



2020 Tourism Grant Guidelines

For Marketing and Product Development Funds

Introduction

The Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) is pleased to announce the 2020 Tourism Grant Program designed to enhance visitor and tourism promotional efforts, and tourism product development for the Augusta area. The Tourism Grant assists entities with tourism marketing, promotion, tourism product development, attractions, special events, and festivals that will foster local economic impact through tourism ultimately resulting in increased visitation from outside of the Augusta area and higher destination appeal.

The Augusta CVB administers the grant under contract with the City of Augusta which is funded through a portion of the local hotel/motel tax. Grants are reviewed by the Tourism Grant Committee, which is comprised of the Mayor Pro Tem, two commissioners, and four members of the Augusta CVB Board of Directors.

The Tourism Product Development Committee, which is comprised of the same members as the Tourism Grant Committee, are authorized to use up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the tourism grant funds for the purpose of developing new tourism products and enhanced experiences designed to attract visitors to Augusta.

Mission

The purpose of this grant program is to provide funds for marketing, product development, and other qualified expenses directed towards increasing the number of overnight visitors to Augusta from outside of the area.

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Tourism Grant Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must fulfill all of the following:

- Be a documented not-for-profit, governmental or quasi-governmental entity
- Have completed at least one year of fiscal operation as a not-for-profit organization.
- An annual financial agreed upon procedures review must be conducted by the Augusta CVB's chosen CPA firm. Please contact:
 - Mary K Grady, Audit Senior
Cherry Bekaert, L.L.P.
1029 Greene Street, Augusta, GA 30901
(706) 421-1359 – Direct
(706) 724-3557 – Phone
mgrady@cbh.com
- All applicants must represent an ongoing, sustainable activity.
- Applying for funds for a non-retroactive project
- Be a partner in good standing
- No qualified entity may serve as a fiscal agent for a non-qualified entity.
- If requested, applicant may be required to furnish the Augusta CVB with up to 10% of all printed materials produced with the assistance of this grant.
- Applicants should be able to demonstrate the ability to execute its project without depending on the continued financial assistance from these funds. It should be the intention of the organization to be self-sustaining.
- Applicants must be located in Augusta and/or a board of directors composed of at least one-half Augusta residents and must meet on a regular basis. Or, if it is a festival/event it must take place in Augusta.
- An application and all related documents must be submitted and approved by the Tourism Grant Committee.
- A sponsorship benefits package equivalent to the dollar amount of grant funds awarded. Sponsorship benefits could include, but are not limited to event tickets, website exposure, print advertising acknowledgement, press passes, etc.
- A contract must be signed by the applicant and the Augusta CVB prior to distribution of funds. The contract may be for a term of one year, but no more than five years based on qualifications.
- A final report is required for each grant and for each year during the grant. It should be submitted in the form of summary which addresses the following:
 - A description of the Performance under Contract
 - Benefits to Augusta and the public
 - Actual Attendance & Attendance Tracking Method

- Impact it had on tourism in Augusta
- Marketing plan results and analytics
- Effect on City hotels. Provide number of room nights generated in Augusta hotels.
- Samples of advertising and promotion including tear sheets, brochures, photographs, video, other collateral, digital advertising, broadcast affidavits, etc. may be attached.

Tourism Grant Core Stipulations

- Failure to use funds as specified in the contract may result in penalties up to and including a full refund of grant funds.
- Failure to submit the agreed upon procedures and final report by the deadline is unacceptable and may result in penalties up to and including a full refund of grant funds.
- Project applicants cannot transfer funds from one specific tourism project to another without a written request and addendum to the contract. Submit any requests for official modification forms to Lindsay Fruchtl at Lindsay@VisitAugusta.com and Jennifer Bowen at Jennifer@VisitAugusta.com no later than October 9th.
- Organizations receiving a Tourism Grant must have a reciprocal link on their website to www.VisitAugusta.com. The consumer must be able to reach www.VisitAugusta.com in one click.
- Any media obtained through this grant program must be shared with the Augusta CVB for promotional use.
- Applicants who do not comply with all deadlines and procedures may be disqualified and ineligible to receive Tourism Grant Funds for one year.
- Applicants are highly encouraged to attend the grant review workshop.

