



CENTRAL COUNTIES TOURISM

2023-2024 Partnership Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

The CCT Partnership Program has become a huge success, with twice as many partnerships being submitted than the organization has money to fund. We anticipate the 2023-2024 fiscal to be no different. To this end, the organization is implementing some changes to ensure funds are available for projects taking place throughout the year and is focusing on projects that are going to have the biggest impact on the visitor economy.

We are also moving our application and reporting process online. This will streamline our ability to review applications and aggregate reports. All applications will be reviewed and rated based on several criteria including:

- 1) The number of visitors the project will attract over its lifespan (works for both short-term festivals/events and longer-term experiences).
- 2) The number of opportunities for the visitors to spend additional time/money in the region (how are you going to tell them about other things to see and do).
- 3) The number of other stakeholders who are actively participating in the delivery of the project.
- 4) How you plan on tracking the overall success, including economic impact, of the project.
- 5) Your history partnering with CCT and delivering and reporting against project objectives. (Don't worry. If you haven't worked with us before, you have a clean slate!).

In order to qualify for partnership, at least one person from each organization in the partnership application will be required to complete Central Counties' [Tourism Ambassador Program](#). This self-guided, interactive course will provide insights on how to best be prepared to welcome visitors and ensure they have a great time in your community. The course can be completed at your own pace and takes about an hour end-to-end.

New for 2023-2024

- 1) All potential applicants must contact their Industry Relations Manager (see below) prior to starting their online partnership application.
- 2) Maximum program funding allocations per intake period.
 - a. \$79K Intake 1
 - b. \$100K Intake 2
 - c. \$100K Intake 3
 - d. \$50K Intake 4
 - e. \$50K Intake 5
- 3) Funding amount is up to 40% of total project cost up to a maximum \$20K per partnership application.
 - a. CCT would partner up to \$4,000 on a \$10,000 project or
 - b. Up to \$20,000 for projects that are \$50,000 or greater
- 4) All applications and reporting will be completed and submitted through the [CCT Partnership Application Portal](#).

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Intake Periods

CCT recognizes that in today's environment it is difficult to plan a whole year out and that is why we have created five different intake periods. Applications must be submitted prior to the close date. Late submissions will not be accepted, but we may be able to re-open your incomplete application so you can submit it for the next intake.

Intake 1: March 24, 2023 for projects beginning April 1 – May 31, 2023

Intake 2: May 15, 2023 for projects beginning June 1 – July 31, 2023

Intake 3: July 15, 2023 for projects beginning August 1 - September 30, 2023

Intake 4: Sept 15, 2023 for projects beginning October 1 – December 31, 2023

Intake 5: December 15, 2023 for projects beginning January 1 – March 31, 2024

Notes: In the past few years, there have been more amazing partnership proposals than CCT has had budget for. We do our best to support as many stakeholders as possible which may result in CCT partnership commitments of less than 40% and CCT being fully committed and unable to partner on all projects.

Why partner with CCT?

Having Central Counties as a partner means more than just financial support. There are many programs, initiatives and opportunities that your organization can utilize to help grow your capacity and success. The expectation is that your organization will be engaged with Central Counties and take advantage of the opportunities we provide. That is why a requirement of the program is to start with a meeting with your Industry Relations Manager.

Durham Region	Lisa John-Mackenzie	ljohn-mackenzie@centralcounties.ca
York Region	Sara Sterling	ssterling@centralcounties.ca
Headwaters Region	Sarah Gratta	sgratta@centralcounties.ca

They will review your project idea with you and also provide you information regarding marketing/communications opportunities and all of the resources Central Counties has to help you grow your business.

Organizations that are just looking for the funds and are not interested in learning / understanding how their project fits within the tourism landscape will not be considered for this program. We truly are looking for organizations that want to help grow the visitor economy which, in turn, will make our communities vibrant places to live and work.

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HOW DO I BECOME A PARTNER (How do I apply?)

