

# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
4 FUNDING STREAM DESCRIPTIONS  
SAMPLE OF APPLICATION QUESTIONS

# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROGRAM



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The heartbeat of tourism is felt throughout the communities of Hamilton, Halton and Brant, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and the Mississauga of the Credit First Nation. Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association regularly works with industry partners to develop high-quality, new or enhanced experiences that will help drive new visits and spending in the region. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport allocates annual funds to The Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association (HHBRTA) to co-invest with partners in initiatives that align with HHBRTA's annual business plan.

Over time, HHBRTA has responded and adapted to the changing tourism landscape in our region, which has seen shifts in visitor priorities, interests, spending habits, demographic markets, and industry needs. Re-visiting our regional development role and re-calibrating our responsibilities became our priority. At the end of 2022, we began a journey to develop a 3-year Strategic Plan for Regional Tourism Development to guide our work to support and advance our tourism sector and regional visitor economy, starting in 2024 and going to the end of 2026.

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As such, The Heart of Ontario's 2024 – 2025 Partnership Program has been re-designed to support the areas of focus and goals outlined in our new 3-year Strategic Plan for Regional Tourism Development. With that in mind, the parameters of the program have changed for fiscal 2024-2025.

## OBJECTIVE

The HHBRTA's Partnership Funding program is designed to build on existing and introduce new tourism products that enhance the region's diversity of tourism attractions and competitive advantage by supporting the development of visitor experiences in the region.

1. **SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE VISITOR ECONOMY**
2. **INCREASE CONTENT OF VISITOR OFFERS**
3. **CONTINUE TO BUILD OUR REGION AS A TOURISM DESTINATION**
4. **MEET THE GROWING VISITOR NEED FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES**
5. **CREATE A SAFE AND WELCOMING DESTINATION THAT IS VISITOR READY**

## WHAT DOES “PARTNERSHIP” MEAN?

A partnership is defined as a qualified collaboration to work with one or more entities on a specific project that aligns with HHBRTA's business plan for the current year. In addition to financial support, organizations engaged in the Partnership Funding program benefit from HHBRTA's expertise and support in marketing, experiential and sustainable tourism development.

**OUR 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM HAS 4 NEW FUNDING STREAMS.**

## 4 FUNDING STREAMS

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)  
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
MARKETING DEVELOPMENT**

## KEY POINTS

**This program is not a grant.** The Ministry sets guidelines and restrictions on the expenses that HHBRTA as part of the Partnership Funding Program, is permitted to support.

All expenses must be relevant to the completion of the project. You are encouraged to reach out to Angelica Seraj, [angelica.seraj@theheartofontario.com](mailto:angelica.seraj@theheartofontario.com) with any questions regarding the eligibility of your project expenses.

A business entity can only submit **one (1) funding application per fiscal year**. If a second intake period is available in a fiscal year and an application was approved in the first intake, the business may not submit a second application.

Applying for multiple streams can be considered for a single project if the project can satisfy stream requirements. This would provide funding beyond limits of a single stream and support the project in achieving greater goals.



## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- In order to apply for HHBRTA's 2024 - 2025 Partnership Funding, projects must take place within the boundaries of the City of Hamilton, the Region of Halton (City of Burlington, Town of Milton, Town of Halton Hills, Town of Oakville), City of Brantford, County of Brant, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.
- All projects must take place and expenditures must be invoiced between April 1st, 2024 - March 31st, 2025.
- Potential eligible partners include municipalities, private businesses, entrepreneurs, business improvement areas and destination management organizations who provide tourism-related products and experiences to the public.

## INTAKE PERIODS

HHBRTA may host two intake periods depending on the number of approved submissions during the first intake period. *\*\* Projects can apply for multiple funding streams where relevant.*

**INTAKE 1 DEADLINE: MAY 3RD, 2024 AT 5:00PM**  
**INTAKE 2 DEADLINE (IF INTAKE 1 IS NOT FULLY SUBSCRIBED):**  
**SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2024 AT 5:00PM**

Notifications for Applications will be communicated via the corporate website - [www.hamiltonhaltonbrant.com](http://www.hamiltonhaltonbrant.com) - and shared through our monthly industry e-newsletter.

