

The safety of residents, employees and tourists is of paramount importance in all our efforts to promote your experiences and the region. Advertising may be suspended with little or no notice if directed by the Province of Ontario, local health units or municipalities.

Preserving the environment and social fabric in and around our communities is a priority for RTO7 and we will integrate "Plan Ahead/Book Ahead" messaging into all program criteria as appropriate.

RTO7 reserves the right to limit the number of programs/funds that one stakeholder may receive per year.

Festival Implementation Program Guidelines

General Program Overview

With over 500 identified festivals and events days across BruceGreySimcoe, it is important to focus on areas that present the best opportunities for tourism growth. While events play a significant role in shaping the culture of the communities within the region, support for **established and emerging festivals** (as defined in the [Resource Guide](#)) will be given priority.

You must also aim to:

- Increase visitor spending
- Help to reduce overcrowding in areas experiencing capacity issues
- Stay relevant during the COVID-19 era for example shifting to a virtual festival
- Increase length of stay and/or
- Increase return visits to BruceGreySimcoe.

Partner Eligibility

Who can apply

- Established businesses or organizations, including
 - Private tourism businesses who run festivals
 - Destination Marketing Organizations and Not-for-profit organizations who coordinate tourism festivals like the Lucknow KinClubs Music in the Fields
 - Chambers of Commerce/Business Improvement Areas that coordinate tourism festivals
 - Tourism Organizations/Associations that coordinate tourism festivals
 - Municipalities/Conservation Authorities that organize tourism festivals.
- You must be capable of demonstrating financial and other capacity to execute the festival.
- You must be located within Bruce, Grey or Simcoe Counties.
- Organizations outside BruceGreySimcoe may apply if the festival takes place in Bruce, Grey or Simcoe.
- Future funding will in part depend on timely completion of the project in question and the final report, as well as your responsiveness and communication.
- Organizations must be legally registered to operate in Ontario.
- **Note that as part of the application, partners will need to attest to having read both the Guidelines and [Resource Guide documents](#), including all informational links.**

Clusters

BIA's, Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce or DMOs are eligible for a maximum of five (5) approved festivals per year. Each festival would receive \$1,500 - \$2,000 towards social media marketing. RTO7 reserves the right to approve inclusion of each festival in the cluster into the Festival Implementation Program. Each partner must be able to demonstrate that **their** festival within the cluster has invested at least \$750 - \$1,000 per festival towards creating greater sustainability, improved quality or expanded offerings to attract a new audience. Each festival does not need to make the same financial investment but RTO7 will match the **actual** investment at a ratio of 1:2 (for every \$1 of partner expenses, RTO7 will contribute \$2 towards a social media ad campaign) to a maximum of \$2,000 each per festival.

Stakeholders may only apply for one virtual festival per year. Over the last year, the popularity of running events virtually has increased. RTO7 has seen limited success with this format. Staff are willing to work with partners to see if there are opportunities to shift festivals back to an in-person format. If this is not possible, then RTO7 will work with festival organizers to set realistic goals to determine the success of virtual festivals.

Festivals must apply at **least six (6) weeks** before the festival advertising campaign commences.

All festivals must occur within Bruce, Grey or Simcoe before March 31, 2022.

Project/Partner Requirements

Project Requirements:

The Festivals Implementation Program (FIP) is designed to **coach**, and **educate** festival organizers in BruceGreySimcoe to

- Make the festival more *sustainable*
- Increase the *quality* of the festival
- Where feasible shift to a virtual or hybrid version to stay relevant during the COVID-19 era
- Expand or develop an *existing or new* target audience to attend the festival.

The festival must be [Well Established or Regional/Emerging](#).

You must demonstrate how you will accomplish at least one of the items listed above by financially investing in the festival's operation or offering. You **must be able to match 50% of RTO7's contribution** through your investment (i.e. capital improvements, marketing to support a new geographic target, etc.). You **must** be able to prove these expenditures by providing receipts and proof of payment of the purchases with the final report. Please ensure that expenses are only used once when accessing any RTO7 program. Regional Tourism Organization 7 will support the festival by providing a minimum \$1,500 including HST and fees to a maximum of \$2,000 including HST and fees towards social media marketing with the support of RTO7's agency of record, The Aber Group.