Step 1 **Review**

Look at your proposed project through a tourism lens. Is your project going to help you drive and retain visitors from outside of your community? Is there opportunity for them to spend money while they are here? Is there a way to measure the success of your project and at what points are you going to share your stories with CCT?

Step 2 **Connect with your Industry Relations Manager**

Have an open conversation about your project and use us as a resource to connect you with other organizations who will a) help make your project become a destination and b) benefit from being part of the project. Review the [Partnership Application Template](#) ahead of connecting with your Industry Relations Manager to get a sense of the information required for the application.

Step 3 **Project Budget**

Knowing the limits of support that CCT can provide, determine whether your project is viable. The Industry Relations Manager may be able to point you to other funding opportunities and it is important to note that the CCT partnership program cannot be leveraged against any other provincial grant monies. However municipal and federal grants can be used as the “partner commitment” to access our funds.

Step 4 **Complete the Tourism Ambassador Program**

On the application, you will need to fill out the name(s) of the staff member(s) that completed the program. CCT staff will be able to verify the information during project review.

Step 5 **Complete the Online Application prior to the Intake Deadline**

You can access the partnership application via the [CCT Partnership Application Portal](#). Once you have created an account*, you can login to begin completing the application, invite collaborators to assist with the application, save your progress, and return to it at any time. Once completed, be sure to submit the application ahead of the deadline. Your Industry Relations Manager can assist you with any questions you may have about the process.

Step 6 **Project Evaluation**

Each project is evaluated by Central Counties’ Partnership Committee with input from the Industry Relations Managers and other CCT staff. It is our goal to provide funding confirmation within two weeks of the intake close. Please review the [Partnership Reporting Template](#) for a better understanding of the information that CCT is looking for to help tell the story of partnership successes.

NOTE:

**If you previously created an account for the CCT-Tourism Relief Fund, you will be prompted to update your eligibility responses before being granted access to the 2023/2024 Partnership Program application.*

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Expectations of Successful Partners

Sharing your Success Stories

An important thing to note is that our program is not a grant. Central Counties can help your project with more than just money. We have a wealth of knowledge and contacts that can make your project even more successful.

Communication is key with a partnership. CCT wants to know how things are going as you hit project milestones. More importantly, CCT wants to share your story of success across the region to motivate others to think about investing in their business to help grow the tourism economy.

Reporting

We want to celebrate your success and can't do that if we don't hear the results of the project. Your efforts and the risks you take to invest in something you believe in, could very well motivate others to create new opportunities that grow the visitor economy.

What you do is important to us and helps us tell the collective story of creativity and entrepreneurship throughout the region. Every partner must submit to CCT a final report via the CCT Partnership Online Portal. Please review the [Partnership Reporting Template](#) to better understand the metrics that will be required.

Finances

CCT will partner with eligible organizations for up to 40% of the project costs. In recent years, there have been more projects submitted than there have been funds available. We may not be able to accommodate all projects to the full 40% level.

Each partnership is different and, as such, CCT provides three different financial options for the partner to choose from. Please keep in mind, that for all partnerships, the partner commitment is spent first, followed by CCT's commitment. It is very important that you have a good sense of your overall budget so you maximize our partnership investment.

For visualization, let's assume that your total project is \$10,000. Central Counties has agreed to partner in the project and provide an investment of \$4,000. Here are the three ways we can work together on finances:

CCT-led: Your organization provides \$6,000 to CCT. The organization then submits \$10,000 in project invoices that CCT will pay directly to vendors.

This takes some of the management pressure off of your organization, but it will be your responsibility to provide each one of your suppliers our vendor guidelines.

Split: Your organization pays supplier invoices of \$6,000. They submit those invoices along with proof of payment to CCT and then can submit the remaining \$4,000 in invoices directly to CCT for payment under the CCT-led system.