**Only one application submission per applicant will be considered. Multiple applications will not be permitted.**

## INTERESTED IN APPLYING?

Do you have a project that you think would be a good fit for the Partnership Funding Program in Hamilton Halton Brant?

Contact Angelica Seraj, to discuss your initiative, prior to applying.

## ANGELICA SERAJ

Industry Relations & Partnerships  
Manager

[angelica.seraj@theheartofontario.com](mailto:angelica.seraj@theheartofontario.com)  
905 297 - 0190 ex 105



# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROGRAM

## PARTNER CONTRIBUTION

Potential partners must minimally provide a 1 : 1 funding contribution for the eligible project. For example, a \$5,000 investment from the partner may apply for \$5,000 of funding from a relevant partnership stream(s).

Partners Contributions:

- Must be monetary in nature. In-kind contributions are not eligible
- CANNOT be supplemented from other Ontario Government programs, such as Experience Ontario, or Ontario Government agencies such as Destination Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Fund or other RTOs for the same project.

Approved projects may receive up to 50% of their eligible project budget, with a minimum matching contribution of \$1,000 and a maximum matching contribution of \$10,000 dependent on funding stream(s).

**Costs are EXCLUSIVE of HST.**

Some exceptions to the above matching will apply.

**All projects must be completed by March 31st, 2025.**

## ELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

RENTAL EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- OUTDOOR TENT
- PORTABLE TOILETS
- AUDIO/VISUAL
- TABLES/CHAIRS
- STAGE
- EVENT SPACE

ARTIST FEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- PERFORMER FEES
- LIVE MUSIC
- WORKSHOP FACILITATOR FEES

SOME PROFESSIONAL FEES, INCLUDING:

- GRAPHIC DESIGNER
- PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

MARKETING EXPENSES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM/GOOGLE ADS
- RADIO ADVERTISING

SIGNAGE (INCLUDING WAYFINDING SIGNAGE)

RESEARCH / DATA

## PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Ministry requires that HHBRTA be responsible/accountable for the administration of the project funds, meaning that HHBRTA cannot pay or reimburse the partner directly.

**Supplier invoices must be addressed to HHBRTA but sent to the partner for approval before payments by HHBRTA.**

The approved applicant will be invoiced by the Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association (HHBRTA) for their portion of the project. Upon receipt of the partnership invoice from HHBRTA, partners must submit payment within 30 days.

\*\* An Approved Project cannot commence nor project expenses cannot be incurred until payment has been received from the partner and proper supporting documentation (MOU\*, etc) has been signed and received by HHBRTA.

Note: All Paid work must be completed by third parties, and suppliers are to have a valid HST registration number, as required by Provincial Regulations.



## INELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- INSURANCE
- STAFF WAGES/SALARIES
- OFFICE RENT/LEASE
- OFFSITE STORAGE
- ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE
- OVERHEAD COSTS
- OFFICE SUPPLIES

CAPITAL EXPENSES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- INFRASTRUCTURE (EX. BRICKS AND MORTAR BUILDINGS, PATIOS, RENOVATIONS, ETC.)
- VEHICLE PURCHASES (EX.DELIVERY VAN)

### **REFUNDABLE PORTION OF THE HST OR OTHER REFUNDABLE EXPENSES**

FLOW-THROUGH FUNDING OR DONATIONS:

- GRANTS
- DONATIONS TO POLITICAL PARTIES OR LOBBY GROUPS
- ADVOCACY
- CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING
- IN-KIND DONATIONS

ALCOHOL IS NOT A REIMBURSABLE EXPENSE

COMPETITION PRIZING, PRIZE MONEY OR MONIES PAID TO COMPETITION PARTICIPANTS

**EXPENSES INCURRED PRIOR TO THE PROJECT PERIOD OR  
THAT DO NOT DIRECTLY RELATE TO THE  
APPLICATION/DELIVERY OF THE PARTNERSHIP FUND  
PROJECT.**

# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROGRAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS?

