Tourism Events Program (TEP)
Covid-19 Updates and FAQ for Funding Recipients and Applicants

The Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture’s top priority is protecting the health and safety of people in B.C. We recognize the immense and unprecedented impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the province’s tourism sector, including impacts to funded Tourism Events Program projects. We are closely monitoring sector impacts and have adjusted our processes and policies in response to the rapidly evolving situation. We appreciate your patience and cooperation in helping to stop the transmission of COVID-19 and keep people safe during this challenging time.

The provincial government’s Restart Plan outlines our approach to carefully and slowly reopen our economy while protecting people’s health and safety. Read more about BC’s Restart Plan online at: gov.bc.ca/restartbc.

BC’s Restart Plan indicates that international tourism and activities requiring large gatherings can begin in Phase 4, which is conditional on at least one of the following: wide vaccination, “community” immunity, or broad successful treatments. While there is no set timeline for this phase to begin, we are working with our TEP partners to plan ahead now. Festivals and events will play an important role in our province’s economic and social recovery, once public health officials indicate these activities are again considered safe.

For the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 from the Province of BC please refer to:
- COVID-19 Provincial Support and Information
- Destination BC COVID-19 Information
- BC Centre for Disease Control
- HealthLinkBC
- Resources for Managing Stress

The following FAQ is intended for TEP recipients and applicants whose funded projects are or may be impacted by COVID-19.

1) **Who can I talk to about TEP funding that my organization has received?**

   Our staff remain available during regular business hours. We encourage you to email tourismeventsprogram@gov.bc.ca with any questions or concerns you may have. To comply with physical distancing measures and other public health recommendations, staff may be working remotely. Please be patient if you encounter delays in response times.

2) **What should I do if my event involves public gatherings or ongoing public programming?**

   The Provincial Health Officer encourages everyone to practice physical distancing to limit transmission of COVID-19. As of March 16th, the provincial health officer has prohibited gatherings of more than 50 people. Read the “mass gatherings” order at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/covid-19-pho-class-order-mass-gatherings.pdf

   This order is being reviewed regularly as the situation evolves. We advise that you regularly consult the most up-to-date information and direction on COVID-19 at the links listed above.
3) I was previously approved for TEP funding; however, my event has not yet taken place and I wish to either cancel or postpone. What are my options?

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are being as flexible as possible in allowing TEP funds that have already been received to be used for eligible activities or similar purposes. We understand many event organizers will have already used at least some of these funds to market their event.

Please contact tourismeventsprogram@gov.bc.ca to discuss cancellations or date changes.

4) I have received TEP funding for an event that has been postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19 and have incurred additional expenses related to the extraordinary circumstances. Can I use the TEP funds previously received to cover additional expenses, if needed?

We are being as flexible as possible with how the funds can be allocated given the circumstances.

If your event has been postponed, our first priority is for the funding to be used as outlined in the program guidelines. In this situation, please make sure you document all expenses for which the TEP funds were used so this can be included in your final report. If your event has been cancelled, we can discuss use of TEP funds to cover expenses related to the cancellation.

5) I have submitted a TEP application for an event that may be impacted by COVID-19. How will this affect the assessment of my application? Should I submit additional information?

Contact tourismeventsprogram@gov.bc.ca if your event is no longer feasible given the most recent travel and health advisories. Please also email us to provide updates on significant changes to your proposal because of public health and travel advisories.

6) Is the Ministry currently accepting applications?

The spring application window closed May 30, 2020. All submissions are currently being reviewed. The estimated review time is at least three to four months after the window has closed. All applicants will be contacted once funding decisions are made. More information can be found at https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/tourism-immigration/tourism-resources/tourism-funding-programs/tourism-events-program.

7) Will support be made available to cover longer-term operational or financial implications of COVID on our organization?

Information about response and recovery plans specific to the tourism industry is available at https://www.destinationbc.ca/covid-19/update/.

Information about support through B.C.’s COVID-19 Action Plan is available at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support
We appreciate your patience during this difficult time. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and reassess as conditions change.