



Athens, Georgia Local Product Development Grant

Purpose:

The Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), along with The Classic Center and Classic Center Cultural Foundation (CCCF), have established a matching grant program to assist local tourism partners in developing new tourism products and experiences that will attract new overnight visitors to Athens-Clarke County. Up to \$15,000 may be granted as a one-to-one match to one or more selected applicants. A total of \$15,000 is available for this grant program in FY19.

An investment in tourism means big dividends for the community: a stronger, more diverse economy, an influx of substantial revenue, increased sales tax collection, and an improved quality of life for Athens residents who share in the variety of restaurants and retail operations, cultural and recreational attractions, and entertainment that are supported and sustained through visitor spending.

Timeline:

- All application materials must be received by 5 p.m. on December 14, 2018.
Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.
- Award notices will be made on or before January 31, 2018.

Selection Process:

The Athens CVB will convene a product development grant selection panel to review all qualified applications. The panel will consist of the CVB Director, CVB Marketing & Communications Director, CVB Advisory Board Chair, Classic Center Executive Director, Classic Center Cultural Foundation Director, and the Georgia Department of Economic Development Regional Tourism Project Manager.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- Applicants must be based *within* Athens-Clarke County.
- Organizations must have been in business *at least* two years.
- Matching grant funds are capped at \$15,000 per applicant per fiscal year. A total of \$15,000 is available through this program, and may be distributed among several applicants.
- Grant funds are meant to enhance, not replace, existing product development funds.
- Promotion of tourism product must be targeted *outside* of Athens-Clarke County. Adhering to this requirement encourages the investment of new out-of-area tourist dollars into the local economy rather than moving around discretionary entertainment dollars available to Athens residents.
- Tourism product must show the potential to generate *overnight hotel stays*.



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- Athens CVB and grant committee must review and give advance approval on funded marketing activities, including advertisements, flyers, posters, programs, websites, and digital marketing.
- Sponsoring organizations of this grant must be recognized via logos and website URLs. Minimum allowable sizes will be noted. All applicants must use the logo and taglines appropriately. Those who fail to do so will result in a denial of payment.

Criteria:

- Ability to draw visitors from outside Athens-Clarke County.
- Ability to grow, with or without funding support, over two or more years.
- Ability to project a positive image of Athens-Clarke County through media activities and promotional efforts.
- Projected number of attendees or participants.

Examples of Eligible Tourism Products:

- New themed tour.
- Music-themed mural.
- Production of promotional pieces to be distributed outside of Athens-Clarke County, including brochures, posters, direct mail pieces. Applicants must be specific on production costs and methods of distribution.
- Creation of a new visitor experience at an existing attraction.

Examples of Ineligible Expenditures:

- Annual operating expenses or staff salaries.
- Fees paid to third party vendors, consultants, or professional services.
- Expenses incurred or obligated prior to or after the funding period. Invoices paid outside of contract period.
- Travel, accommodations, or personal expenses for staff or board members.
- Mileage or gas expenses due to distribution of materials.
- Value of in-kind promotional costs, such as providing tickets to media outlets for contests or PR campaigns.
- Advertising or promotional pieces placed within Athens-Clarke County.



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Funding and Reimbursement:

- This grant program requires one-to-one matching funds. For example, a \$10,000 project would be eligible for up to a \$5,000 grant, with \$5,000 funding available from the applicant.
- All grant funds are available on a reimbursement basis only.
- All reporting requirements must be satisfied in order to receive reimbursement.
- Copies of paid invoices, cancelled sheets, printed samples, or other backup information which shows proof of payment must accompany all requests for funds.
- All requests for reimbursement must be received in a timely fashion.

Funding Ranges:

| Application Score: | % of matching grant (not to exceed \$15,000) |
|---------------------------|---|
| 90-100 points | Up to 100% of request |
| 80-89.99 points | Up to 90% of request |
| 70-79.99 points | Up to 80% of request |
| Up to 69.99 points | No funding |

Other Conditions:

The grant committee reserves the right to approve grants based on assessment of need and demonstrated potential to draw overnight visitors. A grant may be awarded for less than the amount requested, depending on the number of applications received, appropriateness of marketing initiative, and total funds available for grants.

The event or organization will credit the sponsoring organizations at the level equal to the award amount. For example, if the award is \$2,500 and that amount is equivalent to a gold level sponsor, the grant is to be listed as a gold level sponsor. This year's winner not only represents an Athens attraction, but it could also be said that they are themselves an attraction.

Because the source of the grant organizations' funding is, in large part, public, all applications are subject to public record requirements. Submitted applications will be disclosed upon request.

Sponsor organizations of this grant (CVB, Classic Center, Classic Center Cultural Foundation) are not eligible to apply for funding through this grant program.

If you have questions about the application process, contact Hannah Smith, Director of Marketing & Communications, at 706-357-4408, hsmith@VisitAthensGA.com.



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Application Checklist

Complete and sign Cover Sheet.

Submit responses to the following:

1. Describe the tourism product for which you are requesting this matching grant. Include its mission, goals, and activities during the next 12 months. If this request is part of a larger project, please describe the larger project and how this component is integrated. (20 points)
2. Describe in detail how this project relates to TOURISM, focusing on the overall economic impact of the tourism product to Athens-Clarke County. What **new** spending will your product generate from those **outside** Athens who would visit over multiple days? What attendance figures do you expect? (35 points)
3. Submit a marketing-promotion plan to attract visitors from outside of Athens-Clarke County. (35 points)
4. Extra points will be awarded to projects that fulfill goals or recommendations outlined in the GDEcD "Tourism Product Development Music Tourism Report" (10 points)
This report may be found at <http://www.marketgeorgia.org/resource/athens-music-tourism-product-development-report>

Submit the budget, and timeline, for the project.

Note: If the project's budget exceeds \$30,000, the maximum amount of 1+1 matching funds eligible through this program, indicate which budget line items would be fulfilled by the grant and provide evidence that additional sources of funds would be available to complete & sustain the project, should the grant be awarded.

Submit three letters of support for the project.

Provide seven sets (1 original + 6 copies) of your application packet.

Complete applications must be received no later than 5 p.m. on December 14 at:

Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau
300 N. Thomas St.
Athens, GA 30601
Attn: Hannah Smith, Director of Marketing & Communications

Late or incomplete materials will not be accepted.



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Cover Sheet

Applicant Organization Name: _____

Tourism Product Name: _____

Project Contact Name & Title: _____

Contact Phone: _____ Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Initial next to each item below, signifying that you have read and understand the conditions of the Product Development Grant:

_____ I understand that this grant provides matching funds, and sufficient total project funds must be available and demonstrated by the organization to launch and sustain the tourism product.

_____ I understand that all reporting requirements must be satisfied in order to receive reimbursement.

_____ I understand that all printed and/or digital marketing collateral must be reviewed by the grant committee prior to publication and must provide credit to the sponsoring organizations.

_____ I understand that the event or organization will credit the grant at the level equal to the award amount.

Signature of authorizing official(s)
(Board Chair &/or Director)

Signature of Contact Person
(if different)

Date

Date