

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Event Director | International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration (i4C)

Submission Deadline: 5:00pm (EST), Friday September 3, 2026

About i4C

The International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration (i4C) is Canada's premier celebration of cool climate Chardonnay, bringing together renowned wineries, winemakers, industry professionals, media, and wine enthusiasts from around the world for four unforgettable days of education, exceptional wine, culinary experiences, and hospitality in the heart of Niagara wine country.

Founded in 2011, i4C has grown into an internationally respected event that showcases the elegance and diversity of cool climate Chardonnay while proudly profiling Ontario VQA Chardonnay alongside benchmark producers from around the world. Each July, the festival welcomes hundreds of guests to experience educational seminars, immersive tastings, signature consumer events, and meaningful opportunities to connect with some of the world's most respected producers.

The Opportunity

The Board of Directors of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration invites proposals from experienced event professionals interested in serving as Event Director for one of Canada's most respected wine festivals. Reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the Event Director is responsible for the year-round planning, coordination, management, and successful delivery of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration. Working collaboratively with the Board, committees, participating wineries, sponsors, volunteers, suppliers, government partners, media, and industry stakeholders, the Event Director provides leadership across all aspects of festival planning while ensuring i4C continues to deliver an exceptional experience for participants and guests alike.

This is a year-round independent contractor position offered as a three-year agreement, with the contract term running from October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2029. The successful Event Director will be engaged for the full three-year term, providing continuity in the planning, development and delivery of i4C.

Recognizing the importance of ensuring a strong working relationship for both parties, the agreement will include a one-time review following the completion of the first contract year. At that time, either the Event Director or the i4C Board may elect not to continue with the remaining two years of the agreement by providing three months' working notice. If neither party exercises this provision, the agreement will continue for the balance of the three-year term. The role offers flexibility in work location while requiring regular meetings, industry engagement, and a significant on-site presence leading up to and throughout the festival.

Success in this role requires equal parts strategic leadership, relationship management, operational excellence, and attention to detail. The successful proponent will be an exceptional communicator, a collaborative leader, and an experienced project manager who thrives in a dynamic environment where no two days are alike.

Key Responsibilities

1. Organizational Leadership & Administration

Provide year-round leadership and administrative oversight to ensure the successful planning and delivery of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration.

Key responsibilities include:

- Act as the primary operational lead for the organization, reporting to the Board of Directors.
 - Develop annual operational work plans, timelines and critical path schedules.
 - Coordinate Board and committee meetings, prepare reports and provide regular project updates.
 - Maintain organizational records, policies and operational documentation.
 - Support annual budgeting, financial reporting and year-end wrap-up activities.
 - Coordinate with external service providers including accounting, legal and administrative support.
 - Identify operational efficiencies and recommend improvements to strengthen the organization.
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2. Winery & Industry Relations

Lead the recruitment, engagement and ongoing relationship management of new and returning participating Ontario and international wineries while fostering strong industry partnerships that support the continued success and reputation of i4C.

Key responsibilities include:

- Develop and implement annual winery recruitment strategies.
 - Build and maintain positive relationships with participating wineries throughout the year.
 - Coordinate winery registration, onboarding, communications and participation requirements.
 - Manage winery logistics including wine shipments, credentialing, itineraries and event participation.
 - Coordinate winery meetings, information sessions and/or regular communications.
 - Foster ongoing engagement that strengthens long-term participation and industry relationships.
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3. Festival Programming & Event Delivery

Lead the planning, coordination and successful delivery of i4C's educational and consumer experiences while ensuring exceptional guest, winery and partner experiences.

Key responsibilities include:

- Coordinate all festival programming in collaboration with the Board and committees.
 - Lead project planning from concept through post-event evaluation.
 - Oversee venue coordination, permits, logistics and operational planning.
 - Coordinate transportation, accommodation and guest services programs.
 - Manage ticketing strategies, registration processes and guest communications.
 - Coordinate food and beverage logistics with venues, chefs and catering partners.
 - Source, negotiate, and manage supplier and venue contracts in accordance with Board direction.
 - Coordinate production schedules, rentals, transportation, accommodations, and event logistics.
 - Build long-term partnerships that support operational excellence and provide value to the organization.
 - Develop contingency plans and oversee risk management throughout the festival.
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4. Sponsorship, Grants & Stakeholder Relations

Develop and maintain meaningful partnerships that support the long-term sustainability of i4C while delivering exceptional value to sponsors and stakeholders.