### 1. Can I apply for multiple funding streams and can I apply for multiple projects?

- A business entity can only submit one (1) funding application per fiscal year. If a second intake period is available in a fiscal year and an application was approved in the first intake, the business may not submit a second application. Applying for multiple streams can be considered for a single project if the project can satisfy stream requirements. This would provide funding beyond limits of a single stream and support the project in achieving greater goals.

### 2. What types of projects are eligible for funding?

- Examples of projects are provided for each Funding Stream, see individual Funding Stream descriptions.

### 3. How much funding is available, and what is the typical grant amount?

- Each Funding Stream has a minimum and maximum funding request. Depending if your project can satisfy multiple stream requirements, you would be able to apply for funding beyond the limits of a single stream but only to the maximum amount of the applicable stream(s).

### 4. Can I apply for funding for a project that has already started?

- No, your project must be within the April 1st 2024 - March 31st 2025 timeframe. In terms of reporting, we will consider projects that go into market/production after the March 31st 2025 deadline, however all payments must be paid no later than March 31st, 2025.

### 5. How do I submit an application?

- Applications will be submitted via SurveyMonkey. The link for the application form can be found on HHBRTA's corporate website: <https://hamiltonhaltonbrant.com/partnership-opportunities/funding/>

### 6. When is the application deadline?

- HHBRTA may host two intake periods depending on the number of approved submissions. The first intake period deadline is May 3rd, 2024 at 5:00PM. The second intake deadline (if intake 1 is not fully subscribed) is September 27th, 2024 at 5:00PM.

### 7. How will we know if there is second intake period?

- Notifications for Applications will be communicated via the corporate website - [www.hamiltonhaltonbrant.com](http://www.hamiltonhaltonbrant.com) - and shared through our monthly industry e-newsletter.

### 8. How and when will I be notified if my application was successful?

- HHBRTA will email the Primary Project Contact as early as May 21st 2024 with the results of their application. If further details are required, applicants will be notified by email and have up to 5 business days to provide us with the required information. If for any reason you have not heard from HHBRTA by June 30th, 2024, please consider your application unsuccessful.

## INTERESTED IN APPLYING?

Do you have a project that you think would be a good fit for the Partnership Funding Program in Hamilton Halton Brant?

Contact Angelica Seraj, to discuss your initiative, prior to applying.

## ANGELICA SERAJ

Industry Relations & Partnerships  
Manager

[angelica.seraj@theheartofontario.com](mailto:angelica.seraj@theheartofontario.com)  
905 297 - 0190 ex 105



# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING STREAM DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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Minimum Request: \$1,000

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Maximum Request \$5,000

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Funding Stream aims to support Hamilton Halton Brant Tourism Operators to develop, enhance or promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within their communities.

**The program will directly support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through business practices in an effort to create a safe and welcoming workplace/space for workers/visitors.**

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- **Enhancing Your Business:** To support operators in enhancing their environment, product and/or business best practice by becoming inclusive.
- **Raising Awareness:** Increase awareness and education focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility leading to positive business and societal change.
- **Forging Partnerships:** To foster collaboration and partnerships between organizations, communities, and stakeholders to address systemic inequalities and promote inclusive business practices.

## EXAMPLES:

- Implementation of inclusive practices to enhance tourism initiatives (product, service or experience) leading to an increase visitation directed at marginalized and or underrepresented groups.
- Capacity-building initiatives that enhance the skills, knowledge, and resources of organizations working in the DEI space. **I.e. Becoming Rainbow Registered, Digital Assets**
- Research and data collection projects aimed at understanding and addressing gaps and inequalities within specific populations or sectors.
- Training and professional development programs that promote business cultural competency, inclusivity, and anti-discrimination practices. **I.e. Visitor Services/Staff Sensitivity Training**

## ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Projects must demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within their activities and outcomes.
- Priority may be given to projects that focus on marginalized or underrepresented communities, including but not limited to racial and ethnic minorities, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and newcomers to Canada.

# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING STREAM

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Minimum Request: \$1,000



Maximum Request \$5,000

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Sustainable Tourism Funding Stream is designed to support HHB Operator initiatives and projects that promote sustainable practices within the tourism industry. HHBRTA is a certified Sustainable Destination by GreenStep Solutions.

**The program will directly support the tourism industry in an effort to increase the benefits and reduce negative destination impact caused by tourism to meet the growing visitor needs and expectations for the responsible traveller.**

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- **Promote Sustainability:** Encourage the adoption of sustainable tourism practices leaving the destination better than how it was found. Some examples include: building a sustainable supply chain reducing carbon footprint, resource conservation, waste reduction, and the promotion of eco-friendly transportation options.
- **Reduce Over-Tourism:** Support the development of a new or enhanced experience occurring in the “shoulder season” and winter (November - April).
- **Curation of Cultural Experiences:** Fund initiatives that contribute to the curation of experiences/storytelling related to Indigenous, First Nations and Canadian cultures, traditions, and heritage sites.
- **Combat Climate Change:** Implementation of sustainable environmental, social and/or financial initiatives that contribute to combat climate change correlating to the Tourism Visitor Economy.
- **Environmental Conservation:** Fund projects that focus on the protection and restoration of natural ecosystems, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable land management practices that correlate to the Tourism Visitor Economy.
- **Build Leadership Competencies:** Drive awareness and reprioritize sustainability as a business best practices for your operations.

### EXAMPLES:

- Ecotourism initiatives that promote responsible travel and environmental stewardship.
- Community-based tourism projects that empower local communities and preserve cultural heritage.
- Conservation efforts aimed at protecting natural habitats, wildlife, and marine ecosystems.
- Capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of tourism stakeholders, including training in sustainable tourism practices, and tools that support sustainable practice.

### ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Projects must demonstrate a clear commitment to sustainability, community/local engagement, and positive socio-economic impacts that correlates to the Tourism Visitor Economy.
- Applicants must adhere to all relevant local, national, and international regulations and guidelines related to sustainable tourism development and environmental conservation.

# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING STREAM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

**Minimum Request: \$1,000**



**Maximum Request \$10,000**

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Product Development Funding Stream aims to support the creation and/or enhancement of unique and authentic tourism products and experiences that showcase the cultural, natural, and heritage assets of Hamilton, Halton and Brant.

**The program will directly support the tourism industry in an effort to increase the visitor economy and content of visitors offers, while strengthening our region as a tourism destination.**

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- **Diversification of Tourism Offerings:** Encourage the development of new and/or enhanced innovative tourism products and experiences that differentiate the destination from competitors and appeal to a diverse range of travellers.
- **Enhancement of Visitor Experiences:** Improve the quality and authenticity of visitor experiences through the creation of memorable and immersive tourism offerings that engage, educate, and inspire travellers.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster partnerships between tourism stakeholders to co-create experiences that reflect the unique identity of the destination.
- **Economic Development:** Generate economic benefits through the development and promotion of experiential tourism products.
- **Understanding Your Visitor:** Conduct research and data collection projects aimed at understanding your visitor, target market, motivators and interest or future planning.

## EXAMPLES:

- New or enhanced tourism product or experience.
- Integration or exploring usage of new technology. **I.e. AI processes, Virtual Reality, Applications**
- Performing or buying market research and data analytics. **I.e. Feasibility Studies, Economic Impact Studies**
- Creating visitor data collection processes. **I.e. Visitor Satisfaction Surveys, Visitor Attendance Studies**
- Focus on 4 season offerings.

## ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Eligible expenses include third party expertise to conduct research studies
- Research Projects must be completed by December 15, 2024
- Multiple partners may provide support for the project



# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING STREAM MARKETING DEVELOPMENT

**Minimum Request: \$1,000**



**Maximum Request \$10,000**

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Marketing Development Funding Stream is designed to support initiatives that enhance the marketing and promotion of HHBRTA's tourist destinations, attractions, and experiences.

