027**	• Applications will be evaluated based on the program criteria.
Funding Status Notification	**Spring 2027**	• Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email when decisions have been made. Applicants will need to access their status letter in the application portal. • Please ensure that your organization's contacts are up to date in your Transfer Payment Ontario account.

There is no appeal process for unsuccessful applicants to the program.

Completed applications must be submitted through TPON using the online application portal. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure applications are complete and have been successfully submitted along with all mandatory documents. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated. Once you have submitted the application, you should receive an email verification. **If you do not receive a confirmation notice by email within 24 hours of submitting your application, please contact** Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care (TPON CC).

Application Deadline

All applications must be submitted by **December 16, 2026, 3 p.m. EST**. Applications and required documents submitted after the deadline will not be considered. **If you are experiencing technical difficulties preventing you from submitting your application, you must contact** Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care (TPON CC), **not your Regional Development Advisor.**

Technical Issues in TPON Application Portal

Applicants who are unable to submit an application on time due to technical issues with the portal must reach out to the TPON CC and log an official service ticket before the deadline. Applicants must demonstrate that work has been done on their application, otherwise they may not be permitted to submit their complete application. Applicants should log an official service ticket as soon as possible so their issues can be addressed before the deadline.

TIP

Submitting your application on the last week could potentially result in system delays, unexpected/unanticipated technical issues and high user traffic causing technical issues. You are strongly encouraged to submit your application early to avoid any issues.

Definitions

Tourism festival or event – a public, in-person celebration held over consecutive days (minimum of two days)* that is: promoted to and attracts tourists; creates employment in the tourism, culture and entertainment sectors; and has a proven tourism economic impact involving local sponsors, suppliers, and services.

> Duration: a tourism festival or event must be offered over consecutive days, minimum of two days. * For each of the consecutive days, a minimum of five continuous hours of programming per day is required. The tourism festival or event may be offered as a series of consecutive days. A series must be offered and marketed as a consolidated, themed festival/event. Applicants cannot combine distinct events into one application.

* Single-day Canada Day events held on July 1, 2027, are eligible for funding.

Priority event – a tourism festival or event hosted by an organization with a specific mandate to support one, or more, of the defined priority groups below, and where the event has programming dedicated to celebrate their priority group.

1. **Francophone tourism festival or event** as presented by an organization with a stated mandate to develop initiatives supporting Francophones in Ontario and that delivers programming celebrating Francophone culture.

2. **Indigenous tourism festival or event** delivers programming celebrating Indigenous culture at the local, regional, or provincial level. The applicant organization must be a band council, or an incorporated Indigenous organization.

3. **2SLGBTQIA+ tourism festival or event** as presented by an organization with a stated mandate to develop initiatives supporting Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and gender diverse communities and that delivers programming supporting these communities.

4. **Ethnocultural tourism festival or event** as presented by an organization with a stated mandate to develop initiatives supporting people, groups and/or communities of a specific or multiple ethnic or cultural origin(s). The event is delivered as public programming that supports and showcases the cultural and linguistic diversity in Ontario.

5. **Northern tourism festival or event** which is located in the northern Ontario districts (RTO 13) of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay or Timiskaming.

6. **Rural tourism festival or event** as an event in a community that meets either of the following criteria:
    - has a population of fewer than 100,000 people.
    - has a population density of 100 people or fewer per square kilometre.

The Ministry reserves the right to request supporting documentation that validates an organization's claim to be eligible as a priority group as per the Experience Ontario Program guidelines.

Legacy Event: Long-standing festivals and events recognized for their cultural and economic significance in Ontario. The event must have taken place for **30 years or more** in the same region, and **meet total attendance** criteria based on their eligible tier:

TIER	TOTAL ATTENDEES
Tier 1 – Signature	500,000 +
Tier 2 – Emerging	250,000 +
Tier 3 – Community	100,000 +

The Ministry reserves the right to request supporting documentation to verify eligibility for Legacy Event points. This may include documentation confirming the event's length of operation and the methodology used to calculate total attendance.

