



# TOURISM WHISTLER EXPERIENCES FUND APPLICATION CRITERIA

**In order to create a more balanced year-round tourism economy, Tourism Whistler has increased its investment into spring and autumn to grow visitation during lower-occupancy months.**

**In order to promote further development of off-peak periods, and ensure there is an attractive offer for visitors, an Experiences Fund was created to support initiatives that produce new activities or experiences during these times. The fund will be utilized to test these new experiences, however once an experience is deemed successful, the business or sector is encouraged to continue promotion and delivery of the experience independent of funding.**

## EXPERIENCE FUND GOALS

Tourism Whistler has launched the Experiences Fund to:

- Further attract visitors to Whistler who will meaningfully engage in our destination
- Support Tourism Whistler's shoulder season strategy, including driving increased visitation and longer length of stays during off-peak periods
- Incentivize member businesses to collaborate on creating new or enhanced tourism experiences that are unique and authentic and align with the Whistler brand
- Facilitate change or improvement to the existing visitor experience
- Increase positive user-generated content and sharing of experiences on visitor social channels

## COMMON REQUIREMENTS

Experience Funds can only be awarded under the following conditions:

- The experience must benefit multiple members, either through direct partnership(s) or by way of a coordinated theme across a minimum of three or more venues. Applicants are encouraged to work within their business sector to generate ideas and experiences that have broad appeal and provide rich visitor engagement opportunities.
- The combined total of proposed experiences for any single time period must meet the minimum requirement for marketing promotion (e.g. a single application by one business may not alone create a compelling offer for a large volume of visitors.)

## ELIGIBILITY

All experience fund applications should meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Demonstrate involvement of multiple businesses. For example:
  - Multiple businesses may coordinate to create ONE larger experience that benefits each business. In this case, ONE application would be submitted.
  - Multiple businesses work together to identify a common interest/theme, but each business creates its own unique experience. In this case, MULTIPLE applications would be submitted.

- Funding application must be submitted by a current member in good standing of Tourism Whistler.
- Must be a visitor-friendly experience that takes place in Whistler Village (Village Centre, Village North or Upper Village), Whistler Creekside, or is easily accessible by the Valley Trail system or transit. Member businesses in Function Junction or outside Municipal boundaries will be considered based on the strength of the application and visitor access infrastructure in place.
- Focuses on weather-independent and non-core Resort experiences, such as Arts & Culture, Heritage, Health & Wellness, or other themed experiences (e.g. Halloween, Festive, etc).
- Must be a net new or enhanced experience during Whistler's off-peak months of **May, June, October, November** or **early-December**. Experiences outside this timeframe will be considered based on the strength of the experience outside of existing peak season offerings.
- Must have a minimum 1:1 matching contribution.
- If applicable, must acquire any and all required permits from the Resort Municipality of Whistler

#### INELIGIBLE REQUESTS INCLUDE:

- Capital/infrastructure expenses
- Regular operational expenses
- Charitable Contribution

#### APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process will require the following information to be provided:

1. Provide the lead business name, address and contact information.
2. Provide all additional businesses that will coordinate with, and benefit from, this experience.
3. Provide the name of the experience and brief explanation of the project.
4. What are the requested dates and duration of this experience?
5. What are the goals/expectations for the project?
6. How will the experience(s) meet the above Experience Fund Goals?
7. How will the success of the project be measured and reported?
8. What is the estimated budget for the project? Please specify what expenses will be covered through the Experience Fund partnership project.
9. Will reservations be required in advance for a visitor to participate in this experience?
10. Will there be a minimum number of participants required for the experience to run?
11. Will there be a charge or admission price for the experience? If so, how much, and how does this compare with your regularly advertised rates?
12. What type of marketing support will your business provide to promote this experience?
13. Is this intended to be an ongoing event or experience?
14. What are the risks associated with this project (i.e. weather, permitting, minimum attendance requirements...)? Please describe contingency plans to mitigate these risks.
15. What permits will you require, if any, and have you inquired with the RMOW to secure them?



## SELECTION CRITERIA, PROCESS AND FUNDING

The following criteria will be utilized to evaluate each application:

1. Net new or enhanced experience (not pre-existing)
2. Level of collaboration with other stakeholders
3. Unique, authentic experience that is a good fit for Whistler's brand
4. Potential to attract out-of-town visitors and generate room nights
5. Level of weather-independence
6. Level of shareability (i.e. inspires social media sharing)
7. Overall feasibility
8. Marketing/promotional support provided
9. Appeals primarily to visitors, however, locals (residents and 2nd homeowners) may engage

All applications will be assessed by a Tourism Whistler Selection Committee, who will then make a decision for: a) approval; b) revision and re-assessment; and c) non-approval.

Funding will be awarded by way of a co-investment funding agreement between the lead organization and Tourism Whistler.

## FOLLOW UP EVALUATION REPORTING FORM

All organizations who receive funding are required to provide a final project evaluation directly to Tourism Whistler no later than 60 days from the conclusion of the event or completion of the project, and include reporting for the following:

1. Describe any significant accomplishments, success stories, knowledge gained and/or lessons learned.
2. Briefly summarize goals and objectives outlined in your original proposal.
3. Report specific results of each of the above-stated goals and objectives (including the number of persons served, social media engagement, earned media and final budget spend).
4. Describe any significant factors that may have impacted your ability (positively or negatively) to implement the funded project (e.g., challenges or opportunities)
5. Will the funded activities be continued? Please provide details.
6. Do you have feedback on how the Destination Development project team might be more helpful to organizations it funds (e.g., application process, review process, level of funding)?

## NEXT STEPS

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their project, questions and eligibility before applying using the contact info below. Please express interest in applying by email to Rachel Hughes, Coordinator, Destination Development for Tourism Whistler at [rhughes@tourismwhistler.com](mailto:rhughes@tourismwhistler.com).