**The program will directly support the tourism industry by strengthening our region as a tourism destination, increase the visitor economy, and encourage longer stays and/or potential for repeat visitation.**

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

- **Market Expansion:** Expand the reach of marketing efforts towards new, under developed markets to attract a diverse range of travellers.
- **Brand Enhancement:** Strengthen brand identity and positioning through cohesive and compelling marketing messages that showcase unique attractions, culture, experiences and sustainability values.
- **Product Promotion:** Promote specific tourism products, experiences, and events to increase visitor engagement, driving bookings and visitation to the region.
- **Partnership Development:** Foster collaboration and partnerships between tourism stakeholders to leverage resources and maximize marketing impact.
- **Digital Innovation:** Embrace digital marketing strategies, including social media marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and website development, to engage with travellers and encourage visitation.

## EXAMPLES:

- Development and implementation of marketing campaigns targeting specific markets, including print, digital, and multimedia advertising.
- Creation and distribution of promotional materials such as brochures, maps, videos, and photography showcasing attractions, activities, and experiences.
- Website development and enhancement, including the creation of mobile-friendly, user-friendly websites with engaging content and interactive features.
- Social media marketing campaigns, influencer partnerships, and content creation initiatives to engage with travellers and build brand awareness, loyalty, retention and expansion..

## ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Marketing activities must include 40Km+ visitors and not rely on local marketing alone.
- Created content may be used by HHBRTA for future marketing purposed with relevant credit.

# HHBRTA 2024 - 2025 PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROGRAM APPLICATION QUESTIONS

## BUSINESS INFORMATION

Legal Business Name  
Business Operating Name [If Different]  
Business Address  
Company Website  
Number of Years in Operation  
Primary Type of business  
Primary Contact / Secondary Contact  
Operation Location [Specific to Region]

## BUDGET INFORMATION

Specify the amount of funding you are seeking, per funding stream (if applicable):  
What is the total budget for your project?  
Have you secured any other sources of funding for this project?  
How will the requested funding be utilized to support the project's objectives effectively?

## PROJECT IMPACT AND EVALUATION:

What are the expected outcomes and impacts of your project?  
How will you measure the success of your project? Please outline your evaluation methods.  
How do you plan to track and report progress throughout the project duration?  
Are there any potential risks or challenges associated with the project, and how do you plan to mitigate them?

## PROJECT INFORMATION

Proposed project start date: (no earlier than April 1, 2024)  
Proposed project end date: (no later than March 31, 2025)

Project Description: Provide a full project description that clearly identifies:

- Project objectives
- Key project activities
- How these activities will achieve the intended project objectives
- How the project will support your organization and tourism development in your community.
- What does project success look like?

Project Summary (used for promotional/media purposes) (max:50 words)

What program objectives does your project satisfy (select all that apply)?

- Support and Strengthen the Visitor Economy
- Increase content of Visitor Offers
- Continue to Build our region as a Tourism Destination
- Meet the growing visitor need for responsible tourism experiences and practices
- Create a safe and welcome destination that is visitor ready

Please elaborate on how your project applies to the priority(ies) above.

Who is the target audience or beneficiaries of your project?

Are there any partnerships or collaborations with a different organization/party involved in the project?

Which Funding Stream(s) are you applying for: (Select all that apply)

## DEPENDING ON THE SELECTION ABOVE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL APPLY BASED ON THE STREAM SELECTED.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI):

Describe how your project relates to improving DEI?

Sustainable Tourism:

Describe how your project adds to sustainability, community, and/or positive social-economic impacts?

Product Development:

Is this a **new** or **enhanced** Product/Experience?

Is this experience meant for a **day visitor** or are you encouraging **overnight visitation**?

What is the targeted season for this experience?

Marketing Development:

Do your Marketing Activities include 40KM + [Yes/No]

Please identify the target market audience(s) that are 40km+ from your location/event that you plan to market in:

## INTERESTED IN APPLYING?

CONTACT:  
ANGELICA SERAJ

Industry Relations &  
Partnerships Manager

angelica.seraj@theheartofontario.com  
905 297 - 0190 ex 105