Ontario's urban municipalities - are municipalities located within a Statistics Canada Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and include Ajax, Barrie, Brampton, Brantford, Burlington, Cambridge, Chatham-Kent, Clarington, Guelph, Greater Sudbury, Hamilton, Kingston, Kitchener, London, Markham, Milton, Mississauga, Oakville, Oshawa, Ottawa, Richmond Hill, St. Catharines, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Vaughan, Waterloo, Whitby, and Windsor.

Tourist – an individual (including an Ontario resident) who travels 40 kilometres or more (one-way) or crosses a border into Ontario to attend a festival or event.

Consecutive Days – a minimum of two days that occur in sequential order i.e. Saturday and Sunday of the same week with no gaps or interruptions between them.

5 Hours of Programing – 5 hours of continuous programming at the same location, without any breaks or interruptions.

Partnerships – tourism organizations, hospitality or local businesses, and sponsors with whom the applicant is collaborating to develop tourism offers, incentives, packages, or marketing/promotional collaborations that contribute to the community economic impacts or financial success of the event. Partners do not include paid supplier relationships.

Fiscal year – the period from April 1 of one calendar year to March 31 of the next calendar year.

Audited Financial Statement - a set of financial statements consisting of five components: an Income Statement, a Statement of Changes in Financial position, a Balance Sheet, a Statement of Cash Flows, and Notes to Financial Statements; prepared using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) by a Licensed Public Accountant who expresses an opinion on the financial statements in an accompanying Auditor's Report.

Review Engagement (Reviewed Financial Statement) – a set of financial statements consisting of five components: an Income Statement, a Statement of Changes in Financial position, a Balance Sheet, a Statement of Cash Flows, and Notes to Financial Statements; prepared using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) by a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) who expresses some assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatements in an accompanying Review and Engagement Report.

Board-Endorsed Financial Statement – an income statement and balance sheet that report on a year's worth of financial activity (e.g., revenues, gains, expenses, losses, net income, assets, liabilities and other totals). The statement must be accompanied by a Board motion that verifies the accuracy and approval of the document and is signed and dated by the Board Chair.

Treasurer-Certified Financial Statement –an income statement and balance sheet that report on a year's worth of financial activity (e.g., revenues, gains, expenses, losses, net income, assets, liabilities and other totals). The statement must be accompanied by a note that verifies the accuracy and approval of the document and is signed and dated by the Chief Financial Officer.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Organizations must be:	Established Events Stream	Capacity Building Stream
A legal entity, established by or under legislation; federally or provincially incorporated; or a First Nation in the province of Ontario.*	✓	✓
In existence since January 1, 2026, or before.	✓	✓
Not in default of the terms and conditions of any grant or loan agreement with any ministry or agency of the Government of Ontario.	✓	✓
An operating business conducting business in Ontario (e.g., business address, physical presence) and have a Canadian bank account in the legal name of the applicant at a Canadian financial institution.	✓	✓
Ineligible Organizations:	**Established Events Stream**	**Capacity Building Stream**
Sole proprietorships, limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships and general partnerships.	✓	✓
Federal or provincial governments and/or their agencies.	✓	✓
Eligible Tourism Festivals or Events must:	**Established Events Stream**	**Capacity Building Stream**
Take place between April 1, 2027, and March 31, 2028, over a minimum of two consecutive days** and consist of a minimum of five continuous hours*** of programing on each of the consecutive days.	✓	✓
Occur in the province of Ontario.	✓	✓
Be open to the public at large without membership in a club or group.	✓	✓
Have been held at least once in the previous three-year period.	✓	
The event has not received an Experience Ontario award in the past for the festival or event that the grant is being applied for.		✓

