



The Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau

## **2021 Tourism Grant Guidelines**

*Revised May 2021*

### **Introduction**

The Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) doing business as Destination Augusta is pleased to announce the 2021 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 and higher destination appeal through tourism ultimately resulting in increased visitation from outside of Augusta.

Destination Augusta 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 Destination Augusta's Board of Directors.

The Tourism Product Development Committee, which is comprised of the same members as the Tourism Grant Committee, is 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.

### **2021 Tourism Grant Changes**

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on 2020 overnight visitation to Augusta and subsequent declines in hotel/motel tax collections -the grant's funding source- there are limited funds available to award in the 2021 Tourism Grant cycle. With the reduction in available funds, it is critical that we maximize our resources to package and promote the destination as a whole to get visitors back and our residents out exploring Augusta, including your attractions and events.

In these challenging and unpredictable times, we need to be laser-focused on getting the greatest return we can get for our limited dollars. The Tourism Grant Committee voted that 2021 Tourism Grant funds be allocated towards co-op marketing programming and product development projects that support Destination Blueprint recommendations, rather than individual marketing awards. Historically, co-op marketing has leveraged grant funds to highlight individual grant recipients together in publications and media with excellent exposure that would be financially out of reach for an individual recipient to purchase without grant funds. Due to the extraordinary circumstances, we're facing, the Committee has also made an exception for co-op marketing funds to be spent 70% out-of-market and 30% in-market to target both locals and travelers passing through our destination.

## 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 Destination Augusta'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](mailto: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 acknowledge grant funds were provided by Destination Augusta and/or the City of Augusta to fund the project for both marketing and product development projects.
- 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 have 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 contract must be signed by the applicant and Destination Augusta 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 co-op marketing grants and for each year during the grant period. A form will be provided to all co-op grant recipients to fill out. Information that will need to be provided includes:
  - Website traffic from co-op campaigns
  - Inquiries received from co-op campaigns
  - Visitor testimonials
  - Visitation numbers compared to prior year

## Tourism Grant Core Stipulations

- 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](mailto:Lindsay@VisitAugusta.com) and Jennifer Bowen at [Jennifer@VisitAugusta.com](mailto:Jennifer@VisitAugusta.com).
- Organizations receiving a Tourism Grant must have a reciprocal link on their website to [www.VisitAugusta.com](http://www.VisitAugusta.com). The consumer must be able to reach [www.VisitAugusta.com](http://www.VisitAugusta.com) in one click.
- Any media obtained through this grant program must be shared with Destination Augusta for promotional use.
- Applicants who do not comply with all deadlines and procedures may be disqualified and ineligible to receive future Tourism Grant funds for at least one year.

## Co-op 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.

Tourism Grant Co-op marketing programs are managed by Destination Augusta and its supporting agencies. In 2021 we will offer two rounds of co-op marketing. Applicants that apply for Round 1 that are interested in Round 2 need not reapply.

- Round 1 Co-op Marketing Program (February-mid July)

- Round 2 Co-op Marketing Program (July-December)

**Click [here](#) to review the 2021 Round 2 Co-op Marketing Package presentation which includes:**

- 2021 Goals & Objectives
- Round 2 Plan Overview
- Round 2 Tactic Selections

There is no guarantee that all applicants will be awarded a grant. All decisions regarding awards are at the sole discretion of the Tourism Grant Committee.

## Co-op 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
- Culinary
- Entertainment
- History & Heritage
- Outdoor Adventure
- Sports

### ***Destination Augusta 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

## 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 Destination Augusta
- 4) Attend the tourism grant workshop reviewing proper use of grant funds and procedures
- 5) All supporting information is due to Destination Augusta's chosen CPA firm by December 30<sup>th</sup> 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 Destination Augusta before January 21<sup>st</sup> of the year following the award.

## 2021 Tourism Grant Timeline for Application and Awards

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>December 18, 2020</b>	2021 Tourism Grant Application, Guidelines, and Round 1 Co-op Marketing Package go live
<b>January 15, 2021</b>	2020 Application deadline (4:00 p.m.)
<b>January 25, 2021</b>	Target date for notifying 2021 grant recipients for product development and round 1 co-op marketing awards
<b>May 17, 2021</b>	Target date for Round 2 2021 Tourism Grant Application, Guidelines, and Co-op Marketing Package go live
<b>June 2, 2021, 3:30pm</b>	2021 Tourism Grant Round 2 Marketing Co-op Informational Session
<b>June 11, 2021</b>	2021 Tourism Round 2 Marketing Co-op Applications due
<b>December 30, 2021</b>	2021 supporting information for financial review due to CPA firm to conduct review
<b>January 21, 2022</b>	2021 Product Development and Co-op Marketing Final Reports due to the Augusta CVB