You will be required to demonstrate how the festival will:

- Improve quality and sustainability
 - Does it attract support from the private sector?
 - Does it attract support from other partners including the local DMO, Municipality or other businesses?
 - Is there a risk management policy?
 - Are visitor and/or vendor surveys conducted?
 - Do you have a green policy?
 - Have you shifted to virtual to stay relevant in the COVID-19 era?
- Tell the story of place
 - Why is the festival unique to BruceGreySimcoe and the community?

- Increase attendance and/or geographic reach
 - Will it attract seasonal and second home owners and visiting friends and relatives?
- Increase tourist visitation and expenditures
 - Are visitors encouraged to extend their stay?
 - Are there additional opportunities to increase the economic impact? For example, ticketed VIP opportunities or a ticketed experience?
 - Are visitors encouraged to return to the community again?
 - Does it reduce seasonality and expand the operating season?
 - Does this attract people to come at a different time of day that is not considered peak time?

Partner Requirements:

- You must have all necessary permits in place (federal, provincial, municipal, etc.).
- You must carry liability insurance of at least \$2,000,000 and provide RTO7 with a certificate of insurance.
- You have a website, phone number and email address that are regularly monitored and contain current information.
- You must have a Facebook **PAGE** set up prior to applying.
- You must be the owner or have immediate access to the owner of the Facebook page.
- [Google Analytics](#) are activated on your (festival), or when appropriate, the Lead Partner's website.
- Your website **must** be updated with current content the program is launched. This includes point of sale portals.
- You must supply a minimum of five (5) to a maximum of ten (10) [high-resolution images](#) and/or one (1) video for use in the campaign.
- RTO7 feels that when visitors can plan or book ahead, not only does it help to improve the quality of visit to the region but also helps our stakeholder manage their business more effectively, therefore plan ahead/book ahead messaging must be included in your campaign.
- You will supply all names and email addresses of program contacts to be added to [Basecamp](#) (RTO7's project management program).
- You must commit to [monitoring](#) the Facebook/Instagram posts daily for the duration of the campaign.
- You must identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as *partners* on your website with an active link back to BruceGreySimcoe.com and Destinationontario.com respectively. RTO7 will provide these [logos](#).
- Social media posts related to the product or experience will include tags for @BruceGreySimcoe and @ontariotravel and use #brucegreysimcoe and #DiscoverON on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- You will identify BruceGreySimcoe and Province of Ontario as partners on all printed collateral and media releases.
- Please ensure your operator and festival listing on BruceGreySimcoe.com is [current and accurate](#).
- Please add your [operator listing](#) to Destinationontario.com
- You or someone from your organization must complete the free [BGS Tourism Service Excellence Program](#) by March 31, 2022.
- You are strongly encouraged to have at least one representative from your organization also complete the [It's Your Shift \(Sexual Harassment & Violence\) Training](#).
- You must join the [RTO7 E-Newsletter](#).
- You are required to complete a final report and supply copies of invoices and proof of payment demonstrating your \$750 - \$1,000 investment in the festival within 30 days of the completion of the festival. Failure to do this may result in ineligibility to participate in RTO7 programs in the future. Please ensure that expenses are only used once when accessing RTO7 programs.

Ineligible expenses

The following contributions are *not* eligible contributions for partners' financial outlay:

- Grants and flow-through to partners or other organizations
- Charitable funding

- Political parties or lobby groups
- Recipients of funding from Ontario Government programs such as Reconnect
- In-kind donations.

Partners who use third party agencies for social media marketing are eligible for this program however we will communicate/work with ONLY the lead partner and NOT the third-party agency. This program is first and foremost an educational opportunity for partners to learn about the social media marketing process. This program is not intended to be a grant.

RTO7 is not to be listed on invoicing from suppliers to the festival.

Administration Fee

Note: The Administration Fee will be waived for 2021/22; Environics Analytics postal code analysis will still be provided however upon request (free of charge). That said, please still read the links below to markets, [segments](#) and activities that RTO7 targets – note that we are monitoring these, and they are subject to change/updating as new patterns emerge. Please also see the tourism metrics we encourage you to consider tracking.

