

Job Description

Managing Director

Organization: Kingston Culinary Association (Incubated under Kingston Accommodation Partners)

Reports To: Board of Directors / Advisory Committee (with administrative oversight by Kingston Accommodation Partners during incubation)

Location: Kingston, Ontario

Term: Full-Time, Fixed-Term (3-Year Contract) with the possibility of extension

Start Date: March 2026

Salary Range: \$80-\$100K annually plus benefits

Position Summary

The Kingston Culinary Association (KCA) is a newly established, industry-led organization created to strengthen Kingston's culinary sector, advance culinary tourism, and provide a unified voice for advocacy, collaboration, and destination development.

The Managing Director will serve as the founding leader of the Association during its three-year incubation period. Reporting to an industry-led Board or Advisory Committee and working in close partnership with Kingston Accommodation Partners (KAP), the Managing Director will be responsible for establishing governance, building industry trust and membership, delivering high-impact programs, guiding the organization toward long-term financial and operational sustainability, and integrating and executing in partnership Kingston's Culinary Strategy and Kingston's Integrated Destination Strategy.

This is a foundational leadership role requiring strong sector credibility, entrepreneurial mindset, and the ability to balance advocacy, relationship-building, and program delivery. By the end of the three-year term, the Managing Director will have positioned the Kingston Culinary Association as an independent, financially viable organization with demonstrated value to members, partners, and the broader visitor economy.

Key Responsibilities

1. Organizational Leadership & Governance

- Lead the establishment and operational launch of the Kingston Culinary Association.

- Work with an industry-led Board or Advisory Committee to define mandates, bylaws, governance structures, and strategic priorities.
- Operate the Association under Kingston Accommodation Partners' administrative umbrella during incubation, ensuring accountability, transparency, and alignment with destination development priorities.
- Develop annual work plans, budgets, and performance reporting aligned with Development Fund requirements and industry expectations.
- Integrate with and execute from Kingston's Culinary Strategy and Kingston's Integrated Destination Strategy in partnership with Tourism Kingston, KAP, and the City of Kingston.

2. Industry Engagement & Membership Development

- Build trust and participation across Kingston's diverse culinary sector, engaging operators of all sizes, cuisines, and business models.
- Design and implement a membership framework, value proposition, and communications strategy.
- Serve as the primary point of contact and advocate for member organizations.
- Foster a collaborative industry culture through networking events, working groups, and regular engagement.

3. Advocacy & Sector Representation

- Act as the unified voice of Kingston's culinary and restaurant sector on regulatory, policy, workforce, and cost-related issues.
- Liaise with municipal departments, public health authorities, and regulatory agencies to advance industry priorities.
- Represent Kingston's restaurant sector with provincial and national organizations and associations where appropriate and in partnership with Kingston Accommodation Partners.
- Support the exploration and implementation of industry-supported funding mechanisms, including a voluntary culinary levy.

4. Program Delivery & Culinary Destination Development

- Lead the development and delivery of member-focused programs that strengthen business resilience and sector capacity.
- Initiate and manage collaborative culinary initiatives such as dining trails, seasonal promotions, dining maps, and signature experiences.
- Align restaurant initiatives with Tourism Kingston marketing campaigns, festivals, and destination storytelling.
- Support certification and sustainability initiatives (e.g., Feast On®, sustainability, or equity-based designations).

5. Partnerships & Stakeholder Collaboration

- Work closely with Tourism Kingston, KAP, the City of Kingston, KEDCO, DBIA and regional tourism organizations.
- Strengthen alignment between culinary operators, tourism marketing, economic development, and cultural initiatives.
- Strengthen collaboration with Frontenac County, Prince Edward County, and festivals.
- Lead regional culinary trail development with RTO9 and other tourism bodies such as ORHMA and Restaurants Canada.
- Align culinary initiatives with the City of Kingston Food Framework team and sustainability goals.

6. Financial Management & Sustainability Planning

- Manage Development Fund resources responsibly and in accordance with approved pro forma and reporting requirements.
- Develop and implement diversified revenue strategies, including membership dues, sponsorships, partnerships, and collaborative marketing initiatives.
- Prepare the organization for financial independence by Year 4 through clear sustainability planning and revenue transition.

7. Evaluation, Reporting & Transition Planning

- Track and report on key performance indicators, including membership growth, program participation, and sector impact.
- Evaluate economic and destination impacts of Association activities.
- Lead the transition planning process to move the Kingston Culinary Association toward independence from Kingston Accommodation Partners by the end of Year 3.

Qualifications

Required:

- Minimum 5-7 years of senior experience in hospitality, culinary tourism, destination development, economic development, or industry association leadership.
- Proven ability to build and lead organizations, initiatives, or sector-wide programs from early-stage development through growth.
- Strong understanding of restaurant operations, food systems, and hospitality-sector challenges.
- Demonstrated experience in stakeholder engagement, advocacy, and partnership development.
- Excellent communication, facilitation, and relationship-building skills.
- Strong financial literacy, including budget management and revenue development.

Preferred / Asset Qualifications:

- Experience working with industry associations or member-based organizations.
- Familiarity with culinary certifications, sustainability frameworks, and workforce initiatives.
- Experience writing and managing grant applications and other sources of revenue generation
- Knowledge of municipal, provincial, and tourism governance environments.
- Experience working with diverse, multicultural culinary communities and inclusive economic development initiatives.
- Familiarity with Kingston's culinary, tourism, and economic development landscape.

Why Join the Kingston Culinary Association?

This is a rare opportunity to **build a city-wide industry organization from the ground up** and shape the future of Kingston's restaurant and culinary tourism ecosystem. The Managing Director will play a defining role in creating lasting impact for local businesses, strengthening Kingston's visitor economy, and elevating the city's reputation as a leading culinary destination in Canada.

Term & Compensation

This is a **full-time, fixed-term position (3 years)** with the possibility of extension. Compensation will be \$80-\$100K per year plus benefits and RRSP matching, along with 3 weeks vacation.

Land Acknowledgement

Welcome / Boozhoo / Tekwanonwera:tons
to Kingston / Ka'taroh:kwi / Ken'tarókwen / Cataracoui

Kingston Accommodation Partners acknowledges that Kingston is located on the ancestral lands of the Huron-Wendat, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We recognize the enduring presence of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and our responsibility to honour the land, water, and skies with respect and care.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Kingston Accommodation Partners is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and respectful environment that reflects the diversity of Kingston's culinary community. We welcome applications from individuals of all backgrounds and lived experiences.

Ready to Apply?

The deadline to apply is February 26th, 2026. Please apply directly to Krista LeClair, Executive Director, Kingston Accommodation Partners (krista@visitkingston.ca) with your resume and a brief cover letter.