Follow all municipal and provincial guidelines, including health and safety guidelines.	✓	✓
Submit expenses for the festival or event that are not solely related to marketing or media buys.	✓	✓
Demonstrate that the event saw an overall tourist attendance of at least 30% or 5,000 tourists, at least once in the past three years of holding the event being applied for. (See definition of tourist above)	✓	
Ineligible Tourism Festivals or Events	**Established Events Stream**	**Capacity Building Stream**
One-day tourism festivals or events (except for Canada Day events held on July 1, 2027).	✓	✓
Non-consecutive day festivals or events. Festivals or events that offer a series of days are only eligible for the consecutive days.	✓	✓
Non-continuous hours of programming that are not 5 hours. Festivals or events that offer concurrent programming that add up to 5 hours or more. Ex: Two shows at different locations that that are 2.5 hours each and are held at the same time do not equate to 5 continuous hours of programming.	✓	✓
Virtual/broadcast festivals or events.	✓	✓
Festivals or events that are receiving funding through the Ontario Sport Hosting Program or the Ontario Music Investment Fund (OMIF).	✓	✓
Sporting events offering programming that is of primary benefit to event participants/athletes only (e.g., sport tournaments/competitions, marathons), with no ancillary programming for visitors, and is neither marketed to nor attracts tourists.	✓	✓
Festivals or events that seek to attract only a special interest audience, restrict audiences (e.g., students only), or recruit new members (e.g., religious or political gatherings).	✓	✓
Festivals or events of a primarily commercial nature, where the main intent of the event is to sell or promote one or multiple products, services, or sponsorships (e.g., trade fairs and shows, business events, consumer shows, artisan and craft fairs).	✓	✓
Fundraising events or events with a primarily charitable purpose.	✓	✓
Symposia, conventions, meetings, conferences, seminars, clinics, workshops, contests and events that solely consist of an award show.	✓	✓
Applicants who apply **only** for marketing funding.	✓	✓
Events defined as one-off single activities, gatherings or celebrations typically taking place over a concentrated period of time, such as a few hours. Examples of events are rallies, demonstrations, fundraising events, single performances or other single artistic activities.	✓	✓

* First Nation/Indigenous organization applicants must be:
An Indigenous community in Ontario; a regional or provincial organization representing First Nation, Métis, Inuit or urban Indigenous peoples; or an Indigenous service provider in Ontario (e.g. band councils, tribal councils, Indigenous education authorities, Provincial Territorial Organizations).

** A minimum of two days that occur in sequential order i.e. Saturday and Sunday of the same week with no gaps or interruptions between them. .

***A minimum of five (5) hours in a row at the same location, without any breaks or interruptions.

Eligible Expenses for Established Events and Capacity Building Streams

Expenses must be incurred between **April 1, 2027,** and **March 31, 2028**. Eligible expenses must be incurred for the delivery of the festival or event and do not include costs related to operational costs of the organization.

Eligible expenses must be linked to programming activities and other services accessible to the public. Expenditures that are not related to the delivery of the festival or event (e.g., benefitting VIPs or invitation-only guests) are not eligible.

Examples of eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

Programming and Production

- Performance and appearance fees paid to artists, performers, and presenters, including travel, accommodation, hospitality and bookings (reasonable costs associated to expenses such as meals, transportation). Hospitality does not include alcohol or cannabis-related products.
- Programming costs, including interactive, experiential and/or accessible programming.
- Ontario-based production costs, including audio and visual support (e.g., rental of sound and lighting equipment and rental of event venue).
- Wages for temporary/contract event staff directly related to programming and production for the festival or event.
- For eligible sporting events, programming costs related to attracting and engaging spectators.
- SOCAN or other licensing fees.
- Honorarium for Elder/Knowledge Holder.

Marketing

- Targeted paid media or advertising buys (e.g., broadcast, digital, social, print, out-of-home).
- Distribution/shipping costs for printed materials.
- Mobile application and website development and upgrades if promoting or supporting the festival or event.
- Wages for temporary/contract event staff directly related to marketing for the festival or event.

Other

- Translation costs directly related to the programming or marketing of the festival or event.
- Costs related to volunteer activities (training for the event, site/visitor services, t-shirts, lanyards, name badges).
- Event Security
- Accessibility services and improvements to comply with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* directly associated with the event programming (e.g., ramps, accessible viewing areas).