Marketing Fund Applicants: Qualifying Programs and Events

Programs: Qualifying entities may be attractions, associations, organizations or governmental or quasi-governmental agencies which promote their products and/or services to visitors from outside the area.

Festival/Event: A festival is a cultural event or group of events planned, produced, and promoted in a well-defined period and organized to occur at regular intervals, usually on an annual basis, all related to a common cultural form, theme or vision.

There is no guarantee that all applicants will be awarded a grant. Even though a project may qualify, limited funds may not allow all projects to receive assistance. Any and all decisions regarding awarding or not awarding grants are at the sole discretion of the Tourism Grant Committee.

Marketing Fund Applicants: Funding Purposes

All grants must be used for expenses directly related to the project. Again, grants must be used for marketing and other qualified expenses directed toward increasing hotel/motel room nights (overnight visitors) and toward bringing people to Augusta from outside the metropolitan area.

Greater consideration is given to projects that develop partnerships or are done in conjunction with another non-profit organization. The list below is a guide but is not comprehensive. Eligible allowable and disallowable expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

Allowable Expenses

- Development of new events or major exhibits and activities
- Out-of-market tourism advertising/marketing or promotion including digital, social media, print, television, direct mail, radio, or other types of advertising/marketing.
 - For purposes of this grant “Out-of-Market” is considered 60+ miles outside of Augusta. Local media outlets do not normally meet the intended purpose of the grant and will receive less consideration than media outlets located 60+ miles outside of Augusta.
- Promotional activities that compliment advertising, including materials that create awareness and build or maintain a good image of Augusta, e.g., printing of brochures, inserts, and display banners for events
- Production costs of media advertising, photography, videography, website and social media development
- Marketing expenses, including outside professional marketing service
- No more than 50% of grant funds may be used for postage.

Disallowable Expenses

- Capital expenditures
- Rent of offices, repairs, renovation and/or remodeling of facilities
- General operating or administrative expenses
- General staff or personnel costs (excluding sales and marketing staff)
- Interest or the reduction of deficits or loans
- Expenses incurred or obligated before grant project approval
- Expenditures for local food and beverage events
- Projects restricted to private or exclusive participation, other than certain grand and pre-opening expenses
- Scholarships or endowments
- Cash awards of any description
- Expenses not directly related to the approved program
- Activities related to any for-profit organization
- Activities or materials which violate the law

Marketing Fund Applicants: Focus Areas and Target Markets

Projects which target and support Augusta area tourism drivers, the Augusta CVB’s strategic priorities and audiences will be given special consideration.

Augusta Tourism Drivers

- Art & Culture
- Outdoor Adventure
- Sports
- History & Heritage
- Culinary

Augusta CVB Strategic Priorities

1. Tell Augusta's Story to Influence the Decision to Travel Here
2. Help Augusta Gain Market Share in Conventions, Events and Film
3. Help Increase Visitor Activity and Spending in Augusta

Audiences

- Target Markets
 - Near Drive – 250-mile radius of Augusta
 - Top MSA's: Atlanta, GA., Charlotte, NC.
- Demographic Groups:
 - Primary:
 - Millennial Singles and Families (predominantly Female): As of 2019 ages 23 to 38
 - GenX (predominantly Female): As of 2019 ages 40-54
 - Secondary: Boomers – defined by the boom in U.S. births following World War II
- Clusters
 - Bleisure – Bleisure travelers mix business and leisure travel. Often, bleisure travelers will extend their stay, and bring their families along to enjoy a mini vacation.
 - Action Adventure – These are travelers who seek healthy, culturally rich destinations. They enjoy the outdoors and local culture. They appreciate sustainable practices and promote social responsibility.
 - Meeting Planners – Meeting planners are strong resources for bringing potential visitors to Augusta. They seek destinations that can accommodate their events and tools that make planning easy and efficient.

