

DESTINATION
AUGUSTA



2022 Tourism Grant Guidelines

Marketing Fund

May 2022

INTRODUCTION

Destination Augusta is pleased to announce the 2022 Tourism Grant Marketing Program. The grant is designed to assist entities with tourism promotional efforts that foster local economic impact ultimately resulting in increased visitation from outside the Augusta area.

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

MISSION

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

QUALIFYING PROGRAMS & 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.

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
- 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 Destination Augusta 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 the project without depending on the continued financial assistance from these funds. It should be the intention of the organization to be self-sustaining.

DESTINATION MARKETING FOCUS AREAS AND BACKGROUND

Tourism Grant applications that align and compliment Destination Augusta's mission, vision, strategic goals, and marketing and messaging strategy will receive special consideration.

MISSION STATEMENT: Destination Augusta develops and promotes our community, inspiring people to have unforgettable experiences.

VISION STATEMENT: Augusta is a thriving community rich with experiences that attract people.

STRATEGIC GOALS & PRIORITIES:

- Recruit and promote meetings, events, festivals, and film productions year-round
- Keep Augusta improving to be the most attractive travel destination it can be
- Foster stakeholder alignment and collaboration
- Articulate and emotionalize Augusta's unique selling proposition

POSITIONING STATEMENT

Augusta's River Region provides travelers the opportunity to experience a new destination like a local by offering accessible, authentic travel experiences to leisure travelers in the Southeast with a comfortable friendliness that brings them into the fold of the Augusta community.

TARGET LEISURE AUDIENCE

PRIMARY: Adults 25-54 which encompasses both Millennials (25-40) and Gen Xers (41-54) interested in travel; layering in additional interest categories that Augusta is strong in to include outdoors, arts & culture, history, dining, festivals and events.

KEY FEEDER MARKETS - These are top drive-in markets from 2021 VisitAugusta.com users according to Google Analytics.

1. Atlanta
2. Charlotte
3. Raleigh
4. Columbia
5. Myrtle Beach
6. Savannah
7. Charleston

DESTINATION LEISURE MESSAGING STRATEGY

Implement brand-centered messaging through the Come See Augusta campaign across all markets with a focus on Augusta's core brand pillars of outdoors, arts & culture, history, dining, festivals and events. In addition to a consistent brand message, we will tailor messaging to hit on Augusta's unique selling propositions (USP's):

- Ease & accessibility
- Authentic undiscovered experiences
- Comfortable friendliness
- Great pop-over stop on a longer trip or weekend getaway



MARKETING FUND APPLICANTS: FUNDING PURPOSES

We encourage all applicants to first review the cooperative marketing opportunities offered by Destination Augusta in your request. Cooperative marketing opportunities include Destination Augusta and professional agency support and execution. All grants must be used for expenses directly related to the project. Grants must be used for marketing and other qualified expenses directed toward increasing lodging 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. 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

CORE STIPULATIONS

- 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.
- 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
- 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 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.
- 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 no later than October 14, 2022.
- Organizations receiving a Tourism Grant must have a reciprocal link on their website to VisitAugusta.com. The consumer must be able to reach 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 Tourism Grant Funds for one year.

TOURISM GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Completed application
2. Grant awarded by the Tourism Grant Committee
3. Signed contract between the applicant and Destination Augusta
4. All supporting information is due to Destination Augusta's chosen CPA firm by December 30, 2022 for conducting the annual financial agreed upon procedures review (as mentioned in the eligibility requirements).
5. A final report and agreed upon procedures are due to Destination Augusta before January 20, 2023.

TOURISM GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

DATE	ACTION
Wednesday, May 25, 2022	2022 Marketing Tourism Grant Guidelines, Application, and Co-op Opportunities go live
Wednesday, June 8, 2022	Tourism Grant Overview Q&A session
Wednesday, June 15, 2022	Applications Due
Thursday, June 23, 2022	Award Notifications Target Date
Wednesday, June 29, 2022	2022 Tourism Grant Workshop and Contract Signing
Friday, December 30, 2022	2022 supporting information for financial review due to CPA firm to conduct review
Friday, January 20, 2023	2022 Final Reports due to Destination Augusta