- Non-capital costs related to strengthening health and safety measures at the event (e.g., technology for digital contactless payment and admission).
- Sanitation services (handwashing stations, hand sanitizer dispensers).
- Economic impact studies.
- Other costs deemed reasonable and directly attributable to the project that have been approved in writing by the ministry.

Ineligible Expenses for Established Events and Capacity Building Streams

Ineligible expenses include those not directly related to the festival or event programming or marketing, as well as, the following:

- Any expenses incurred outside of the eligibility period of April 1, 2027, to March 31, 2028.

Programming and Production

- Production costs incurred outside Ontario.
- Costs for festivals or events held outside Ontario.
- Costs related to the creation of permanent creative assets (e.g., sculptures).
- Competition prizes, prize money and monies paid to competition participants, as well as awards, trophies, and medals, or costs for gifts, gratuities, honoraria or other items of personal benefit.
- Costs related to participants in eligible sporting events (e.g., uniforms, travel, hospitality).
- Food, unless for the purpose of culinary demonstrations.

Marketing

- Creative, production and associated staff costs, contract staff included (this includes photography, videography, graphic design).
- Printing of publications.
- Booking/packaging costs, corporate sponsorship fees.
- Merchandise (e.g., for inclusion in takeaways for attendees, promotional items).

Staffing and Administrative

- Salaries and wages for permanent staff and full-time contract staff.
- Administrative and overhead costs and any other operational or capital expenses related to an organization's activities, including:
    - Rent, telephone and communication lines/services, insurance, computers, utilities, maintenance costs, credit/debit card fees, membership, printing and subscription fees.
    - Travel costs, meals and incidental expenses for all staff (permanent, contract, and event) and volunteers.
    - Capital costs (construction materials, motorized vehicles, land acquisition, purchase of equipment, stages, fixed or portable seating, computers/notebooks, depreciable assets).
    - Charitable donations.

    - Labour costs not directly related to the event.
    - Legal, audit or interest fees.
    - Fees relating to grant writers procured for preparing government funding applications.
    - Fees related to audit or engagement review of financial statements.
    - Budget deficits, capital repayments or any repayments to other funding programs.
- Hospitality costs, excluding those for Canadian or international artists, performers and presenters.

Other

- Cost of alcohol or cannabis-related products.
- Harmonized Sales Tax or refundable expenses (e.g., security deposits).
- Any expenses not directly paid by the recipient organization or that will be covered by in-kind revenues, in-kind services, or funded by another source.
- Any costs related to transactions by organizations directly affiliated with the applicant or between enterprises under common ownership or control.

How To Apply

The Transfer Payment Ontario system is your one-window access to apply for funding, check the status of your application, e-approve documents and submit reports.

The Government of Ontario has changed the way public users access secure government services, including TPON.

Application Process

Your Experience Ontario application for both the Established Events and the Capacity Building streams must be completed online through the TPON portal.

All organizations are required to have an Ontario.ca Account for secure access to TPON. For organizations that don't have an Ontario.ca Account, please reference the guide and video links below.

NOTE: an Ontario.ca Account replaces the former My Ontario account

- For further information, see the Creating an Ontario.ca Account guide and video in preparation for creating your Ontario.ca Account.
- Creating a new account may take up to several days, so please begin this process early. You can set up your Ontario.ca Account prior to submitting your Experience Ontario application.
- Applicant organizations should ensure they know the email address that is associated with their TPON account.

How Does This Impact Users?

- **New users** to TPON will need to create an Ontario.ca Account profile.
- **Existing TPON users** will have the opportunity to migrate their profile to their Ontario.ca Account by creating an account with their TPON associated email.

