

Tourism Vaughan Festival and Sports Events Hosting Grant and Partnership Funding Program (“Host in Vaughan Grant”)

Application Guidelines

2026

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About the Fund

The Host in Vaughan Grant, established in 2024, aims to enhance tourism across Vaughan by encouraging visitation and participation at local events. It also encourages strong partnerships between stakeholders in the Vaughan tourism sector. This program aims to grow existing events and projects in Vaughan and attract new activations to the city.

Fund Objective

Consideration will be given to projects that meet the following objectives:

- Delivery of events, product packages and thematic campaigns that support tourism in Vaughan
- Demonstrated traction for the project to draw participants and visitors into Vaughan from greater than 40 kilometres away
- Events, activities and programs must take place in the city of Vaughan
- Proposed events and activations encourage residents to participate in their community and generate a sense of pride of place in the city of Vaughan
- The project promotes inclusivity, cross-cultural collaboration and participation of a diversity of groups and organizations in the city of Vaughan

Funding Categories

Projects will be assessed under one of the following Funding Categories:

1. Sports Events (sanctioned)
2. Business Conferences
3. Tourism Partnerships
4. Major Festivals and Events
5. Community Activations

Funding Category descriptions:

1. Sports Events (sanctioned)
 - Include a minimum of two (2) consecutive days of amateur competition at a minimum of seven (7) hours per day
 - Occupy a minimum of 50 room nights (#rooms x #nights) in recognized Vaughan paid accommodation providers
 - Are events sanctioned by a recognized sport body or if an emerging sport with no official status, the sport has official rules/regulations that are being adhered to
 - Events are typically characterized as a regional, provincial, national, international or world level competitive, ranking event (as opposed to a participation or festival focused event)
 - E-sports events that satisfy the above requirements are considered eligible

2. Business Conferences

- The event must be a conference, meeting and/or event that takes place over two nights or more. Some exceptions may apply.
- The event must attract a minimum number of 250 delegates and/or occupy a minimum of 50 room nights (#rooms x #nights). Some exceptions may apply.
- Annual General Meetings are not eligible.

3. Tourism Partnerships

- Non-event based project (see other categories)
- Projects must clearly demonstrate a direct ability to draw visitors into Vaughan from greater than 40km away
- Marketing plan includes paid promotion targeting communities outside of Vaughan, York Region.

4. Major Festivals and Events

- May include festivals and events, that are celebrations of art, culture, food, music, dance, recreation, sport and other special attractions
- Are open to the public, accessible and welcoming to Vaughan residents and visitors
- Marketing plan includes paid promotion targeting communities outside of Vaughan, York Region.
- Have an attendance greater than 2,500 unique participants in-person
- Typically takes place over multiple days.
- Have a minimum overall event-specific budget of \$50,000

5. Community Activations

- Lead applicant is a registered not-for-profit corporation
- May include festivals and events, that are celebrations of art, culture, food, music, dance, recreation, sport and other special attractions
- Are open to the public, accessible and welcoming to Vaughan residents and visitors
- Have an attendance greater than 500 unique participants in-person
- Have a minimum overall event-specific budget of \$12,500
- Priority for consideration will be given to Vaughan-based organizers

Available Funding

Available funding per project, for the funding term, as well as the total funding envelope are outlined in the table below (note: all references to funding amounts are in Canadian Dollars):

Category	Available funding per project/applicant	Total funding envelope
Sports Events (sanctioned)	Up to \$15,000 or up to \$25,000 for International	\$60,000
Business Conferences	Up to \$5,000 or up to \$10,000 for National/International	\$40,000
Tourism Partnerships	Up to \$10,000	\$40,000
Major Festivals and Events*	Up to \$10,000	\$50,000
Community Activations	Up to \$5,000	\$40,000

* 20 per cent of the total funding envelope in this category will be reserved for new-to-Vaughan events that were not hosted in Vaughan in the prior year

Funding requests will be considered and allocated based on evaluation from the Fund Review Committee. The number of organizations selected will be determined by the strength of the applicant pool and the availability of funding. Applicants should be able to demonstrate their experience and capacity to run the type of event or activation being proposed through examples of prior projects. Funding must be used to complement and leverage other resources (cash and in-kind support such as donations and volunteers) to support the project.

The total Funding Envelope per category may be subject to change, depending on available budget and evolving strategic tourism priorities. All funding is subject to availability in Tourism Vaughan's budget, as Tourism Vaughan determines in its sole discretion.

