

The Woolwich Way – Destination Development Fund

Application Guide

Definitions

Conflict of Interest:

Includes:

- Any applicants shall declare to the Township as part of their proposal any situation that may be either a conflict of interest or a potential or perceived conflict of interest with their proposal.
- No member of the Township and no officer or staff member of the Township are, will be, or shall become interested, directly, or indirectly, as an applicant or otherwise in the performance of any contract resulting from this solicitation or in the supplies, work, or business in connection with any such contract or in any portion thereof, or in any monies to be derived there from.

Council: Council of the Township.

For-profit: A business or organization with the goal of making a profit for the sole benefit of an individual or a group of individuals.

Incorporated: Entities incorporated under either federal or provincial legislation. This can include either non-profit or for-profit organizations.

In Good Standing: A business or organization is not in arrears with the Township of Woolwich. This can include but is not limited to property taxes, utilities, and/or accounts receivable.

Municipal Accommodation Tax: A direct tax of four (4) per cent of the Purchase Price on room nights sold, under 30 consecutive days or less.

Not-for-Profit: Not-for-profit corporations are organizations that provide products or services to improve or benefit a community and are incorporated as a non-profit either provincially or federally.

Senior Management Team: Includes the Chief Administrative Officer and Directors within the Township of Woolwich.

Tourism Product: A tourism product is considered any product, service, event or offering that is intended to attract visitors.

Township: The Corporation of the Township of Woolwich.

Visitor: A visitor is considered anyone who visits Woolwich from more than 40 kilometers away who is not making a routine trip.

Background

On April 9, 2019, Council approved the establishment of a by-law for implementation of a mandatory 4% Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) for hotels and airbnb's in the Township of Woolwich effective July 1, 2019. The revenue sharing model approved by Council included 50% to Explore Waterloo Region, 40% to the Township, and 10% to the Region of Waterloo. Explore Waterloo Region receives 100% of Airbnb revenues. The Township's portion of MAT revenues are directed to:

- strengthening the local tourism economy;
- encouraging overnight stays;
- supporting strategic community and cultural development initiatives; and
- enhancing the Township's reputation as a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive destination.

On March 19, 2025, the Township of Woolwich officially implemented the [Municipal Accommodation Tax \(MAT\) Administration Policy](#) and approved the 2025 MAT funding allocation to community organizations.

The Woolwich Way Destination Animation Fund will provide support for tourism product development projects, the "Woolwich Way." This funding stream provides funding to Woolwich businesses and organizations who increase and diversify Woolwich's tourism experiences and further develop Woolwich as a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive destination. Successful applicants to this funding stream will demonstrate new or enhanced tourism products that focus on creating experiences that extend visitors stays in Woolwich.

All funds are subject to the requirements outlined in the [Municipal Accommodation Tax \(MAT\) Administration Policy](#).

Funding Stream Selection Criteria

The evaluation committee will consider the following when selecting successful applicants:

- Unique tourism product development experiences that are done the "Woolwich Way"

- A focus on partnering with businesses and organizations in Woolwich and the Region
- A focus on sustainable tourism practices
- A focus on accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Encourage and result in overnight stays

Eligibility

Businesses and organizations located within the municipal boundaries of the Township of Woolwich, including for-profit and not-for-profit businesses and organizations. Successful applicants must be able to provide a minimum financial contribution to the value of 15% of the proposed project's total funding ask of up to \$4,000. All applicants must be in good standing with the Township of Woolwich.

All successful projects must:

- Be achievable within the calendar year of the year the fund is applied for.
- Reach 30% visitor demographics for the program, project, or event.
- Develop or enhance tourism products.

Eligible Costs

- Capital costs that enhance visitor experience
- Equipment purchases and rentals
- Materials and supplies that enhance the visitor experience
- Signage and wayfinding. Note: signage and wayfinding must meet standards in line with existing wayfinding signage and also meet all Township and Regional standards.

Ineligible Costs

- Alcohol purchase, distribution, and licensing;
- Awards, prizes, and raffles;
- Building and other permits and associated fees;
- Donations;
- Individuals or unincorporated entities;
- Legal, audit, or interest expenses;
- Lottery licences;
- Marketing and advertising costs;
- Operating expenses (i.e. hydro, water, rent, staff, etc.);
- Political organizations or contributions;
- Pre-existing deficit funding (grant or loan);

- Regular staffing expenses (i.e. offsetting costs of an existing position);
- Township of Woolwich or Region of Waterloo fees or procedures (i.e. special event permits, staff time, etc.);
- Website or application development;

Structure and Process

The Woolwich Way – Destination Development Fund is an annual fund that will only accept applications during the timelines outlined. Successful applicants cannot apply for this fund the following year but they can apply the year after as long as there is demonstrable enhancements and differences in the project (i.e. if successful in 2025, you can't apply until 2027). Applications can be submitted online or in written format (if specifically requested).

Businesses and organizations who receive other Township of Woolwich grants are not eligible for The Woolwich Way – Destination Development Fund. Any grantees must not have a conflict of interest.

Examples of a Successful Project or Program

Examples of what could be a successful project or program are, but are not limited to:

- Walking tours
- Culinary experiences/tours
- Art and culture experiences
- Virtual reality experiences
- Festival or event development
- Shoulder season experiences
- Tourism product packaging

Submitting a project or program from the list above does not guarantee funding.

Application Process

Applications for The Woolwich Way – Destination Development Fund will be accepted from Tuesday, August 5, 2025 through Tuesday, August 19, 2025 at 11:59PM, EST. Applications can be submitted online or in written format (if specifically requested).

An evaluation committee will review all applications before making a funding decision.

Funding Decision

An evaluation committee will review all applications following the closing of the application period. Funding awards will be announced within two months following the application closing date. All applicants will be contacted directly with the status of their award and successful applicants will receive 50% of the funds within 30 days of the award notice. Successful applicants must complete the project that was awarded funding, by December 31, 2025. Any invoices dated prior to the launch of the funding stream or already paid invoices will not be covered. The final 50% of the awarded funds will be provided upon completion of a reporting document.

Reporting Requirements

All successful applicants must submit a report within 30 days following the completion of the project or program. Details that will need to be collected and reported on are as follows:

- How funds were spent – all copies of receipts must be provided as well as invoices specifically detailing how funds were spent.
- How the project or program benefited local tourism
- A success story and/or testimonial (if applicable) supporting the program/project
- Visitor (40km or further away) impact of the program or project
- Overnight stay impact of the program or project
- Overall tourism industry impact
- Partnerships/collaborations created or enhanced
- Local jobs created or retained through the program/project
- Local community feedback on the program or project
- Other KPI's or data points that would be relevant to measuring the impact of the program
- Future of the project or program
- If the project or program is a success

In addition, the successful applicant must submit proof of their 15% contribution from their own means. This documentation should include proof of the matching funds, such as bank statements, receipts, or other relevant financial records. If reporting documentation is not submitted by the date outlined above, the successful applicant must return all awarded funds to the Township.

Supporting Documentation

- Application Form

- Budget Document
- Signed Contribution Agreement

More information

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