



PACIFIC. AUTHENTIC. EXPERIENCES LAUNCHPAD

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Are you an entrepreneur, business or organization with a great new idea for a tourism experience in Richmond? Need help to get it off the ground?

Put your idea forward for the opportunity to receive eight months of one-to-one mentorship, in-kind marketing support from Tourism Richmond, and \$5,000 in funding. Tourism Richmond is looking for fresh tourism experience ideas with a meaningful connection to Richmond. Three ideas will be selected.

Through the **Pacific. Authentic. Experiences Launchpad**, entrepreneurs, businesses and organizations are invited to put forward ideas for new tourism experiences that could give visitors another reason to discover Richmond and connect with the destination.

Your experience doesn't need to be fully developed at this stage, but you must have a strong idea and be committed to developing and delivering it.

Applications open Tuesday, October 6 and close Friday, November 27, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time (PT).

Apply online at visitrichmondbc.com/launchpad

If you have any questions about the program, please send an email to FundingPrograms@TourismRichmond.com

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We're looking for new tourism experience ideas that celebrate what makes Richmond distinctive, including its food, culture, coastal setting and connection to nature.

- **Food:** Culinary experiences, local flavours and cultural connections. For example, a guided food walk through a dining district, a cooking class with a local chef, a farm-to-table or sea-to-table meal, or a tasting built around harvest season.
- **Culture:** Arts, traditions, diverse communities and authentic local stories. For example, an Indigenous-led experience sharing culture and connection to the land and water, a guided tour sharing Richmond's multicultural stories, a hands-on workshop with a local artist or maker, or a festival that brings visitors in during quieter months.
- **Coastal:** Waterfront experiences, maritime heritage and community character. For example, a boat tour on the Fraser River, a seafood harvest or fishing experience, or a heritage walk along the working waterfront.
- **Nature:** Outdoor recreation, wildlife and connections to the natural environment. For example, a guided birdwatching outing during spring or fall migration, a cycling tour along the dykes, or a farm visit that connects visitors with local growers.

A strong idea:

- Offers something new or fills a gap in Richmond's existing tourism experiences.
- Gives visitors another reason to come to Richmond, stay longer or visit at different times of year, including new events that bring visitors to Richmond.
- Creates a meaningful connection with Richmond's people, places or stories, and builds on what makes Richmond distinctive.
- Comes from someone ready to lead the work themselves, with strong support behind them.

Your idea doesn't need to fit neatly into one category or be a finished concept. If you have a compelling tourism experience that celebrates Richmond, we want to hear about it.

WHO CAN APPLY?

You don't need to be an established tourism operator to have a great tourism idea. You don't need to live or run a business in Richmond, but your experience must take place here.

The **Pacific. Authentic. Experiences Launchpad** welcomes ideas from individuals aged 18 or over, new and existing businesses, tourism operators, non-profits, community groups and cultural organizations. There's no business size requirement.

Whether your idea is still taking shape or you're ready to take an existing concept in a new direction, we're interested in its potential and your commitment to developing it.

The person who applies should be the person who will lead the work. Launchpad is built for people who want to develop their own idea, with mentorship and support behind them.

WHAT WILL SELECTED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE?

Following a competitive application and pitch process, three participants will be selected for Launchpad.

Each selected participant will receive:

- **Eight months of customized one-to-one mentorship**
Mentorship matched to your idea and your needs, providing practical guidance as you develop your experience and prepare to bring it to market.
- **In-kind marketing support from Tourism Richmond**
Marketing support to help prepare your experience for market and support its promotion.
- **\$5,000 in funding**
Funding to support the development and testing of your tourism experience, including eligible market-testing costs. Funding will be provided in three installments: 25% upfront, followed by two additional installments tied to program milestones.
- **Access to workshops and a peer network** with connections that continue beyond the program.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS COMMIT TO

Launchpad runs from February to September 2027. Selected participants commit to:

- Meeting with their mentor twice a month
- Attending workshops and milestone check-ins
- Presenting at a showcase in fall 2027
- Sharing photos and content from the program with Tourism Richmond

Participants sign a short participant agreement that covers these commitments and the funding schedule.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Apply

Head to page 7 of this document for full instructions and application questions to help you prepare.

2. Pitch your idea

Applications will be reviewed, and five finalists will be invited to pitch their ideas in person to a selection panel. Pitches will be about five minutes plus Q&A. It's a conversation, not a sales pitch. Finalists need to be available in person on Thursday, January 21, 2027, at a venue in Richmond.

3. Join Launchpad

Three participants will be selected to join Launchpad. After selection, you'll meet one-on-one with the program lead so we can match you with the right mentor.

4. Bring your experience closer to market

Participants work with their mentor and Tourism Richmond to develop their ideas into tourism experiences and test them with visitors.

5. Showcase your experience

Participants present their experience at a showcase event in fall 2027, celebrating what the cohort has built.

6. Launch to the public

With mentorship complete, participants launch their experience and join a network of Richmond experience operators and mentors that lasts beyond the program.

KEY DATES

Date	What happens
Tuesday, October 6, 2026	Applications open
Thursday, October 29, 2026, 11:30 a.m. Pacific Time (PT)	Information session (virtual, recorded) To attend, register at: richmond-attend.idss.com/pacific-authentic-experiences-launchpad-information-session
Friday, November 27, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time (PT)	Applications close
By mid-December 2026	Five finalists invited to pitch and non-finalists informed
Thursday, January 21, 2027	Pitch day , in person
By Friday, January 29, 2027	Three participants announced
February to September 2027	Mentorship and workshops
Fall 2027	Showcase and launch

FAQ

Do I need to be an established tourism operator to apply?