Funding Term

Funds for each project will be allocated for a term, from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026. There is no funding available for multi-year projects. **Projects must be delivered within the allotted timeframe.**

An organization may only qualify to receive funding for one project during each funding term.

Eligibility

Organizations must meet the following criteria in order to receive funding:

- For Event-based proposals, the applicant must read, review, and understand the relevant [Hosting an Event in Vaughan](#) guidelines
- Project venue/location must be confirmed by the venue/property management in order to qualify for the release of funding
 - Note: If your event will be at a City-owned facility or park, please book the facility through [Recreation Services](#) prior to applying for a Special Event permit.

- Approval of a [special events permit](#) (if applicable) shall be made at least fifteen (15) business days prior to the event and must be confirmed by the By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services department of the City of Vaughan in order to qualify for the release of funding
 - Note: If the presence of paid duty officers is required, this must also be secured and confirmed in order to qualify for the release of funding – confirm this early as certain weekends may already be fully booked by [York Region Police](#) – which may force an organization to change their dates
- Organizations proposing a project at the \$10,000 or greater support level – must provide third-party audited financial statements (income statement and balance sheet) of the organization for the most recent fiscal year-ended that demonstrates the organization is in good financial standing
- For organizations proposing a project at less than \$10,000 support level – must provide board/management prepared financial statements (income statement and balance sheet) of the organization for the most recent fiscal year-ended that demonstrates the organization is in good financial standing
- Have established and documented financial management systems in place
- Have a mandate that benefits Vaughan's residents and/or business communities
- Project operates within the boundaries of Vaughan and provide services to residents/businesses of Vaughan (note: for activations that may have elements that take place outside the City, only the activation elements taking place in Vaughan will be given consideration in terms of impact)
- Have evidence of insurance coverage, including a minimum \$2/\$5 million liability coverage acceptable to the City of Vaughan
- Comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code in hiring practices and in the provision of all services
- Comply with relevant federal, provincial and municipal laws, bylaws and regulations including *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as amended
- Not be in unresolved litigation with the City of Vaughan or affiliated with an entity engaged in unresolved litigation with the City of Vaughan. "Unresolved litigation" means any unresolved dispute between the City of Vaughan and any other party or related party adverse in interest, including third party and cross-claims, where a legal proceeding has been commenced for an injunction, a mandatory order, a declaration, or the recovery of money
- Must be in good standing with Tourism Vaughan and the City of Vaughan as per above, but also is up-to-date with any prior final reporting requirements from past funding cycles.

In addition, for organizations applying to the **Community Activations category**, organizations must:

- Be a registered Community Service Organization (CSO), in good standing with the City of Vaughan Recreation Department; and/or,
- Be incorporated as a not-for-profit/non-profit organization or registered as charity by the Canada Revenue Agency for the purposes of the *Income Tax Act* (Canada); and,

- Be governed by a Board of Directors that has been democratically elected and has remained active in the last few months

Collaborations between organizations is encouraged. **At least one partner must meet the eligibility criteria.**

Organizations must **submit only one application form**. Collaborative applications with two or more eligible organizations will be considered, however only one organization must serve as the applicant. Collaborative proposals should clearly define roles of each organization and any funding amounts to be transferred by the applicant to the collaborator.

Ineligible Organizations

The following organizations are not eligible for funding:

- Organizations acting in the capacity of a funding body, exclusively for fundraising drives/events
- Building managers and property owners
- Individual residents
- Grant making organizations
- Entities that promote, endorse, or any other way support:
 - Tobacco, vaping, cannabis, hookah
 - Illicit substance use
 - The support of, or involvement in the production, distribution, and sale of weapons and other life-threatening products
 - Terrorism
 - Businesses and offerings that are not family-friendly or may be considered graphic, explicit, offensive, obscene, or that promotes violence, hate, discrimination, intolerance, substances
 - Any activity or organization which, if associated with the City, may constitute a reputational risk for the City as determined by City staff
- Religious organizations unless the program/project being funded:
 - is open to all, regardless of faith, race, or sexual orientation
 - will not incorporate religious teachings or participation in religious services/rites
- Political organizations, including political parties, campaigns, advocacy or lobby groups
- Schools (private, charter or independent, fee-based schools), and public pre-schools, elementary or secondary schools
- Organizations in major deficit or debt positions

Eligible Project Costs

Funding can only be used for eligible **direct personnel and non-personnel project costs** for the proposed project. Eligible projects will be funded up to 40 per cent of the total costs of the project to a maximum per category based on the levels outlined in the 'Available Funding' section.