Joining an Organization in TPON

- The entire Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) and Terms and Conditions (Ts&Cs) process and approval will be carried out electronically within the TPON system. Persons administering the TPA or Ts&Cs and signing authorities* must all have their own Ontario.ca Account.
- The designated individual with signing authority will require an Ontario.ca Account to e-approve the TPA. Once your Ontario.ca Account has been created, you will need to join your existing organization in TPON.
- For organizations who qualify for Ts&Cs, the signing authority* of the organization must attest to the terms in the TPON portal or the Ts&Cs can be downloaded as a PDF for the signing authority* to sign.
- To register a **NEW** TPON system user, visit https://www.tpon.gov.on.ca/tpon/psLogin
- To add **NEW** authorized users to your account/organization, visit the How to Join an Organization in TPON webpage and follow the prompts.

  *A signing authority is an individual appointed by an organization to have the legal authority to sign documents and legally bind the entity to agreements and transactions.

Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care

Technical questions related to TPON must be directed to Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care.

Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EST, excluding statutory and government holidays)

- 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

General Best Practices

- Submitting your application on the last week of the application intake, could potentially result in system delays and high user traffic causing technical issues. Acquiring the necessary permissions to TPON and gathering the necessary documents may take significant time. Applicants **are strongly encouraged to submit their application earlier to avoid any issues.**
- If you encounter any technical difficulties, DO NOT contact your Regional Development Advisor. Contact Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care.
- Applicants who are unable to submit an application on time due to technical issues with the portal must reach out to the TPON CC and log an official service ticket before the deadline, otherwise they may not be permitted to submit their application. Applicants who have an open ticket with TPON CC and have demonstrated that work has been done on their application may be permitted to submit their completed application once the TPON technical ticket has been resolved.
- Applications submitted after 3 p.m. EST on December 16, 2026, **WILL NOT** be accepted.

Application Requirements

For an application to be considered complete and eligible for assessment, the following mandatory documents must be attached to your file in the TPON portal, on or before the application deadline.

1. Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) business number - If you do not have one, you can apply for a CRA business number with these steps.

2. **Incorporation documents** - your organization's incorporation documents **must match your organization's legal name as registered in Transfer Payment Ontario** (not required from municipalities or First Nations). Acceptable documents include:

    - Certificate of Incorporation (and any related Amendments thereto)
    - Articles of Amalgamation
    - Letters Patent

    ➢ **Business Improvement Areas:** Where incorporation documents are not available, BIAs are required to submit BIA policies and by-laws as established by the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

    ➢ **Agricultural Societies:** Where incorporation documents are not available, Agricultural Societies are required to submit letters of good standing as established by *The Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act, R.S.O. 1990.* The letter of good standing can be dated no older than 2025.

3. **Financial statements** (not required from municipalities or First Nation organizations) all other organizations must provide:

    - **The previous year's audited financial statements or review engagement report**
        - income statement, balance sheet, and the notes. Audited financial statements must include the auditor's opinion on the statements; for review engagement reports, a professional assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatements. The statements should be final and signed by the auditor and by the Board of Directors.

    If audited financial statements or review engagement reports are not available, please submit:

    - **The previous year's financial statements (balance sheet and income statement)**
        - a dated and signed, board-endorsed or treasurer-certified, statement that verifies the accuracy and approval of all the information contained therein. The statement should be final and signed by a member of the board of directors.

Evaluation Process and Assessment Criteria

The application evaluation process will include a fair and consistent evaluation of the merit of submissions against the stated eligibility requirements and mandatory requirements to ensure that festivals and events meet program priorities. Applications that fail to meet any of the eligibility or mandatory requirements will not be considered.

Applications that meet all eligibility requirements and mandatory requirements will be scored based on a pre-determined technical criteria.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming cannot guarantee funding to all applicants, including to past recipients, nor can the ministry ensure the total amount requested by successful applicants will be granted. The decision to fund all or part of an applicant request will be based on the demonstrated ability to meet Experience Ontario 2027 program priorities and assessment criteria, total confirmed eligible expenses, and the overall demand for funds in the program.

The assessment criteria of the Established Events and the Capacity Building streams differ. Please ensure you are referencing the correct scoring matrix below.

