



2021 Tourism Grant Guidelines

For Co-op Marketing and Product Development Funds

Introduction

The Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) 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.

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, 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 has 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 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 acknowledge grant funds were provided by the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau 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 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 product development grants and for each year during the grant period. 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 if applicable
 - Impact it had on tourism in Augusta
 - Effect on City hotels. Provide number of room nights generated in Augusta hotels if applicable
- 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 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.
- 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 maybe 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 the Augusta CVB 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 1 Co-op Marketing Package presentation which includes:

- 2021 Goals & Objectives
- Round 1 Plan Overview
- Round 1 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
- 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

Product Development Grant Applicants: Project Criteria

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

- Increases visitation or enhances visitor experiences;
- 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 Applicants: 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 competitive with other destinations

Product Development Grant Applicants: 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 Applicants: 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 Product Development Allowable Expenses

Allowable Expenses

This is not a conclusive list:

- Development of new events or major exhibits and activities
- Artists & Entertainer fees
- Production costs related to arts or events
- Contractor and/or Construction Costs
- Public Art purchases
- Event Management Fees

Disallowable Expenses

- Product Development Research or Feasibility Studies
- 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

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 the tourism grant 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 21st of the year following the award.

2021 Tourism Grant Timeline for Application and Awards

DATE	ACTION
December 18, 2020	2021 Tourism Grant Application, Guidelines, and Round 1 Co-op Marketing Package go live
January 15, 2021	2020 Application deadline (4:00 p.m.)
January 25, 2021	Target date for notifying 2021 grant recipients for product development and round 1 co-op marketing awards
February 26, 2021	Target date for mandatory workshop/contract signing
May 12, 2021	Target date for Round 2 2021 Tourism Grant Application, Guidelines, and Co-op Marketing Package go live
December 30, 2021	2021 supporting information for financial review due to CPA firm to conduct review
January 21, 2022	2021 Product Development and Co-op Marketing Final Reports due to Augusta CVB for 2020 grants