Key responsibilities include:

- Cultivate relationships with sponsors, government partners and industry organizations.
 - Identify funding opportunities and coordinate grant applications and reporting.
 - Support sponsor recruitment, retention and stewardship initiatives.
 - Ensure sponsor benefits and recognition are delivered as contracted.
 - Represent i4C at industry meetings and networking opportunities.
 - Maintain strong working relationships with municipal, provincial and tourism partners.
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5. Marketing, Communications & Brand Stewardship

Lead the execution of marketing and communications initiatives that strengthen the i4C brand while supporting ticket sales, stakeholder engagement and consumer awareness.

Key responsibilities include:

- Oversee implementation of annual marketing and communications plans.
 - Coordinate website content, e-newsletters, digital communications and promotional campaigns.
 - Work with creative, PR and social media partners to deliver consistent brand messaging.
 - Support ticket sales initiatives and promotional partnerships.
 - Ensure all communications reflect the organization's brand standards and strategic objectives.
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6. Financial Management & Reporting

Provide sound financial stewardship while supporting the Board in maintaining the long-term financial sustainability of the organization.

Key responsibilities include:

- Develop and manage the annual operating budget in collaboration with the Board.
 - Monitor revenues and expenditures throughout the contract term and provide regular financial updates.
 - Oversee invoicing, contract administration, and coordination with external accounting support.
 - Support sponsorship revenue tracking, grant administration, and financial reporting requirements.
 - Ensure all financial activities are conducted in accordance with Board policies and approved budgets.
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7. Volunteer Leadership

Lead and support a welcoming, engaged volunteer program that reflects the culture and values of i4C while ensuring the successful delivery of the festival.

Key responsibilities include:

- Recruit, coordinate, train, and support volunteers throughout the year.
 - Develop volunteer schedules, assignments, orientation materials, and event-day plans.
 - Foster a positive volunteer experience that encourages long-term engagement and retention.
 - Recognize and celebrate the contributions of i4C volunteers before, during, and after the festival.
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Qualifications & Experience

The successful proponent will demonstrate a combination of leadership, organizational expertise, and relationship-building skills, together with experience delivering complex events or comparable projects.

The ideal candidate will possess:

- Demonstrated experience managing complex, multi-day events, festivals or comparable projects.
- Strong project management skills, with the ability to manage multiple timelines, priorities, stakeholders and deliverables.
- Experience developing and managing budgets and working with financial reporting.
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain strong relationships with diverse stakeholders, including industry partners, sponsors, suppliers and volunteers.
- Experience working with Boards, committees or other volunteer-led organizations.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills and a high degree of professionalism.
- Ability to work independently, exercise sound judgment and take initiative in a dynamic environment.
- Proficiency with:
 - Microsoft Office and standard business software.
 - WordPress
 - Survey Monkey, Mailchimp
 - Better Impact
- Hold a valid driver's license and the ability to travel throughout the Niagara region as required.
- Hold a valid Smart Serve card

Assets

Preference will be given to candidates with experience in one or more of the following:

- Wine, tourism, hospitality, culinary, or destination marketing sectors.
- Sponsorship development and stewardship.
- Grant writing and funding administration.
- Event ticketing and customer relationship management systems.
- Wine education or familiarity with the Ontario wine industry.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested proponents are invited to submit a proposal that includes:

- A cover letter outlining their interest in the opportunity and relevant experience.
- A current résumé.
- A summary of experience delivering comparable events or projects.
- Three professional references.
- A proposed annual fee and any additional information relevant to the proposal.
- **Submission Deadline: 5:00pm (EST), Friday September 3, 2026**

Proposals should be submitted electronically to: careers@coolchardonnay.org

Mark Torrance

Chair, Board of Directors | International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to participate in an interview with representatives of the Board of Directors.