Experience Ontario Established Events Stream

Applications will be measured against program criteria and scored against the following:

<table>
<tr><th>Assessment Criteria</th><th>Scoring Weight</th></tr>
<tr><td>Organizational Capacity: Financial Stability | Fiscal Governance |Successful Management of Events</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>Festival and Event Information: Event Description | Innovation</td><td>20</td></tr>
<tr><td>Festival and Event Programming Details: Alignment to Program Objectives |Performance Measures |Impact of Government Support</td><td>30</td></tr>
<tr><td>Marketing and Community Economic Development: Marketing Plan |Marketing to Attract Tourists | Community Economic Development</td><td>25</td></tr>
<tr><td>Event budget: Aligned Expenses |Diverse Financing/Revenues</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>100</td></tr>
<tr><td>Priority Sector Points: To be classified as a priority event, event and applicant organization must meet the definitions as outlined in the definitions.</td><td>5
(Indigenous, francophone, 2SLGBTQI+, ethnocultural, northern & rural tourism festival or event)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Legacy Events Points: To be classified as a legacy event, the event must have taken place for 30 years or more in the same region and meet total attendance criteria based on their eligible tier:
<table>
<tr><th>TIER</th><th>TOTAL ATTENDEES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Tier 1</td><td>500,000 or more</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tier 2</td><td>250,000 or more</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tier 3</td><td>100,000 or more</td></tr>
</table>
</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total Possible Score</td><td>115</td></tr>
</table>

Priority sector points and Legacy event points are added as additional points to the overall score of 100.

Applicants must obtain a minimum score of 50 to be considered for funding.

Experience Ontario Capacity Building Stream

Applications will be measured against program criteria and scored against the following:

Assessment Criteria	Scoring Weight
Organizational Capacity: Financial Stability | Successful Management of Events | Partners	10
Business Case: Value Proposition |Governance |Anticipated Impact |Implementation Plan	20
Festival and Event Information and Innovation: Event Description | Innovation	20
Programming Details: Alignment to Program Objectives |Performance Measures |Tracking of Results |Impact of Government Support	25
Marketing and Community Economic Development: Marketing Plan |Marketing to Attract Tourists |Community Economic Development	15
Event budget: Aligned Expenses | Diverse Financing/Revenues	10
Total	**100**
Priority Sector Points: To be classified as a priority event, event and applicant organization must meet the definitions as outline above.	**5** **(Indigenous, francophone, 2SLGBTQI+, ethnocultural, northern & rural tourism festival or event)**
Total Possible Score	**105**

Priority sector points are added as additional points to the overall score of 100.

Applicants must obtain a minimum score of 50 to be considered for funding.

Experience Ontario 2027 is a competitive and non-entitlement program. There is no guarantee, including to past recipients, that the applicant will be approved for funding.

All applications are subject to the final review and approval by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.

There is no appeal process for unsuccessful applicants to the program.

Recipient Obligations

Acknowledgement

Successful applicants are expected to comply with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the "Code") and all other applicable laws. Failure to comply with the Code may 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.

Successful applicants should be aware 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 the ministry in connection with your Experience Ontario 2027 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

Successful applicants will be required to:

- Execute and approve a TPA with the ministry and/or attest to the Ts&Cs of the funding upon successful funding notification from the ministry.
- Carry at least $2 million commercial general liability insurance coverage for the recipient organization for the duration of the agreement and add "His Majesty the King in right of Ontario, His ministers, agents, appointees and employees" as an additional named insured on this coverage before the TPA can be executed (refer to the Certificate of Insurance Instructions).
- Report back to the ministry within 120 days following the event on the use of funds, deliverables and outcomes achieved using the final report module (TPON portal) and upload any ancillary documents.
- Permit the ministry to verify/audit information submitted (at the discretion of the ministry) 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), or 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 all or part of the funds transferred.
- Obtain prior written consent from the ministry for any changes to the event once funding is approved.
- Acknowledge Ontario's support in electronic, print, or social media as part of a visibility campaign, and in a form and manner directed by the province.
- Comply with all federal, provincial, and municipal laws and regulations (e.g., health and safety, environmental approvals, zoning by-laws, human rights, animal welfare, accessibility).
- Consent to having their contact information shared with Destination Ontario's Roaming Travel Counsellor Program.