Direct personnel and non-personnel project costs:

Direct personnel costs for delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project:

- Management and coordination – up to 50% of staff salaries for time allocated to the proposed project

Direct non-personnel costs:

- Purchased services from contractors or consultants specifically relating to the delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project (i.e. communication, translation etc.)
- Supplies and materials purchased or rented to use in the delivery of the project

Restricted and Ineligible costs

- Applications will not be considered for the following:
 - Purchase of property
 - Religious or political activities or proselytizing
 - Event sponsorships and fund-raising activities
 - Annual General Meeting events
- Funds must **not** be used to support overhead and administration costs (e.g. accounting, legal fees, rent, utilities, etc.)
- Up to 50% of the funding request may be used for direct personnel costs for any project related position, including Project Management/Coordination staff time
- Funding must be used to complement and leverage other resources (cash and in-kind support such as donations, volunteers), with a minimum of 60% of eligible direct personnel and non-personnel costs required for the project funded by other resources. Applicants are required to identify all funding sources in their project budget in their application

The Application Process

The application process includes three stages:

1. Please complete the online application form at
https://cityofvaughan.smartsimplebk.ca/s_Login.jsp - during the application intake period. TVC Staff will review and confirm eligibility of proposed projects. If TVC Staff determines that an Application is incomplete, Tourism Vaughan may reject the

application in its sole discretion. Tourism Vaughan is not required to seek clarification or further information from any applicants.

2. The Application will be sent directly to eligible proposals to be completed and submitted for review by the Fund Review Committee.
3. The Fund Review Committee makes recommendations about the applications received to the Tourism Vaughan Board. Final decisions on funding approval are made by the Tourism Vaughan Board. Decisions of the Tourism Vaughan Board are final.

Please note:

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the coordinator of the Host in Vaughan Grant before applying, to discuss the proposed project and application process
- Incomplete applications will be disqualified
- Each applicant can only submit one application per intake period. If more than one application is submitted by the same applicant, the applicant must decide which one application to submit for consideration during that intake period.

How to Apply

The Application form involves completing the following:

Section 1: Contact Information: Organization/Community Group,

Provide the name and contact details of your organization as well as any collaboration partner organizations.

Contact Information: Project Lead

Provide the name and contact details of the individual that will be your organization's key contact and project lead for this project.

Contact Information: Secondary Contact

Provide the name and contact details of an alternate contact from your organization who can be contacted related to this application and proposed project.

All contact information will be used for funding application purposes only.

Section 2: Project Information

Provide a title/name for the proposed project; the specific location(s) where the project will take place; and the start and end date of the project. All approved projects are expected to be completed by December 31, 2026.

Section 3: Project Overview

This section should provide an overview of your proposed project.

This should include:

- A. *History of the Project* – has your organization successfully delivered this project in the past or will this be the first time this project gets delivered? If yes, describe how many years the project has been delivered and a brief overview of the project's evolution from then until now. And what, if anything, do you plan to do differently this time around?
- B. *Project Goal* – state what you hope to accomplish by the end of this project.
- C. *Target Audience* – identify the specific community or group you hope to impact through the proposed project. Define that target audience by highlighting relevant characteristics of this group, including but not limited to demographics, values, attitudes and behaviours, geographic area(s) of the target audience. Additionally, provide the number of people that will be impacted by your project.

Section 4: Project Delivery

The answers in this section should clearly explain why your organization/community group is well-suited to deliver this project. Here you will also explain how the project will be delivered by identifying who else is working with you and what their role in the project will be. You will also be required to outline the proposed work plan (a summarized version) by listing the key steps required to carry out your project.

- A. *What skills, expertise, experience and accomplishments make your community group/organization well-suited to deliver this project?* For this question, consider the following: (150 words)
 - What is the mandate of your organization/community group?
 - What are the goals and objectives of your organization?
 - What are some of the current or past programs/services your organization/community group or members of staff have provided and/or delivered to local communities?
 - What are some community-based projects, past grant/funding awards or other special accomplishments that could help with your delivery of this project?
 - Do your staff members have any special skills or experiences that would help ensure project success?
- B. *Identify all stakeholders in the proposed project and how each of them will be involved in its delivery.* Define the following groups and explain the specific role each group will play in your project: (150 words)
 - your target audience/community – highlight general details, number of people, any characteristics, behaviours or barriers that could help or hinder the project
 - if applicable, any other organizations or partners that you will work with to help deliver the project. This would include groups or individuals who could influence the success of your project
- C. *List the key steps your group/organization will take to deliver your project.* Outline a high level project work plan by listing the key dates for milestones that are expected to be

completed as the project progresses. Your work plan outline should provide a clear picture of how the estimated amount of funding needed for your project will be used. (150 words)

