

Trillium Grant Collaboration Proposal for the Temagami Municipal Council

Background & Eligibility Concerns Initiating this Proposal:

Living Temagami Arts & Culture became incorporated February 19th, 2020. The Ontario Government and Ontario Trillium grants available at this time require an organization to be operating as an incorporated entity for one entire year prior to being considered eligible to independently apply for a grant. Without collaborative assistance by an established, eligible party, we would be unable to apply for any investment programs towards our region's wellness before February 19th, 2021, when these opportunities may no longer be available.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund (with a deadline of September 2nd 2020) is willing to support up to 100% of the costs of a venture building *"organizational capacity and their ability to deliver programs and services"* so we can *"create and/or adopt new approaches for organizations to work together to meet the needs of communities."* Furthermore, the current socio-economic COVID climate and globally recognized importance of an online presence, has made this the ideal time to develop our region's online footprint. Living Temagami wants to apply for assistance while development funding is still available and tourists are still browsing for new remote holiday opportunities in Canada.

We come to the Municipality of Temagami, requesting that you act as the primary "eligible" party within our collaborative application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund. Trillium identifies a collaborative venture as being:

"When two or more organizations with a well-defined relationship submit an application for funding in which the organizations are working jointly to achieve a common goal. Characteristics include mutual benefit, shared decision making and accountability to each other and to the communities they serve. A collaborative may include both eligible and ineligible organizations who are in good standing (...)"

The Community Programming, E-commerce, and Regional Tourism Website Project:

Living Temagami intends to create an active website where the merits of our Northern Ontario regional offerings can be highlighted and easily accessed by aspiring tourists and arts aficionados. This project allows us to apply through two application investment streams: "building inclusive and engaged communities together" and "enriching people's lives through arts, culture and heritage".

Northern Ontario visitors and promoters constantly struggle with the inability to access the diverse arts, culture, and experiential offerings of our region. Tourists are forced to independently track down every minute webpage and event across Facebook, Twitter, hotel booking sites, chamber pages, and municipal websites. When they do, they are constantly facing stagnant webpages and inaccessible event calendars along the way. Unlike the events and programming pages found in major hubs like Ottawa, Montreal, of Toronto, which also include programming in surrounding regions, we do not have a user-friendly page that draws attention north. There also isn't a "go-to" e-commerce page that showcases the wealth of northern arts and culture creations available, which can bring international dollars into the region, especially by those interested in First Nation arts (like the German tourism circles).

We aspire to create a website that highlights regional offerings alongside an e-commerce platform and bookings page. On this site a tourist would be able to order Northern Ontario-made arts and cultural creations from afar, access regional hotel, restaurant and services pages when planning a regional trip,

and create their own personally generated touring plan based on their route and interests. By creating a broader “Northern Ontario” oriented landing page, we can create a network of interconnected sub-pages under one umbrella, allowing the visitor to see a plethora of options. This means that a person seeking information about one specific region will be “drawn down the rabbit hole” to many other local subpages along the way, which they would not have otherwise looked up. Providing this plethora of touring and purchasing opportunities will encourage visitors to spend their money in Northern Ontario because it will clearly show the many opportunities that await them. Rather than competing with each other, a united tourism display will allow us to compete with other regional destinations, like Niagara and Muskoka, within the greater experiential-tourism scene.

We are currently planning to unite our online capabilities with Economic Development Officer at City of Temiskaming Shores Temiskaming Shores, James Franks’. He has initiated the “We the North” website notion and is keen to see us add an e-commerce hub and a greater “Northern Ontario” focus to this project. As an instigator of regional collaborations and interprovincial projects, he recognizes that collective participation will also help keep website and marketing costs lower through the sharing of resources. Having Living Temagami act as the lead on the e-commerce site and arts and culture promotion of the page, through outreach to other galleries, exhibitors, artists, and regional events and cultural programming groups, we will encourage growth and regional adaptation of this new united tourism endeavour. Together we can highlight our regional offerings and purchasable creations to tourists across Canada and beyond.