Marketing Fund Applicants: Grant Review Criteria

Applications are evaluated in the following areas:

- 1) Excellence and merit of program or event
- 2) Merit of marketing plan
- 3) Ability to attract and service visitors
- 4) Fiscal stability and administrative ability
- 5) Economic impact potential, i.e. increasing visitation, restaurant sales, and most importantly, hotel occupancy

Product Development Grant Applicant: Project Criteria

For a project to be considered it should **meet the following basic criteria:**

- Increases visitation or enhances visitor experience;
- The tourism sector supports it and it does not create an unfair competitive disadvantage to other local business;
- Integrates well with the existing destination product and Augusta's brand;
- Generates economic benefits and/or quality of life improvements for local community; and
- Is sustainable, and financially and conceptually viable

Product Development Grant Applicant: Goals of Tourism Product Development

1. Increase the number of products, experiences and services available for visitors and locals.
2. Grow the number of visits, length of stay and spending by visitors.
3. Improve the profitability of tourism businesses.
4. Keep Augusta, GA competitive with other destinations

Product Development Grant Applicant: Match Required

The applicant must be able to match each dollar by a quarter (\$75 grant request + \$25 your match = \$100 project costs). Applications that include cash matches will be given higher consideration than those with in-kind matches.

Product Development Grant Applicant: Tourism Product Development Focus Areas

Tourism Product Development comprises those experiences, activities and products that are specifically provided for the visitor and community. Projects which align with Augusta's Destination Blueprint, a quality of place plan, will be given special consideration. Please find more details about Destination Blueprint at www.DestinationBlueprint.com, also review the Augusta Public Art Master Plan and The Augusta Festival & Events Plan there for more information. The areas of recommendation included in Destination Blueprint include:

Please note that this list is not all-inclusive.

1. Connectivity with the Savannah River
Soft Product Development
 - a. Event development (500+) that could be expanded to create overnight stays – event focused on the Savannah River
2. Arts & Culture
Soft Product Development
 - a. Event development (500+) that could be expanded to create overnight stays focused on arts and culture
Asset Product Development
 - b. Public Art – sculptures, development of a sculpture walk, or monumental art
 - c. Downtown Art and Event Venue – reuse of existing vacant space for a multi-use gallery, studio and small event space
 - d. Art to beautify empty or vacant buildings

3. Events & Festivals
 - Soft Product Development*
 - a. Event development (500+) that could be expanded to create overnight stays focused on the river, arts, and food
 - Celebrate the River – a camp out concert music series
 - City-wide Southern Hospitality Event
 - Outdoor adventure combining hiking, biking, paddling into a multi-day festival
4. Outdoor & Adventure
 - Soft Product Development*
 - a. Packaging assets such as hiking, biking, or paddling into one experience
 - b. Tour Development
 - Asset Product Development*
 - a. Trails that connect to other trails
 - b. Boat ramps or access areas for paddling
 - c. Rentals such as personal watercraft, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, bikes or bikeshare programs
 - d. Zip lines, Rock Walls, unique Outdoor lodging

Tourism Grant Application Process

The Tourism Grant Program consists of six basic areas:

- 1) Completed application
- 2) Grant awarded by the Tourism Grant Committee
- 3) Signed contract between the applicant and the Augusta CVB
- 4) Attend a mandatory workshop reviewing proper use of grant funds and procedures
- 5) All supporting information is due to the Augusta CVB's chosen CPA firm by December 30th for conducting the annual financial agreed upon procedures review (as mentioned in the eligibility requirements).
- 6) A final report and agreed upon procedures are due to the Augusta CVB before January 22nd of the year following the award.

2020 Tourism Grant Timeline for Application and Awards

DATE	ACTION
September 24, 2019	2020 Tourism Grant Application, Guidelines, and Co-op Opportunities Workshop
October 25, 2019	2020 Application deadline (4:00 p.m.)
December 6, 2019	Target date for notifying 2020 grant recipients
March 13, 2020	Target date for mandatory workshop/contract signing
December 30, 2020	2020 supporting information for financial review due to CPA firm to conduct review
January 22, 2021	2020 Final Reports due to Augusta CVB for 2020 grants