

Interlake Tourism Association

Tourism Development Fund

Program Information & Guidelines

2026/27



This program provides financial support for projects that develop new or enhanced existing tourism products. Projects must contribute to the core Manitoba tourism experience, a unique blend of cultural and nature-based attractions and travel experiences.

What is Tourism Product/Development?

A tourism product or development is a good, a service, or a package of goods and services that helps visitors explore the destination they are visiting by offering them the chance to view attractions, shop for unique items, take tours, or purchase experiences.

This is **up to \$2,000.00 matching funds grant** that may include capital costs of up to \$1,000*

*Capital costs are allowed if they are directly related to bringing a new tourism product to market. The maximum allowed under the program for allowed capital costs (equipment costs, construction or acquisition of capital assets) is \$1,000.

Capital costs must be used for:

- Community-based projects that enhance the quality of tourist attractions
- Improve the market readiness of tourism products, or
- Develop travel experiences (immersive learning programs) that tell unique and authentic local stories.

The program encourages tourism development and the integration of regional tourism themes and unique local stories into tourism activities. **Preference will be given to projects that are focused on one of the following regional tourism priorities to support:**

- The Interlake's Culture and Heritage
- Manitoba's Indigenous Tourism Sector
- Trail-based and Nature-based Outdoor Recreation
- Agri-tourism and Culinary Tourism
- Winter and Shoulder Season Tourism

Note: Tourism products are much more than just the tangible souvenir visitors take

home to their friends and families; they are the experiences that they have in the Interlake and at your business or in your region.

As a tourism partner, you supply the tourism products. For example, say you are the owner and operator of the Mountain Biking Tour Company, which provides biking tours to active cyclists. Your tourism product would then be mountain biking tours or the purchase of equipment, i.e. new tires for a mountain bike (up to \$1,000.00).

What Types of Projects Are Eligible?

Projects that improve or expand the tourism sector in the Interlake and develop a unique theme are eligible. Project activities must support the development of a new tourism product or travel experience or the enhancement of an existing tourism product.

Project activities may include, but are not limited to, new or enhanced initiatives in the following areas:

- ❖ **Develop a new or enhanced tourism product, travel experience, or event** that builds upon a unique tourism theme and local story (includes projects that complement or will be used in conjunction with a regional initiative).
- ❖ **Develop a new event or enhance an event** that is positioned to attract a high volume of new visitors to an area during the off-season or shoulder season.
- ❖ **Materials and professional services that support new development or the enhancement of travel experiences** (immersive learning programs, testing).

Ineligible Projects:

- Reprints or second editions of any kind
- Maintaining current projects
- Established and recurring events and festivals
- Updates to websites, including structural changes and/or design changes
- Large-scale projects over \$100,000 will not be considered
- Maintenance or upkeep of equipment
- Expenditures incurred before project approval
- Expenditures not directly related to the project application
- Approved Capital Expenditures over \$1,000
- Out-of-region travel

Eligible Applicants:

- Local governments
- First Nation governments
- Community development organizations
- Rural/northern destination management organizations (DMOs)
- New community events & festival groups, tourism groups
- Small or emerging for-profit businesses employing fewer than three (3) employees
- Nonprofit entities involved with tourism development and promotion

Collaborative partnerships between tourism groups, DMOs, economic development and tourism-related businesses may also apply. Collaborative projects will require the application to be submitted by a lead organization identified as the project sponsor.

Note: All applicants and projects must be located within the Interlake Tourism Association service area. To view our [MAP](#) of the region to see if you're eligible.

Application Deadlines:

Application packages must be received before the deadline to be considered for the current intake.

Submission deadline	Funding notification date	Final Report Due
September 25, 2026	October 24, 2026	December 31, 2027
February 27, 2027	March 31, 2027	March 31, 2028
Previous Deadlines		
September 30th, 2025		December 31st, 2026
February 27th, 2026		March 31st, 2027

Application Steps:

- Review the Program Guidelines to ensure your organization and project idea fit.
- Start gathering the information needed to complete the funding application.
- Contact the organizations below to discuss project scope and eligibility.
- Fill out the application form.
- Fill out the required budget.
- Send the application before the deadline to:

Interlake Tourism Association
Tourism Development Grant 2025/26
ATTN: Dee King
admin@interlaketourism.com
Mailing Address: PO BOX 149 Grosse Isle, Manitoba R0C 1G0

Organizations to Connect with on Eligibility

Community Futures West Interlake iana@westinterlake.com 1-888-496-8932 BOX 68, Ashern, MB R0C 0E0 Regional Map	Community Futures East Interlake tdziadek@eastinterlake.com 1-800-378-5106 62 - 2nd Avenue, Gimli, MB R0C 1B0 Regional Map	Red River North Region admin@interlaketourism.com 204-322-5378 Box 149 Grosse Isle, MB R0C 1G0 Regional Map
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Frequently Asked Questions

Is There an Application Fee?

There is no application fee, but applicants must be members or awaiting membership (upon approval of the board) of the Interlake Tourism Association.

The membership fee must be paid at the time of application. To become a member, email: admin@interlaketourism.com.

How Much Funding Can I Request?

Applicants may request one grant per intake in amounts between \$500 and \$2,000.

While project budgets can exceed \$4,000, grant support will only cover up to 50% of the first \$4,000 in eligible costs. This means the maximum grant remains at \$2,000 or less, regardless of the total project cost.

What If My Project Is Very Large?

Applicants are encouraged to break larger initiatives into clearly defined phases, which may allow future applications for subsequent phases. Please note that projects with total budgets over \$100,000 will not be considered.