D. *Describe what paid advertising tactics you have committed to which target communities outside of Vaughan, York Region.* Specify the publications, platforms, geographic markets, and total amount of spending budgeted on these initiatives to directly promote your proposed project. (150 words)

Section 5: Project Impact

Explain the potential impacts and outcomes of your proposed project, how your group/organization expects to measure and quantify these impacts and how those results satisfy the objectives of the Host in Vaughan Grant.

A. *What are the intended impacts and/or outcomes of the proposed project?* Outline the expected results of your proposed project. The project outcomes should be specific, measurable and relevant to the project and the objectives of the Host in Vaughan Grant. Include anticipated short and long-term results. (150 words)

B. *What are the estimated tourist impacts and/or outcomes of the proposed project?* How many visitors from outside 40km do you anticipate engaging with. How many will be travelling from outside of Ontario? And how many will be travelling from outside of Canada? Provide an estimate of the total number of hotel room nights (at a hotel in Vaughan) that visitors will occupy as a direct result of participation in your proposed project. Have you already identified hotel partner(s) that will be offering a group block or offer for participants in your project? (if yes, please name them).

C. *How will your group/organization measure (quantitatively and/or qualitatively) these impacts and/or outcomes?* Explain how you will monitor and evaluate the success of the project's delivery. Discuss the different methods, strategies and techniques you will use to capture both qualitative and quantitative data. (multiple choice: on-site surveys, post-event survey, advance registration/ticketing, other).

D. *How do the intended impacts and or/outcomes align with the objectives of the Host in Vaughan Grant?* Describe how the intended outcomes of your project satisfy one or more of the core objectives of the Host in Vaughan Grant as outlined in the 'Fund Objectives' section of this Application Guidelines document. (150 words)

E. *What are the potential risks to this project and how will these risks be mitigated?* Identify the potential issues that would threaten the delivery and success of the project. Highlight the steps that will be taken to lessen these risks. For example, presence of emergency first-aid, or paid-duty officers or security. (150 words)

Section 6: Budget Projection

Provide a preliminary evaluation of your proposed project budget. This is the sum of your funding request through the Host in Vaughan Grant and any other funding sources your group/organization may be directing towards this project. Other funding sources refer to monetary donations, other grants or funding your group/organization has been awarded for the proposed project or any financial contributions from any project partners that may be working with you.

Your project's additional funding sources (*i.e.*, all other funding apart from the grant requested from the Host in Vaughan Grant) should represent no less than 60% of the eligible project costs. In other words, the grant request from the Host in Vaughan Grant can only cover **up to 40% of the total eligible project costs**. And therefore, your total project budget should be the sum of your funding request from the Host in Vaughan Grant combined with all additional funding sources.

For example: An organization is contributing (a) \$20,000 out of their own reserves to pay for project related costs. The organization also has a project partner that is contributing (b) \$5,000 towards the project. The organization anticipates receiving another (c) \$10,000 in other grant funding to support the project. Finally, the organization hopes to qualify for a grant from the Host in Vaughan Grant in the amount of (d) \$5,000. Therefore, the total project budget is \$40,000 – calculated as (a) + (b) + (c) + (d). In this example, the \$5,000 grant requested from the Host in Vaughan Grant represents 12.5% of the total \$40,000 budget. Because 12.5% is less than 40%, the request is eligible.

- i. Other funding sources do not have to be confirmed at the time of the submission of the Application. If you have or think you may have other funding sources, please indicate the agency or provider, the amount (approximate value if unknown) and whether or not the funding source has already been confirmed or is expected (*i.e.*, your group/organization is in the process of applying/has applied and you are awaiting a decision). If the other funding sources are not confirmed at that time, any un-confirmed amount may be excluded from your total project budget, which may impact the amount of grant funding the organization is eligible for.
- ii. List any in-kind donations or support that will be directed towards the project. In-kind contributions are the cash equivalent of goods or services (*e.g.* volunteer time) donated to the project. Only list in-kind donations or support that are confirmed at the time of submission of the Application.
- iii. Provide a breakdown of your proposed budget for each of the listed budget categories. Briefly outline the associated actions, activities and/or items that would fall into that category. Where the total dollar amount is unknown, please estimate the amount to the best of your ability. Fill out the funding request, other funding sources (if applicable) and total project budget columns accordingly.

