

Tourism Relief Fund - FAQs

April 25, 2022

RTO7 is administering the [Tourism Relief Fund](#) and following the rules as established by the Government of Canada and Federal Development Agency of Southern Ontario.

These FAQs are subject to update and change.

1. What is the goal of the Tourism Relief Fund?

The Tourism Relief Fund program is designed to enhance and create tourism experiences and support destination development. The applicant must also be a key supplier of the visitor experience, anchor destination or part of a tourism dependent community or cluster.

2. What types of projects are eligible?

Eligible Projects include the following:

- Creating, adapting, and enhancing protocols and permanent infrastructure to meet health and safety requirements to accommodate visitors;
- Modernizing operations, attractions, greening initiatives, and online sales services; Supporting businesses with the local promotion of tourism products, including digital and virtual reality experiences;
- Developing capacity for more inclusive tourism experiences (e.g., staff training to ensure welcoming, inclusive environments to diverse clientele, gender-neutral washroom facilities);
- Providing support to local communities to develop sustainable tourism plans based on research and market analysis, and designed to rebuild tourism confidence in communities;
- Supporting seasonal dispersion by equipping tourism SMEs to extend their product offering to increase visitation during the winter and shoulder seasons;
- Implementation of tourism plans that create or improve local assets, facilities, and planning for key infrastructure;
- Developing and enhancing tourism services and experiences; and,
- Implementing strategies to re-activate and animate downtown cores, main streets and business districts through activities, public art, and mixed use spaces.

3. What businesses are NOT ELIGIBLE for the TRF?

- **The funding provided through the Tourism Relief Fund excludes Restaurants, Retail Sector, Hotels, Sole Proprietors and Partnerships as per directives of the Federal Development Agency Southern Ontario**
- **Entities that have previously received or have confirmation that any of their previous Tourism Relief Funding applications through the 'Tourism Relief Fund' has been approved.**

4. Can I apply for a project that I'll do in the next year?

No. For this intake, projects must be completed between the dates of April 19, 2021 and December 31, 2022.

5. Can I apply using another format other than the digital application provided by RTO7?

No.

6. My business is not located in Bruce, Grey or Simcoe Counties or the Cities of Barrie and Orillia, can I apply?

No. Other [RTOs in Southern Ontario](#) are hosting the Tourism Relief Fund program, requirements differ in each RTO. Please reach out to the RTO that represents the region that your business is located in. RTOs involved in the Tourism Relief Fund [RTOs 1 – RTO 11](#).

7. I have an Indigenous, First Nation, Metis and/or Inuit owned Tourism Business. Should I apply through the program run by RTO7 or Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO)?

Indigenous, First Nation, Metis and/or Inuit owned Tourism Businesses have a choice to submit their application through ITO or RTO7. Please do not submit through both organizations, as the ITO application and program differs from RTO7's application and program. Please use application that is supplied by the organization that you are applying to.

“Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) is also delivering the Tourism Relief Fund in support of Indigenous tourism in the province of Ontario. If your business or organization is 51% or more Indigenous-owned and controlled, please visit [ITO's Tourism Relief Fund webpage](#) to apply and access additional program support. As the recognized voice for Indigenous tourism in Ontario, ITO's program is customized to the needs of Indigenous communities, organizations, and businesses. Together, ITO and RTO7 will work to support the growth of Indigenous tourism in the BruceGreySimcoe region.”

8. Are Indigenous, First Nation, Metis and/or Inuit owned Tourism Businesses required to be Incorporated?

No.

9. I can't afford to do this project unless I am successful in my application for funds. What should I do?

We recommend that you **do not** expend any funds prior to reviewing all documentation, and if your project is accepted and you have signed the Contribution Agreement. Note that reimbursement of this intake will not occur until sometime in July and August for the first installment of 50%.

10. I've been wanting to expand my facility for a long time – could I do that through this fund?

Funding is intended for projects that meet the spirit of the guidelines and applications for the Tourism Relief Fund-RTO7. Please review the applications and guidelines to determine if your project is eligible. Please contact RTO7 directly if you still have questions.

11. I have multiple projects that I have done (or am interested in doing) – can I submit more than one application?

No. Applicants are allowed to submit one application only. We recommend you combine your projects into an umbrella project with multiple components and outline each clearly in your project description.

12. I have multiple tourism businesses within the Region – can I submit multiple applications?

Yes. Each application will be subject to the adjudication process and the amount of funding available.

13. What amount is the 50% calculated on for Incorporated Private Sector and Indigenous, First Nation, Metis and/or Inuit owned Tourism Businesses?

For Incorporated Private Sector and Indigenous, First Nation, Metis and/or Inuit owned Tourism Businesses, e.g., to submit the minimum application of \$10,000 to be reimbursed for 50% (\$5,000), your project would cost \$10,000 pre-tax.