What Is the Matching Requirement for Funding?

All grants require a dollar-for-dollar match. For example, a \$2,000 grant request must be matched with a confirmed \$2,000 contribution from other sources.

What Types of Contributions are Eligible for the Matching Requirement?

Matching contributions must be confirmed at the time of application.

Sources of matching funds may include contributions from project partners, other levels of government, agencies, or the organization's revenues.

In-kind contributions from project partners are allowable for matching purposes but may not exceed 25% of the total project cost.

What is Considered An In-Kind Contribution?

In-kind contributions are non-monetary resources that partners and agencies provide to support a project.

In-kind support may include:

- Donated professional services
- Direct project costs (e.g., travel, meals, and accommodations)

In-kind contributions must be verifiable and reported at true market value, confirmed in writing by the contributing partner.

What Types of Matching Contributions Are Not Eligible?

Volunteer time is not an eligible matching contribution unless it is provided as in-kind from a business or employer that is covering the cost of their time.

Matching funds and in-kind contributions must be applied towards approved project activities and cannot be used for non-project activities or ineligible project expenditures.

When Must the Project Be Completed?

Projects must be completed and the final report submitted by the above Final Report Deadline, including the accounting of all expenditures and project outcomes.

How Will Projects Be Evaluated?

Projects will be evaluated and recommended for support based on the strength of the information included in the application package. Special consideration will be given to those who have *not* previously received program support. Applicants whose projects are recommended for support will be required to sign a funding agreement outlining the terms of the project. See full evaluation

Please wait to receive notification that your project has been approved and you have signed a funding agreement before incurring costs.

Note: Priority will be given to projects that benefit the region on an ongoing basis.

Why Does the Program Application Request Information About Marketing Plans?

The Program Application requests information about marketing objectives to assist in evaluating market potential, brand alignments and planned next steps. While applicants are not required to participate in Travel Manitoba Partnership Programs, grant-supported projects are required to demonstrate brand alignment in any content produced. This includes project-related marketing and promotional materials produced.

What is Brand Alignment?

Travel Manitoba has developed brand alignment guidelines for use by tourism businesses, attractions and destination marketers. Grant recipients are encouraged to further integrate these guidelines into their publications, websites, and other significantly visible activities.

How Are Decisions About Funding Made?

1. Program administration partners review the project applications to determine eligibility.
2. Funding approval recommendations are made to the Interlake Tourism Development Committee for review and then sent to the Executive Board for final approval.
3. Special consideration will be given to those who have *not* previously received program support.
4. The program administration partners notify the organization in writing of funding approvals.

Any ITA Member directly financially benefiting from the project applicants or partners will excuse themselves from the adjudication process.

Funding approvals are subject to formalizing a funding agreement that outlines key deliverables, budget and project timeline.

What Are the Application Assessment Criteria?

- Ability to meet matching funds
- Ability to properly complete the application/budget
- Alignment with regional priorities and direction
- Effective use of the funds and capacity to deliver

- Ability to be COMPLETED within the allowable time frame
- Innovation and uniqueness
- Alignment with provincial tourism brands
- Projects that tell unique stories and are tailored to a specific tourism theme
- Attracting visitors in the shoulder seasons
- Community support, identify partners/contributions
- Will the project move forward without this funding

In addition to the above, priority will be given to projects that demonstrate the following:

- Projects that establish saleable (market-ready) products
- Projects that establish travel experiences (immersive programs)
- Will benefit the region on an ongoing basis

Will the Information In My Application Be Shared?

Application information will be shared only by the program administration partners and the ITA Product Development Selection Committee.

How Is the Funding Awarded?

Funds will be awarded within 30 days of the application deadline. Funding instalments will be paid by cheque upon signing of the funding agreement.

How Are Funds Paid?

Funds are disbursed in two instalments:

1. The first instalment: 50% of the approved contribution will be released once a funding agreement has been formalized.
2. The final instalment: 50% of the approved contribution will be released upon approval of the final report at project completion.

What are the Reporting Requirements?

The final report will include a summary of activities undertaken, the project evaluation and project outcomes.

The final report must include an Expense Report that provides an account of how the grant funds were used. All costs must be incurred by the Final Report Due Date. (Include copies of all project receipts, clearly marked with what budget line item expense it reflects, and documentation for all matching contributions is required.)

What if I cannot meet the Reporting Deadlines as required?

You may submit the final report earlier than the deadline if your project timeline allows.

Failure to submit timely reports will result in ineligibility for funding payment and may

impact your eligibility for any future tourism grant intakes.

Failure to report on the project's progress will require repayment of contributions in full.

What Type of Recognition is Required?

Funding recipients shall display on all finished projects and through such media as grand opening events and media releases that the project is being funded through a contribution from the Interlake Tourism Association. Additionally, ITA's logo must be utilized when producing project-related communications and messaging.

Other Terms and Conditions:

All applications must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the applicant to perform the project (i.e. board chair or executive).

Upon request, an applicant must supply the program administration partner with a copy of the resolution or other documents demonstrating the applicant's authority to undertake the project and authorizing the official to sign on behalf of the applicant. Copies of your organization's constitution, bylaws, and an elected board may be requested.

Funding recipients must provide at least two weeks' advance notice of any significant public events undertaken.

Authorized representatives of ITA must be permitted reasonable access to accounts and records to assess the application and/or monitor progress. Accounts and records must be retained for a minimum of two years after the end of the fiscal year in which the funds are required, or longer as may be required by law.

The awarding of any funding is subject to and conditional upon the Interlake Tourism Association duly appropriating the funds payable in the fiscal year for which they are to be awarded.