Acknowledgement of Provincial Funding and Communication Protocols

To demonstrate transparency and accountability related to how public funds are spent, successful applicants must credit the support of the Province of Ontario in any communications related to the project funded through Experience Ontario. This includes all media, publicity and marketing materials developed for the promotion of project activities, as well as all other project materials developed, including reports, visual and oral presentations. This also includes recognition presence at the physical event itself. Successful applicants are required to adhere to the communication protocol set out in the agreement. This includes:

- Notifying the ministry as soon as possible, at least seven (7) days in advance of any event being held in relation to the project or any local media announcement related to the project. Obtaining the approval of the ministry before issuing any media releases related to the grant project.

- Obtaining the approval of the ministry on all promotional and/or resource material that uses the Province of Ontario's visual identity prior to publication.

Reporting Requirements and Accounting

In addition to completing the final report module (TPON portal), recipients will be expected to provide the following materials as part of the mandatory post-event reporting process:

1. A confirmation of actual event expenses.
2. A summary of all invoices for eligible costs associated with the event. The summary should include the invoice date and expense amount (not including tax), the payee and a specific description of each expense.
3. Any other reports and publications produced as part of the event, including media summaries, economic impact studies, or visitor analysis that supports the actual performance metrics reported in the final report.
4. Supporting evidence of performance metric data (e.g., ticket sales reports, headcount tracker, onsite survey, etc.)
5. Any other details that may be requested by the province.

The ministry reserves the right to request financial statements including but not limited to audited statement of revenues and expenditures or board endorsed or treasure-certified financial statements. Depending on the funding amount, you may be asked to provide the following:

a. For grants of less than $100,000:

- A board-endorsed or treasurer-certified financial statement confirming the revenues and expenses for the Experience Ontario 2026 funded project. The document must clearly outline, in a Note or Schedule, the amount of the Experience Ontario 2027 grant and the expenses funded.
- A representation letter from the recipient's Chief Financial Officer or most senior official confirming that the funding was used only for eligible expenses.

b. For grants of $100,000 or more:

- Audited statements of revenues and expenditures for the funded expenses prepared by a third-party Licensed Public Chartered Professional Accountant. The statement must clearly outline, in a Note or Schedule, the amount of the Experience Ontario 2027 grant and the expenses funded and include the auditor's opinion of assurance.
- A review engagement report providing the same information as above may also be accepted.

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.

Unexpected Circumstances

In the event of unavoidable and unforeseen events due to matters beyond the control of the organization, such as a natural disaster, in accordance with the transfer payment agreement or terms and conditions between the organization and the Province, the Province may consider waiving the organization's obligation to complete the Project as required and funds may be adjusted accordingly.

Appendix 1

Certificate of Insurance Instructions (not required at time of application)

- All grant recipient organizations are required to carry at least $2 million commercial general liability (CGL), including cross liability and contractual liability, per occurrence insurance coverage before the legal grant agreement can be executed.
- The insurance must be in the **legal name** of the recipient organization, the applicant company.
- The required insurance coverage limit can be made up of a primary CGL policy with a limit of $1 million and an umbrella liability policy (commercial) with a limit of $1 million for a combined limit of $2 million.
- It is mandatory that "His Majesty the King in right of Ontario, His ministers, agents, appointees and employees" be added as an additional named insured.
- The insurer must have a secure A.M. Best rating of B+ or greater, or the equivalent.