No. We welcome ideas from entrepreneurs, new and existing businesses, non-profits, community groups, and cultural organizations. There's no business size requirement, and a strong idea matters more than how established you are.

Does my idea need to be fully developed already?

No. Bring us a strong idea with a meaningful connection to Richmond and the commitment to develop it. Mentorship and support exist to help you get from idea to market-ready.

What counts as a "tourism experience"?

An experience goes beyond a product or attraction. It's immersive, tells a story, and leaves visitors feeling connected to Richmond. That said, a strong product with real experience potential is welcome too, and we don't want a good idea set aside for not being "experiential enough."

Does my idea need to fit neatly into one theme?

No. If it celebrates what makes Richmond distinctive and has real potential to bring visitors to Richmond or give them a reason to stay longer, we want to hear about it, even if it touches more than one theme.

What does "new" mean?

New to Richmond, not necessarily new to the world. Bringing an idea that works elsewhere and making it distinctly Richmond counts. As a general guide, this means something that hasn't been operating in Richmond for more than six months.

Are events eligible?

Yes. A new event that draws visitors and connects to Richmond fits alongside experiences and products.

Can I apply if I'm not based in Richmond?

Yes. The experience itself needs to happen in Richmond, but you don't need to be based here yourself.

Can I apply with a partner or as a team?

Yes. Tell us who is involved in your application. One person should be the lead applicant who takes part in the mentorship and workshops. We encourage partnerships with other individuals and businesses.

What can the funding be used for?

Developing and testing your experience, including market testing. Funding can't be used for ongoing operating costs or capital purchases, such as renovating premises, installing permanent signage, or major technology investments.

How much time will it take?

Plan for about two mentor sessions a month from February to September 2027, plus workshops, milestone check-ins and a showcase in fall 2027. Finalists also need to be available in person on January 21, 2027.

How does the selection process work?

It happens in two stages. First, a review panel scores each complete application, including the written responses and video, and invites five finalists to pitch. Then, an in-person judge panel hears the pitches and selects the three participants who will join Launchpad.

What happens if I'm not selected?

All applicants will be notified of the outcome, whether or not they are invited to pitch or selected for the program. All applicants receive links to helpful resources and an invitation to stay connected for future opportunities, while finalists who pitch receive structured feedback.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND QUESTIONS

The application process has two parts

1. Completing a short written online application form telling us about your tourism experience idea, its connection to Richmond, who it's for and how Launchpad could help you develop it.
2. Recording a one-minute, unedited video where you introduce yourself and your idea in your own words. Someone else can film it for you, as long as we can see and hear you clearly.

You will be provided with a link to upload your video at the end of the written application form.

The questions below follow the same order as the online form, so you can plan and draft your answers before you start. When you're ready, apply at visitrichmond.com/launchpad

Section 1. Basic Information

- Name
- Email
- Phone number
- Organization name (if applicable)
- Website and social handles (if applicable)
- Briefly describe your connection to Richmond (up to 50 words)

Section 2. About You and Your Idea

- Are you the owner, operator or decision-maker for this idea?
- Applicant type. Choose: individual, new business, existing business, non-profit, community group, other
- Years operating and number of employees
- Which theme does your idea connect to? Food, Coastal, Culture, Nature (choose the closest one)
- Stage: idea only, in development, launched in the last six months, or an established business adding a new experience
- Do you plan to sell or wind down the business in the next two years?
- Are you already a Tourism Richmond partner? (optional)

Section 3. Written Questions

Note: Word count is a maximum, not a target

Q1. Tell us about yourself and your business or organization. *100 words, 650 characters*

Q2. What is your new or enhanced Richmond experience? Please describe what the visitor would see, do and feel. *200 words, 1300 characters*

Q3. Where in Richmond would it happen, and what would it offer that Richmond doesn't have yet? *150 words 1000 characters*

Q4. Who is it for, and why would it bring visitors here or give them a reason to stay longer? *100 words, 650 characters*

Q5. What story or connection to place would a visitor take home? *100 words, 650 characters*

Q6. What is already in place, and what would you need to make it ready for visitors to book? *100 words, 650 characters*

Q7. Who will lead this, how much time can you commit over the eight months (about two mentor meetings a month plus workshops), and is anyone partnering with you? *100 words, 650 characters*

Q8. How would you use the \$5,000 in funding? (development and testing, not operating costs or capital purchases) *100 words, 650 characters*

Q9. What does success look like for you? *100 words, 650 characters*

Q10. What would you most value from a mentor? *100 words, 650 characters*

Q11. How would your experience welcome a wide range of visitors, or support Richmond's community and environment? *100 words, 650 characters*

Section 4. Commitments and Availability

- Checkbox: If shortlisted, I can pitch in person on January 21, 2027
- Checkbox: I can attend twice-monthly mentor meetings and other workshops and milestone check-ins as arranged with Tourism Richmond
- Checkbox: I understand the funding is provided 25% upfront with two further installments, under a participant agreement
- I can present at a showcase in fall 2027
- I agree to share photos and content from the program with Tourism Richmond
- I am 18 years of age or older

Section 5. Video Upload

Please film a one-minute, unedited video where you introduce yourself and your idea in your own words.

This can be self-shot, or someone else can film it for you, as long as we can see and hear you clearly.

Please upload your video to the link provided and name the file with your full name to ensure we can match the video to your application.

Thank you for your interest in the **Pacific. Authentic. Experiences Launchpad** program. If you have any questions, please reach out to us at FundingPrograms@TourismRichmond.com