STRATFORD'S CULTURAL SCENE GETS A BOOST WITH 11 EXCITING PROJECTS IN 2026/2027 SUPPORTED BY STRATFORD DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUND

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(STRATFORD, ON) The 2026/27 Stratford Destination Development Fund (DDF) received an overwhelming response, with 30 applications submitted representing more than $1 million in project value and over $200,000 in requested funding support. This strong level of interest underscores the continued momentum and creativity within Stratford's tourism and cultural sectors. As a result, the selection process was highly competitive. Following a thorough review, the committee approved funding for 11 selected cultural projects that will deliver meaningful, year-round destination development opportunities, particularly during Stratford's shoulder and winter seasons. All supported projects are scheduled for completion by the end of March 2027.

Established in 2015 through a collaborative investment by Regional Tourism Organization 4 (RTO4), the Downtown Stratford BIA, and Destination Stratford, the Stratford Destination Development Fund (DDF) supports high-impact, experience-driven projects that are designed to be widely shared and celebrated. The selected initiatives reflect Stratford's distinct cultural identity while enhancing storytelling opportunities and enriching experiences for both residents and visitors. Funded projects for this cycle will be delivered between April 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027.

"*With over a decade of enabling local cultural events and experiences, the Stratford Destination Development Fund continues to strengthen our community while supporting a vibrant, year-round visitor economy. The success of the Fund is driven by our creative cultural community as evidenced by this year's outstanding*

calibre of supported projects," said Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford.

"*The BIA is delighted to be part of the Destination Development Fund providing funds to give a boost to initiatives that attract visitors to attend events and engage in overnight stays in our community. Our goal is to nurture events that recur year after year and can blossom into a sustainable event*," said Jamie Pritchard, General Manager, Downtown Stratford BIA.

"RTO4 is pleased to once again support the Stratford Destination Development Fund in 2026. Over the years, this program has helped bring forward creative projects that invite visitors and residents alike to experience Stratford in new ways, many of which have grown into well-loved experiences within the community. With such a strong and competitive round of applications this year, we're excited to see how the selected initiatives will continue to shape Stratford's visitor economy and enrich the destination for years to come," said Andrea Gardi, RT04.

The successful 2026 applications and projects include:

- Boathouse Stratford, The: Voices of the Avon: A River Storytelling Series
- Fresh Idea Collective: Speak to Lead Showcase for Women
- Here For Now Theatre: The Gift Exchange and As Above
- INNERchamber Inc: Season 17 Sept 2026 - May 2027
- Provocation Ideas Festival: Provocation Ideas Festival's Flowing Futures: Avon River Design Challenge
- Stratford Concert Choir: The Big Sing Thing
- Stratford Film Festival: Stratford Film Festival and Monthly Film Series
- Stratford Summer Music: Laila Biali Wintersongs
- Stratford Walking Tours: Boos & Brews
- Stratford Winter Film Festival: Celebrating Film

- Stratford Winterfest: A family friendly, free outdoor cultural winter experience

For more DDF details please visit: visitstratford.ca/ddf

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