Tourism Marketing Assets and Education Program

APPLICATION GUIDE

CITY OF Guelph
Making a Difference

Guelph GATHER HERE







Tourism Marketing Assets and Education Program

Contents

Tourism Marketing Assets and Education Program 1

- Background 3
- Program Overview 3
- Expected Outcomes 4
- What is a Marketing Asset? 4
- What is included in the program? 4
- How will applicants be evaluated? 5
- Funding Structure 5
- Application Process 5
- Funding decision 5
- Reporting requirements 5
- Definitions 6
- Contact Information 6

Background

On February 28, 2022, Guelph's City Council voted to implement the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT), legislated by the Provincial Government, on local short- term stay accommodations. These accommodations include hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and shared accommodation providers like Airbnb. Implementing the MAT was a priority outlined in the 2022-2026 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

The MAT is used to enhance Guelph as a destination for visitors by providing funding and education support to tourism industry stakeholders, infrastructure upgrades that address visitor needs, and in marketing to support increased sport, group, and conference tourism activity in the City of Guelph. The Guelph Chamber of Commerce is the not-for-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and operates under the name Destination Marketing Guelph (DMG).

Tourism industry funding is a direct outcome of the 2022-2026 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy highlighted in priority 1.2 Support industry-led tourism product development and priority 5.3 Enhance placemaking throughout the city. All funds are subject to the requirements and processes laid out in the Municipal Accommodation Tax Administration Policy.

Marketing continues to be a challenge for many tourism operators in Guelph. To address this need, the 2026 Gaps and Needs Fund is focused on strengthening marketing capacity across the sector. The Tourism Marketing Assets & Education Program provides operators with professional photography and videography, along with practical training to help them use these assets effectively. This two-part approach supports tourism businesses and events in improving their visibility, reaching new audiences, and increasing the success of their offerings through stronger, more strategic marketing.

Program Overview

The Tourism Marketing Assets & Education Program helps tourism businesses and event organizers improve their marketing efforts and reach new audiences. The program reduces the cost burden of professional photography and videography by providing high-quality marketing assets at no cost, along with practical training to support their use.

The program has two parts: participants receive a professional photography and videography package, followed by a three-hour, in-person marketing session to plan how to put those assets into action. Applicants must be willing to host a photographer at their business or event and attend the education session.

The program is delivered in partnership with Andrew Goodwin, a Guelph photographer, and Dilettante Hospitality Services, a Guelph marketing agency.

Expected Outcomes

- Improved marketing capacity from tourism-serving organizations
- Stronger, more consistent visual assets to support visitor attraction
- Increased ability to reach new audiences
- Clear and actional marketing plans developed through educational sessions
- Reduce financial burden associated with professional photography and videography
- Enhanced visibility of Guelph's tourism offering cross digital and promotional platforms
- Better understanding of marketing performances through

What is a Marketing Asset?

A marketing asset is any visual or promotional material used to showcase a tourism business, event, product, or experience to potential visitors. Marketing assets help communicate what you offer, attract audiences, and support advertising, social media, websites, and other promotional channels. They can include photography, videography, graphics, written content, or other materials that strengthen your brand and help you reach visitors.

For the purpose of this program, **marketing assets will only include photography and videography.**

What is included in the program?

Applicants will receive:

- A professional photography and videography package of content taken at their business, location, or event.
- A 3-hour marketing education session hosted by a local marketing expert in early 2027
- Marketing data tracking template to track the success of the applicants newly implement marketing campaign

Who is eligible to apply?

Tourism organizations located within the City of Guelph are eligible to apply, including accommodations, festivals, attractions, specialty retail, craft culinary, and sports tourism operators. Both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations are eligible, provided they are tourism-serving and attract visitors from 40 kilometers or more away. All applicants must be incorporated and in good standing with the City of Guelph.

How will applicants be evaluated?

Applications will be prioritized based on the following criteria:

- A demonstrated commitment to marketing education
- A clear need for upgraded or refreshed marketing assets
- The event or business has a tourism serving purpose and can attract visitors from 40km or more way
- The applicant has the organization capacity to participate fully in the program and implement new marketing activities
- A commitment to collecting basic marketing performance date

Funding Structure

The Tourism Marketing Assets & Education Program is funded through the Destination Gaps and Needs Program. Participants receive professional marketing assets at no cost and access to a structured education session. No direct financial payments are made to grantees.

Application Process

Applications for the Accessible Destination Program will be accepted between November 2, 2026, and November 29, 2026. Applications must be submitted online through the application portal. If requested, the City of Guelph will accept written applications or verbal applications. A staff review committee will review applications in full based on a pre-established rubric before making award decisions .

The application process is as follows:

1. Attend an information session in November 2027 hosted by Guelph Tourism.
2. Apply through the City's grant platform (alternate formats accepted upon request). All applications must be submitted by November 29, 2027.
3. Receive notification of application status by March 1, 2027.
4. Complete the project and submit a final report by December 31, 2027.

Funding decision

All applications will be reviewed by a staff selection committee composed of representatives from Guelph Tourism, Accessibility and Community, Equity and Inclusion. Applications will be evaluated using a pre-established rubric that considers accessibility goals, readiness to participate, and potential impact on the visitor experience. Successful applicants will be notified by March 1, 2026. All successful awards will be subject to the Municipal Accommodation Tax Administration Policy.

Reporting requirements

All successful participants must submit a final report by December 31, 2027. A report template will be provided to the grantee. Grantees must plan a head for reporting requirements as this will require visitor information collected for your project, initiative or event.

Definitions

For-profit business: A for-profit organization is one that operates with the goal of making money.
Non-profit organization: A non-profit organization, also known as a non-business entity, or nonprofit institution, is a legal entity organized and operated for a collective, public or social benefit, in contrary with an entity that operates as a business aiming to generate a profit for its owners.

Tourism business: A tourism business is any organization—whether for-profit, non-profit, or charity—that provides services, experiences, or products primarily aimed at serving visitors who travel from 40 kilometers or more away. This includes:

- Accommodations: hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts
- Food services: restaurants and cafes
- Events and hosting: sports organizations, festivals
- Attractions: museums, theme parks, natural sites
- Retail and culture: specialty shops, galleries, performing arts

Tourism event: An event that is focused on attracting 30% or more of its overall attendance to be visitors from 40 kilometers or further away.

Specialty visitor-focused retail: A business or organization that offers a product that is not readily available in all communities. Examples include but are not limited to: wedding dresses, thrift stores, souvenir shops, etc.

Tourism product: A tourism product is considered any product, service, event or offering that appeals to a visitor.

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

Contact Information

Victoria Filippelli, Economic Development Officer Tourism
Economic Development and Tourism
victoria.filippelli@guelph.ca
519-822-1260 extension 2079
Cell: 1-226-821-2263





For more information, please contact visit@guelph.ca.

GatherinGuelph.com