For a limited time, RTO7 will provide to the primary applicant [Environics Analytics analysis](#) of postal code data they provide (a minimum of 500 codes per application). For applications involving multiple partners, if desired, additional partners may have their postal code or mobility data (municipalities only) analyzed at the market rate of \$600.00 per partner. In some cases, partners wishing to undertake multiple projects may be able to combine their projects where appropriate to avoid incurring multiple administration fees. For questions relating to the Administration Fee, please click [here](#).

Data Collection

This data (provided postal codes are provided a minimum of 30 days in advance of your campaign) will be useful to you in your marketing targeting and product development. The markets, [segments](#) and activities that RTO7 targets i.e. the geographic audiences and types of tourists we are aiming to attract and types of activities we promote are outlined [here](#). The data you provide through postal codes will be aggregated across all partners in the longer term to form a clearer, more refined picture of the state of tourism within the region to inform your and our future decision making.

In addition to postal code data, the data that you may be required to include in your final reporting to assess performance will depend on the project and objectives in question. As data is the backbone of good tourism planning, the metrics that are considered most useful to RTO7 and/or stakeholders are elaborated on [here](#).

Program Opportunities

Social Media Marketing Support

Eligible partners will receive the following per festival:

- \$1,500 - \$2,000 including fees and HST of social media advertising directed to the festival's website home page or Facebook page through Facebook/Instagram sponsored posts.

Facebook/Instagram Sponsored Posts

- You must have a Facebook *page*.
- Maximum three (3) ad campaigns can be created.
- Minimum five (5), to a maximum ten (10) photos including logo must be provided and/or one (1) video maximum length of 60 seconds. See best practice guide for more [information](#).
- You must add the RTO7 agency of record, The Aber Group, as [advertisers to your Facebook](#)

- page.
- You are responsible for [managing](#) comments from the post daily.
 - You will receive a one-page report following the campaign that details
 - Impressions
 - Reach
 - Click Through Rate (CTR)
 - Total Clicks
 - Cost Per Click (CPC)
 - Total Spend.
 - Partners will receive support to develop the demographic and geographic targeting, as well as interests for each of the ad campaigns.
 - Partners will receive one (1) interim report approximately halfway through the campaign highlighting performance to date.

Please note that targeting will not change for the duration of the campaign unless results are far less than anticipated by the agency and/or RTO7.

Other RTO7 Programs

If you have cash that you would like to add to the campaign, to increase the size, please see the [Partnership Program Social Media Advertising program](#).

Tourism businesses interested in a social media marketing campaign who have operating expenses of at least \$1,000 can apply for the [Operations Implementation Program](#).

If partners are looking for visual assets (photo or visual), please apply through [RTO7's Video/Image Production](#) category under the Partnership Program portfolio.

Stakeholders looking to develop a new experience should look at the [Experience Implementation Program](#).

Stakeholders who have invested in capital improvements to their operation and are interested ONLY in social media marketing that will be crafted through RTO7's agency of record should apply for the [Tourism Implementation Program](#).

Stakeholders who have invested to improve sustainability (social, financial and environmental) and are ONLY interested social media marketing that will be created through RTO7's agency of record should apply for the [Sustainable Tourism Implementation](#) Program.

If you have expenses as a direct result of COVID-19, please see the [RTO7 COVID-19 Recovery Programs](#).

For the full list of programs please visit rto7.ca/programs or talk to RTO7 staff about options.

For Bruce County applicants

Bruce each provides grants to tourism operators. In many cases, RTO7 is able to leverage these grants with RTO7 funding programs. Please contact RTO7 staff and/or [Bruce](#) staff for more details.

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until December 31, 2021 or until the program is fully subscribed.

Applicants should be aware that RTO7, through funding agreements with the Province is bound by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Ontario) and that any information provided to the Province in connection with the Project or otherwise in connection with the Agreement may be subject to disclosure in accordance with that Act, as amended from time to time, and that any information provided to RTO7 in connection with their application, project or agreement may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the requirements of that Act. Partners to permit RTO7, if required, 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 purpose(s) intended