For Incorporated Private Sector and Indigenous, First Nation, Metis and/or Inuit owned Tourism Businesses, e.g., to submit the maximum application of \$200,000 to be reimbursed for 50% (\$100,000), your project would cost \$200,000 pre-tax.

For Incorporated-Not-For-Profits, Indigenous Bands and Municipalities to collect the minimum \$10,000, your project would cost \$10,000 pre-tax.

For Incorporated-Not-for-profit, Indigenous Bands and Municipalities to collect the maximum \$100,000, your project would cost \$100,000 pre-tax.

14. What documentation will I need to provide to prove payment of project expenses.

You will need to provide a listing of all the receipts and/or invoices with proof of payment. **DO NOT SUBMIT INVOICES AT THIS TIME. COPIES OF INVOICES WILL BE REQUESTED WITH THE FINAL REPORT.**

Example Of List

<u>Purchase Date</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Item Purchased</u>	<u>Cost before tax</u>	<u>Proof of Payment</u>
----------------------	-----------------	-----------------------	------------------------	-------------------------

15. I am filing out the application and I only have estimates/quotes of the cost to complete the work, how do I submit the application.

Please produce a listing of the estimated/quoted cost using the format below, as long as all expenses occur between April 19, 2021, and December 31, 2022 they are considered eligible. Please remember that the project has to be completed by December 31, 2022.

Example Of List

<u>Purchase Date</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Item Purchased</u>	<u>Cost before tax</u>	<u>Proof of Payment</u>
----------------------	-----------------	-----------------------	------------------------	-------------------------

16. I do not have the documentation/receipts/invoices required; do I need the documents?

Yes. Please get copies of documents/receipts/invoices **before** submitting your **Final Report**, failure to provide proof of purchase and payment will prevent you from receiving funds.

17. If my project costs exceed \$200,000, can I submit a second application?

No. You cannot submit more than one application.

18. Are labour costs eligible e.g., training costs for Diversity Training?

Labour is an eligible cost, but you will need to prove the additional labour, hours, wages, etc., were directly related to the project. Be aware that in documenting the extra labour incurred you may encounter privacy issues as RTO7 is subject to Freedom of Information requests.

19. Are labour costs eligible when you've received wage subsidies for a portion of the labour?

Yes, but only for the portion not already covered by the wage subsidy. Up to 50% of this portion may be covered.

20. Are fees paid to consultants to provide training eligible?

Yes. Receipts and or invoices will need to be provided as proof of the expense.

21. What is a Master Business License?

A Master Business License is the document that you would have received from the Federal or Provincial government that allows you to conduct business. If you cannot locate your Master Business Licence, you will need a copy of a government issued document that has your business number, business name and address on it (e.g., the top part of your HST return or other government documentation). This documentation is required.

22. Can I use these funds to promote local?

Local Promotion, e.g., Shop Local, is an eligible expense. We recommend that you contact RTO7 to review any possible leverage through our Partnership Programs. Do not rely on RTO7 programs to replace your portion of the funding.

23. Am I required to provide Historical Financial Statements and Revenue Projections?

Yes. Financial Statements will be required.

24. My business is a start-up, am I eligible?

Yes. Start-up businesses will be required to supply a business plan to verify the risk in awarding the non-repayable reimbursement.

25. Can I use receipts/invoices that I've already used (or will use) to receive government funding?

No. Those receipts/invoices are **not** eligible.

26. As an artist/musician or specific tourism festival/event management company, am I eligible for this fund?

Although not specifically listed, in some instances the above may be eligible if entities are incorporated.

27. Would we be eligible as a registered charity?

If the registered charity is an Incorporated Not-For-Profit, you would be eligible.

28. Can municipalities apply to this fund?

Yes.

29. Would a hair salon/spa qualify?

Although not specifically mentioned in the Tourism Operator definition, large tourism focused spas (e.g., Tourism Destination Spa) would be eligible. Salons or spas that are not tourism destinations for at least 50% of their revenue are not eligible for this fund. Another quick test to determine if you may qualify as a tourism destination salon or spa – do you advertise regularly to locations further than 40 km from your location? Performing salon or spa services for the occasional wedding **does not** make you a tourism destination salon or spa.

30. I own or manage a restaurant, retail store or hotel, am I eligible for the non-repayable contribution?

No. As directed by FedDev Southern Ontario.

31. Do I qualify if I work out of my home?

No. The Tourism Relief Fund is for expenditures for facilities/services that require the visitor and tourism employees to attend in order to experience or service the product/experience.

32. Can I submit for rental expenses (e.g., patio heater rentals)?

No. The program is for the purchase of items such as patio heaters not the rental.

Please read through the application carefully before submitting your thorough application.

Contact partners@rto7.ca if you have questions or require clarification.