



Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund

**Program
Information**

A Unique Investment Program for Extraordinary Events

A photograph of a long, arched hallway with a large clock tower in the center. The hallway is crowded with people, and the architecture features high, vaulted ceilings and a series of arches. The clock tower is ornate and has a large circular clock face. The lighting is bright, and the overall atmosphere is one of a busy, historic event.

The Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund (OCAF) was established in 1999. It has two aims: (1) to increase cultural tourism by providing investments to assist Ontario organizations to develop, promote and present one-off or first time events, or a significant expansion of existing activity, which are designed to attract new tourists and visitors to cultural events; and (2) increase the earned revenue capability of the applicant organization.

OCAF achieves this by providing up front working capital directed towards the applicant's marketing and promotional costs, with the investment taking the form of a partially repayable loan.

Since 1999, the Government of Ontario has invested \$32 million in the Fund and the success of the initiatives in which OCAF has invested has led to a healthy replenishment of the Fund for future projects. The program is now expected to continue until 2014-2015, fund approximately 150 more events and essentially double the government investment. Attendance to OCAF funded events has reached 28 million to date.

Eligibility

The eligibility criteria are as broad and flexible as possible to ensure active participation by organizations of all sizes. The following eligibility criteria apply:

- The applicant organization must be an incorporated Ontario-based, not-for-profit and/or charitable professional arts, heritage or cultural organization or an Ontario municipality or municipal agency that is undertaking a major project in the arts or heritage sector. The organization must have been in existence for at least one year.
- Eligible organizations must be in compliance with the legal financial reporting requirements under the *Canada Corporations Act* or the *Corporations Act of Ontario*, depending on their incorporation jurisdiction.

To be eligible, projects must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- The project must be distinct from ongoing programming or activity (this can be either a new event or a significant expansion or enhancement to existing programming)
- The project must represent the single largest new programming initiative in the applicant's business plan for that year
- The project must run for a fixed or limited period of time
- The project must have a marketing plan targeting new tourists to the community
- The project must anticipate that at least 10% of the project total revenues are secured from the private sector AND at least 40% of total revenues are achieved through the project's earned revenue
- The project must demonstrate clearly the capability of repayment to OCAF with an aim to generate a surplus for the applicant

The OCAF Board understands that some of the biggest tourist draws are free or low admission festivals and events and will consider applications which do not meet the 40% earned revenue criteria. These applications must demonstrate that earned revenue combined with private sector revenue represents at least 50% of total revenue.

Applicants may receive OCAF support no more than once every two years.



Application

Application forms are available on the OCAF website (www.ocaf.on.ca)

First time applicants, and those requiring further information or assistance with the application, should contact OCAF staff prior to submitting a Stage 1 application. It is recommended that organizations start the application process approximately nine months (or earlier) prior to the event.

OCAF has a two-stage application process which ensures that organizations do not dedicate significant time, effort and resources to an ineligible project. Please refer to the OCAF website for a current list of application deadlines.

Stage 1 requires the applicant to complete a three-page form with basic information about the proposed project and target market. This application is reviewed by program staff. If the project meets the general eligibility criteria, applicants will be provided with the Stage 2 application form.

The Stage 2 application requires the development of a detailed business case that includes a marketing plan, attendance and revenue projections and an analysis of the benefits of the project for the community. Stage 2 applications are reviewed by the OCAF board once staff has done a thorough assessment.

Repayment

Repayment of a portion of the investment is required in all cases and forms part of the legal agreement between OCAF and successful applicants. The repayment is required within 60 to 90 days after the completion of the event. The repayment formula is based upon the size of the applicant’s operating budget and the project’s earned revenues.

	Category	Repayment	To Maximum of
A	Annual budget over \$10 million	15% project gross earned revenue	50% OCAF investment
B	Annual budget \$1 million to \$10 million	15% project gross earned revenue	40% OCAF investment
C	Annual budget under \$1 million	15% project gross earned revenue	30% OCAF investment
	All projects in Northern Ontario	15% project gross earned revenue	30% OCAF investment
	All projects in cities or municipal regions with populations under 100,000	15% project gross earned revenue	30% OCAF investment

For applications under the “Free or Low Admission” rule, the repayment is fixed, based on the maximum repayment for the applicant’s category.

The repayment formulae above apply to first time applicants, or to those requesting investment three or more years after their previous application. For applicants returning to OCAF after two years, the maximum repayment increases by 10% for all applicants.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

OCAF Board and staff have identified certain success indicators and benchmarks:

- The Board typically considers projects with total attendance figures of at least 1,000 in rural areas and 10,000 in large urban centres. Special consideration will be given to projects with attendance between 7,500 and 10,000 in large urban centres or between 750 and 1,000 in rural and northern areas if there is a strong case for tourism potential.
- The Board reviews the level of investment requested relative to the number of attendees. The Board supports projects at a maximum of \$10 per attendee.
- OCAF is mainly dedicated to help applicants promote projects to non-local audiences. Usual Board practice is to fund projects for an amount not higher than the applicant’s marketing expenses.

Contact

Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund

151 Bloor Street West, 5th Floor

Toronto, ON M5S 1T6

416.969.7449 | 1 800 387.0058 (toll-free)

416.969.7450 (fax)

For detailed information please go to

www.ocaf.on.ca

Photo Credits

Dance of Nations, Carassauga Festival (Mississauga, 2010)

RC Harris Water Treatment, Doors Open Toronto,

© Ontario Heritage Trust (2010)

Fireworks, Burlington Sound of Music Festival (2009)

Tall Ships, RedPath Toronto Waterfront Festival (2010)