If a certain budget category does not apply to your budget, enter N/A in the description. You may also add other budget categories as needed for your specific project.

Submitting the Application

- Application Submission Deadline: a minimum of two months prior to the event.
- Please complete the online application form at https://cityofvaughan.smartsimplebk.ca/s_Login.jsp - during the application intake period.
- HARD COPY SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please do not send a printed version of your application. Thank you for helping us reduce waste!
- If Tourism Vaughan determines that an Application is incomplete, Tourism Vaughan may reject the application in its sole discretion. Tourism Vaughan is not required to seek clarification or further information from any applicants.
- The City of Vaughan accepts no responsibility for any reason whatsoever, including computer system failures of either the Applicant or the City of Vaughan's service provider, if the Applicant is unable to submit its Application before the Application Submission Deadline, and the Applicant agrees that the City of Vaughan shall have no liability for delays caused by internet/network traffic, degraded operation or failure of any computer system element, including, but not limited to, any computer system, power supply, telephone or data connection or system or software or browser of any type whatsoever.
- It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that it can access and exchange data with the City of Vaughan's service provider's computer systems electronically and that it allows sufficient time to successfully access and share data with the City of Vaughan's service provider's computer systems, having regard to the possibility of delays caused by internet/network traffic. Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring that they plan their access to the City of Vaughan's service provider's computer/servers, so that the Applicants can reach the City of Vaughan's service provider's computers/servers, and submit their Applications, before the Application Submission Deadline.

Next steps:

- All funding is subject to availability in Tourism Vaughan's budget, as Tourism Vaughan determines in its sole discretion.
- Tourism Vaughan reserves the right to reject any or all Applications. In addition, Tourism Vaughan also reserves the right to approve a lower funding amount than the amount requested in any or all Applications.

If Approved for Funding

Tourism Vaughan will promote the project, as applicable, on its channels, which may include social media, website, online events calendar or other channels.

Role of the Fund Recipient

Successful funding recipients must submit a final report and evaluation of their project within one month of the end of the event/initiative. Evaluations will determine whether funding recipients have:

- adhered to the project plans submitted during the application phase; and
- made progress towards or achieved the Host in Vaughan Grant goals and objectives

Funding recipients will be provided with standardized reporting requirements and required to enter into a written agreement in form and content satisfactory to the City of Vaughan in its sole discretion as a condition of funding. The City of Vaughan will only advance funds to recipients who accept to enter into such an agreement. Funding recipients will also be asked to provide photos or video documentation of their project activities.

Acknowledgement of Funding

Funding recipients must acknowledge the financial assistance provided by Tourism Vaughan in program materials and signage, including any promotional materials used in project activities. The City of Vaughan and Tourism Vaughan will need a minimum of 2 (two) business days to approve the use of its marks on marketing and promotional materials. This requirement will be discussed in greater detail after a funding decision is made and incorporated into the previously-mentioned agreement.

In addition, for event-based projects, organizations will be asked to specify how Vaughan elected officials, Mayor and members of Council will be invited to an opportunity to speak if there are welcome remarks, including approval requirement on where in the agenda that occurs, in adherence with the events protocol of the City of Vaughan.

Funding Disbursement

The project venue/location must be confirmed by the venue/property management to qualify for the release of funding. In addition, approval of a [special events permit](#) (if applicable) must be confirmed by the City's By-law and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services (BCLPS) department to qualify for the release of funding. Tourism Vaughan and the City of Vaughan have the right to attend the event site or pre-event site visit if required by BCLPS or any other City of Vaughan department without prior notice.

An initial disbursement of 50 per cent of the approved funding amount will be released to the recipient no earlier than 45 days prior to the start of the project and only once the recipient has met the following criteria:

- successful execution of the grant funding agreement
- confirmation of venue/location
- confirmation of permit requirements
- demonstrated proof of insurance satisfactory to the City of Vaughan

The remaining 50 per cent will be held back and will only be released upon receipt and successful acceptance of the final report including satisfactory performance against key

deliverables reported in the organization's post-event reporting in combination with confirmed visitation numbers.

If a proposed project does not or cannot proceed as planned, the entire amount of approved funding will be cancelled, and any portion of funding already disbursed will immediately need to be repaid in full.