Living Temagami intends to become the “go-to site” for browsing, purchasing, and/or booking the artwork of visual artists and performing artists for all of Northern Ontario. This online initiative extends our in-house gallery and store capacity. By expanding into a virtual store space, we enhance our overall capacity, thereby allowing more art pieces to be sold, and more artists to be showcased year round.

Due to internet limitations across rural regions in Northern Ontario, many companies exist in an off-line capacity. We plan on having a comprehensive commercial marketing feature on our e-commerce website. This would allow potential visitors the opportunity to book lodgings, canoe trips, hunting and fishing excursions, and plan their attendance at special community events which we would feature on our site. For each booking, we could collect a small booking fee (much like other agents and online booking services), which could then be pumped back into operational and community programming costs. This would make our basic operational costs sustainable. Creating this e-commerce subpage as a funding source and sales device will allow us to put money back into the region and allow us to continue promoting Northern Ontarian artists while we locally provide cultural programming.

Similar to many other local organizations, our presence through an online page will extend the local sales season from four summer months to twelve. As we grow and feature more artists on our website, the site will establish a recognized network of professional artists associated with Northern Ontario. Similarly, local businesses, tour groups, and event organizers with limited internet and technical experience will directly benefit from having a regularly managed online presence and booking space available. Groups can then consider how they wish to promote year-round outdoor tourism experiences available in our region’s “great backyard” of Canada!

Municipality of Temagami Engagement & Project Support:

The Municipality of Temagami Draft Action Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2030 indicates that your 4-5 year aspirations align with our organization's immediate project goals. Your draft plan aspires to:

- *Develop a Distinctive Regional Branding and Marketing Platform*
- *Support the Development of Tourism,*
- *Actively Facilitate the Formation and Expansions of Not-For-Profit Enterprises.*

Similarly, your 2013 published article "A Vision for Temagami" highlighted 10 top priorities for municipal projects, plans, and initiatives to stimulate the region's economy. Of these priorities, Living Temagami's website project relates to the following:

- *Priority 2: Define ways and means to make the Train Station a central focus of the Town."*
- *Priority 4: Rebrand Temagami as an active, vibrant community in a world class wilderness setting with all major services available (...)AND promote the new Temagami brand to promote events, links to businesses, discussion pages, collaborate with local business for advertising AND prepare a marketing plan AND dialogue more with community and various organizations to work towards achieving the common vision."*
- *Priority 6: Encourage arts and culture programming; support or partner with private groups; expand art gallery focus; partner with TFN and school, support social activities, create a youth plan (...)*

We believe the Living Temagami Arts & Culture Corporation is a worthy and eligible collaborator for this grant because of its community oriented associations. As a non-profit regional artistic hub, key First Nation's project collaborator, tourism destination with promotional power, educational program developer, and small business community collaborator, we routinely "pursue regional collaboration to advance common goals in order to strengthen Northern Ontario's competitive advantages". We are well positioned to bring Northern community capacity building goals to fruition, and put Temagami on the map as Northern Ontario's arts and culture hub!

We are prepared to take the helm on this project and provide all of the staff administration necessary to make this website and ecommerce page come to fruition. We are also keen to initiate outreach to bring other regional collaborators, associations and municipalities onboard.

Basic contributions from the municipality towards this collaboration could entail:

- **Application backing as the "lead applicant" by highlighting in the application how we the town benefits from this collaborative project.**
- **Communication and insight into local tourism and business needs that the site can aid with**
- **Additional insight into what other media tools you would like to create or obtain through this grant, to improve year-round accessibility to community programming in the region.**
- **Your positivity and encouraging backing of this inter-regional initiative as Living Temagami approaches other regional governing bodies.**

We look forward to the possibility of receiving your support and official willingness to collaborate on this project, so we may team with your Special Projects officer Sabrina Pandolfo, to meet the Sept 2 application deadline.