

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF



Canadian Gateway to the 1000 Islands

TOURISM ADVISORY PANEL Grant Program Guide



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1.0 What you need to know before you apply:

Before filling out the application:

Please read the entire Application Guide before completing the Application Form.

Program Overview

The Tourism Advisory Panel (TAP) funding is an application based, cost-sharing program designed to provide funding to projects and events that exhibit the capacity to draw more than 5,000 attendees, encourage the development of new tourism products, support tourism investment, and encourage more visitors to Gananoque. Events attracting under 5,000 attendees are eligible to apply for funding and will be reviewed utilizing the same assessment criteria. TAP will fund up to 50% of costs that are deemed eligible by the Advisory Panel. Multi-year (two years) events are eligible to apply, an intern report at end of year 1 will be required before the second year funding will be released.

Important Definitions

A **tourist/visitor** is an individual (including an Ontario resident) who travels 40 kilometers or more (one-way) to visit/experience a tourism product.

A **festival/event** is designed to both attract tourist/visitors to the Town of Gananoque and create community gathering opportunities.

Program Objectives

The Tourism Advisory Panel grant funding aims to support projects that will increase tourist visitation and visitor spending in Gananoque by:

- Hosting festivals/events that will take place in the Town of Gananoque, with a focus on culinary and cultural tourism, and outdoor activities.
- Developing innovative tourism products, events, and experiences.
- Build tourist visitation from 40+ KM's away.
- Increasing private sector tourism investment.
- Supporting tourism sector associations' effort to advance the competitiveness and growth of the tourism industry.

Program Priorities

Each application will be evaluated according to how well it demonstrates alignment with the Tourism Advisory Panel funding program objectives and priorities. The evaluation criteria is outlined under the section 4.0 Evaluation Process & Assessment Criteria. See Appendix 1 for the Funding Application Assessment Matrix.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate the following:

- Strong organizational and leadership capacity, including a history of tracking project metrics and experience in managing previous projects.
- A solid tourism-based rationale for the proposed project, including tourism industry analysis, research, future trends and linkages to regional and/or provincial tourism plans.

- Tourism/hospitality, business, and community partnerships that support the project either through cash or through in-kind contributions. Partners that support the project but do not contribute to cash or in-kind contributions are required to submit a Letter of Support.
- Innovative product development projects, new events and creative initiatives that will attract visitors/residents to Gananoque for short and long-term enjoyment.

2.0 Eligibility Requirements

Applications which do not meet the following eligibility requirements will not be considered.

Eligible Applicants

- Indigenous Organizations
- Not-for-Profit Organizations (with a clearly defined tourism focus)
- For-Profit Tourism Organizations

Application Procedures

The individual or organization must submit a completed and signed application form at Town Hall, 30 King St. East, no later than 4:00PM on **Intake #1** – February 23, 2026 **Intake #2** – June 8, 2026, or **Intake #3** – September 14, 2026.

Review Process

Applications for funding will be reviewed by the TAP Recording Secretary for completeness and then presented to the Tourism Advisory Panel (TAP) to ensure that the proposed event is in compliance with Town policies and bylaws.

In addition, to be eligible for the TAP grant-funding program, the project and applicants must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Events must take place in Gananoque.
- Applicant is not in default of terms and conditions of any current or previous grant or loan agreement with the Town of Gananoque.
- Multi-year events (2 years) are eligible to apply, an intern report at end of year 1 will be required before the second year funding will be released.
- Successful applicants must provide proof of insurance of at least 2 million commercial general liability coverage naming the Town of Gananoque as additional insured. If the event is taking place on municipal property the applicant is required to provide 5 million in commercial general liability coverage naming the Town of Gananoque as additional insured. (insurance is an eligible expense)
- Applicants utilizing Town owned parks/facilities are required to complete and submit the Special Events and Facility Booking Permit Application Form. This must be received before any TAP funding can be approved.
- Information provided in the application is true, correct and complete.

If successful, the applicant organization will enter into an agreement with the Town of Gananoque. The applicant must be the organization that will incur and pay the project expenses and report via the appropriate processes to the Tourism Advisory Panel (representing the Town of Gananoque) on usage of the funds.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses for the Tourism Advisory Panel grant funding include;

- Operating costs for organizations including administration, permanent staff salaries and on-going maintenance costs.
- Projects, festival/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).
- Marketing costs including advertising, promotion, branding, websites, and apps.
- Legal, audit or interest fees.
- Costs related to alcohol or cannabis.
- Events occurring outside the geographic area in the Town Gananoque

3.0 Funding Criteria

The Tourism Advisory Panel cannot guarantee funding to all applicants, nor ensure that the total amount requested by successful applicants will be granted.