Partner: Your organization pays \$10,000 in invoices for the project. All invoices, along with proof of payment, are submitted at the end of the project and CCT reimburses the organization their \$4,000 commitment

Please review **APPENDIX I** to fully understand the payment guidelines and requirements.

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APPENDIX I – CCT PARTNERSHIP PAYMENT GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

In order for Central Counties Tourism to proceed with payment of expenses towards your partnership project smoothly and in a way that satisfies CCT's audit requirements, certain criteria must be met and documentation methods adhered to. This document outlines what you, the Partner, is required to do in order to proceed with the payment portion of your partnership contract. We at Central Counties thank you in advance for your adherence to these guidelines.

1. Prior to any expenses being paid out by CCT under your partnership, you must sign and return your partnership contract. CCT will not proceed with payment until a signed partnership is received.
2. For *Financial Options 1* and *2*: Your contribution invoice from CCT (*Option 1*) or the amount of your portion of funds (*Option 2*) must be paid in full before CCT will begin to pay any invoices on your behalf.
3. For *Financial Options 1* and *2*: When you receive invoices that you would like CCT to pay, please forward them immediately by email for payment. Please do not hold and batch invoices before sending. Because CCT considers invoices payable within 30 days of receipt of invoice by CCT, any delay in forwarding invoices for payment may result in delayed payments to your vendors. The number of emails you send to CCT in a day, even if there are multiple emails at a time, is not a problem for us.
4. For *Financial Options 1* and *2*: Please notify your vendors that CCT pays by direct deposit, and that they need to provide their banking information or a void cheque along with their invoice. If an invoice is received for us to pay that does not include this information, it will be returned unprocessed, and may be resubmitted when this information has been obtained. Please note that CCT will not hold onto these incomplete invoices until such time as banking information is received. They must be resubmitted in full.
5. For *Financial Options 2* and *3*: All expenses/invoices must be paid for the full amount of either your contribution portion (*Option 2*) or the full partnership value (*Option 3*). This document must be submitted in a single file (or as close to it as possible if email transmission limits file size) at the same time. CCT will not begin to contribute its portion of the partnership funds until your respective portion of the financial obligation is fulfilled.
6. For *Financial Options 2* and *3*: Copies of your original invoices/receipts must be submitted with proof of payment. Proof of payment can be in the form of:
 - a credit card or bank statement (with irrelevant, unrelated or sensitive information blacked out) showing:
 - corresponding charge, and
 - account holder name
 - a cancelled cheque
 - a statement or printout from your accounting system showing:
 - vendor invoice entry, and
 - payment entry showing payment details

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7. For *Financial Options 2 and 3*: You as the partner will be the sole business/organization contributing payment and requesting reimbursement. CCT will not reimburse you for expenses paid by employees, volunteers, or other businesses/organizations participating in your event or project. If you are faced with this situation, you as the partner must reimburse the employee/volunteer/participating business first. Once you have done that, your reimbursement will then be considered a reimbursable expense as part of your project, and may be submitted along with proof of payment.
8. For *Financial Options 2 and 3*: Please provide a summary spreadsheet, attached as an Excel document, that lists details about your expenses (amount, vendor, etc.), and cross-references it to the corresponding payment document details. CCT does not provide or require a set template to be completed. A simple summary document is acceptable.
9. For *all Financial Options*: You have applied and were approved for Partnership Funding in the amount that you expect to spend. It is CCT's assumption that, without our contributing funds, you would still have spent your portion of funding on your project. CCT allocates all expenses to your portion of the funding first, before contributing its portion of the funds. In the event that you spend the entirety of your funding allotment, CCT will not pay 40% of the lesser total. It will instead contribute the balance of expenses after your full portion has been paid.
10. CCT understands that circumstances can change mid-project and will provide you with an Addendum Request Form should you:
 - a. Need to change your financial option
 - b. Need to change any aspect of your partnership contract including, but not limited to, a project shift or redirection of funds

Once received and approved, the addendum will be added to the partnership contract rather than creating an entire new one.