A Certificate of Insurance must:

1. State that the Named Insured is the legal recipient organization with whom the ministry has contracted.
2. Identify the dates of coverage. Recipients must carry the required insurance for the duration of the agreement and will be required to provide a renewed certificate if it expires before the agreements expiration date.
3. Identify the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming as an additional named insured, represented in the following language, **"His Majesty the King in right of Ontario, His ministers, agents, appointees and employees."** This phrase should appear on the certificate face under a memo heading or special note box.
4. The Certificate of Insurance must evidence (show on the certificate) CGL insurance on an occurrence basis with a limit of no less than $2 million dollars (can be made up of a primary CGL policy with a limit of $1 million and an umbrella liability policy (commercial) with a limit of $1 million for a combined limit of no less than $2 million.) and shall include:
    i. "His Majesty the King in right of Ontario, His ministers, agents, appointees and employees" added as an additional named insured
    ii. A cross-liability clause; and
    iii. Contractual liability coverage.
5. List the ministry as the Certificate Holder and include the ministry's mailing address in this section of the policy:

    Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming
    Tourism, Culture and Gaming Policy and Programs Division
    400 University Avenue, 5th Floor
    Toronto, ON M7A 2R9

6. Include a statement that the certificate holder (the ministry) will be notified of any cancellation or material change within 30 days.
7. Include the signature and date* of an authorized insurance representative.

*Signature can be an 'e-signature' for the purposes of the Certificate of Insurance.

Appendix 2

Tax Compliance Verification Instructions (not required at time of application**)**

Some organizations are required to confirm their good standing with tax laws to receive transfer payment funding from the province.

Confirmation of good standing must be shown through the completion of an attestation and separate tax compliance verification (TCV), which will both be reviewed before funds are provided.

An attestation and TCV must be submitted if the following apply:

- If your organization received cumulative transfer payment funding of $10 million or above from the province in the previous fiscal year or is entering into a TPA with a contract value of $10 million or above; and
- Prior to entering into a net-new agreement, an existing agreement that is being renewed or an existing agreement that is being amended to include new time-limited discretionary funding.

Please note that your organization is only required to submit this to the province once prior to entering into a new TPA, renewing an agreement or amending an agreement to receive new discretionary funding; and the attestation is valid one year from the date of submission.

That means, if you had submitted an attestation a year ago, you will only need to re-submit (after the previous attestation has expired) if you intend to enter into another TPA with the province (new, renewed, or amended).

Organizations may choose to complete and submit this form voluntarily.

Completing the TCV

For steps and information on how to verify your tax compliance status, please go to the Check your tax compliance status webpage.

Completing the Attestation on Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON)

1. For New Users
    - New users will need to create an Ontario.ca Account to log in to TPON.
    - The attestation is part of the registration process. Completion of the attestation can be done at any time and requires the organization to input information from a completed TCV check. Once the completed attestation is submitted, it will be reflected within your organizational profile.

2. For Existing Users
    - Log into TPON with your Ontario.ca Account.
    - Update your organization's information and move to the attestation section.
    - Complete the attestation. Completion of the attestation can be done at any time and requires the organization to input information from a completed TCV check. Please check with your funder if the attestation is required.

Appendix 3

Good Standing with All Applicable Ontario Environmental and Labour Laws

Organizations are required to confirm their good standing with all applicable Ontario environmental and labour laws to receive transfer payment funding from the province.

Confirmation of good standing must be shown through the completion of an attestation before funds are provided.

Applicants must undertake that (i) if selected for the contract award, will be in good standing with all applicable Ontario Environmental and Labour Laws at the time of entering into an Agreement and (ii) that they will take all necessary steps prior to entering into an Agreement in order to be in full compliance with those Environmental and Labour Laws at the time of entering into the Agreement.

For the purposes of this Attestation, **"Environmental Laws"** means all statutes and associated regulations administered by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and **"good standing"** with environment laws means that the organization has not been convicted by a court within the last year and has no ongoing appeals.

For the purposes of this Attestation, **"Labour Laws"** means all statutes and associated regulations administered by the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, and **"good standing"** in respect of labour laws means that the entity has not been convicted of an offence under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1, the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997* and the *Employment Standards Act*, S.O. 2000, c. 41 in a proceeding commenced under Part III of the *Provincial Offences Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 33, during the preceding year.

Failure to make that Attestation may result in the Applicant's disqualification.

To complete this Attestation on Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON), follow the instructions outlined in Appendix 2 above.