The decision to fund all or part of an applicant's request will depend on its alignment with TAP program objectives, assessment criteria, as evaluated through the Funding Application Assessment Matrix (Appendix 1) as well as the overall demand for TAP funding.

4.0 Evaluation Process & Assessment Criteria

All Tourism Advisory Panel (TAP) funding applications will be evaluated by the Assessment Matrix (Appendix 1) and awarded by the panel. All applications will be notified of the funding decision.

5.0 How to Apply?

The Tourism Advisory Panel Funding Application can be downloaded from <https://www.gananoque.ca/town-hall/tourism-advisory-panel-funding> and is fillable online.

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 application.

- i. Tourism Advisory Panel (TAP) funding application completed in full.
- ii. Please provide 2 letters of support from organizations and partners that support the project.

6.0 Post- Project Report

An individual or organization that receives a grant from the Town (TAP) is required to submit a post- project report within two months after the completion of the project, which clearly articulates the success of the project, the number of attendees, proof of acknowledgment of TA funding supporting the event, photos of the event, and a complete final budget. If the report is not submitted, further requests for financial support will not be considered.

7.0 Town of Gananoque Recognition

An individual or organization that receives a grant from the Tourism Advisory Panel must clearly acknowledge the receipt of financial assistance by the Town and the Tourism Advisory Panel on all publicity or promotional materials. Logos and placement guidelines will be provided to approved applicants.

8.0 Application Submission and Deadline

There are three deadlines annually, each supporting events in a specific time frame. Please ensure that your application is in support of an event/festival that falls in the appropriate span of dates. Applications must be received at Town Hall by 4:00pm on the deadline dates indicated below.

- **February 23, 2026- Intake #1**

The deadline for projects taking place in Summer May 15 - September 14.

- **June 8, 2026 - Intake #2**

The deadline for projects taking place in Fall/Winter September 15 - January 14.

- **September 14, 2026- Intake #3**

The deadline for projects taking place in Fall/Winter 2026.

Applicants will be contacted to confirm completeness of your application and communicate whether your application requires clarification and/or additional documentation. Once your application has been confirmed as complete and presented to the Tourism Advisory Panel, the applicant will be notified of the funding decision.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that your application has been successfully submitted. If you do not receive confirmation or your grant submission within 48 hours, please contact the Recording Secretary at businesscoordinator@gananoque.ca or 613- 382-2149 ext. 1125.

All funding decisions by the Tourism Advisory Panel are final.

Questions or support?

Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm
Telephone: 613-382-2149 ext.1125
Email: businesscoordinator@gananoque.ca

Appendix 1

Application Assessment Matrix

FUNDING APPLICATION ASSESSMENT MATRIX

		Score
Project Description	Project description is clear with strong evidence of research and planning (schedule of events, location, date, time)	/6
20%	- Event fits with the applicant's mandate/strategic plan. - Timing of Event (peak vs. curb season). - Risk Management / Contingency Plan is thoughtful and demonstrates effective use of resources.	
Organizational Capacity	Provided evidence of organization's ability to successfully deliver the proposed event.	/3
10%	- Staff/Volunteer project responsibilities are manageable and well assigned per skills sets, experience, etc. - Applicant's history of similar events demonstrates effective problem solving, organizational growth, innovative ideas)	
Community Impact	Community Partners	/4
40%	- Demonstrated connection/collaboration with local tourism stakeholders (1000 Islands Visitors Centre, Thousand Islands Accommodation Partners (TIAP), 1000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce) - Partnership / Sponsorship roles, responsibilities and contributions are clearly identified (financial, in kind, etc.) - Included Letters of Support confirming participation / support.	
	Environmental Impact	/4
	- Will this event/project have a low environmental impact? - If not, does the applicant have a plan to improve or offset the impact?	
	Economic Impact	/4
	- Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM) Results. - Will the event attract visitors to increase tourist visitation/spending (e.g. multi-day events, venues, timing, etc.)	
Marketing Plan	Included description of promotional materials (online, in print)	/3
10%	- Clearly defined target market (i.e. define the ideal participant). - Identified key competitors and how the event/product is positioned to compete.	
Performance Measures	Project goals are clearly defined, relevant and feasible.	/6
20%	- Applicant has identified the tools that will be used to evaluate the success of the event (i.e. ticket sales, online engagement, audience reach, visitor sentiment, etc.) - Activities and Project Plan appears to have a high probability of success and is aligned with TAP Program objectives	
TOTAL SCORE		/30