



# CULTURAL TOURISM ADVANCEMENT GRANT

## Guidelines







## WHAT IS THE CTA GRANT?

The Chattanooga Tourism Company (Tourism Co.) Cultural Tourism Advancement Grant supports a wide range of tourism-related projects that contribute to visitors' positive experiences in the Chattanooga area. Grants are awarded on the basis of merit as determined and administered by Chattanooga Tourism Co.

## BACKGROUND

The Tourism Co. developed this grant and designates funds annually to support several objectives identified in our strategic plan: 1) increase brand awareness for Chattanooga and Hamilton County, 2) drive visitor demand, and 3) develop and enhance visitor experiences.

Grant funds consist of public dollars generated by visitors to Hamilton County who spend the night in our accommodations. These funds must be used to support the Tourism Co.'s mission of promoting and developing visitor experiences to enhance the economic and social prosperity of Hamilton County.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

The CTA Grant is an annual grant program of the Tourism Co. Potential grant recipients are required to complete a grant application form at [chattanoogatourism.gosmart.org/](http://chattanoogatourism.gosmart.org/) on or before the specified deadline in the Timeline section. Applicants must be a partner of the Tourism Co. (there is no cost associated with being a partner).

# GRANT FUNDS AND PAYMENT

- Organizations and businesses may request up to (and no more than) 10% of their total operating budget, but may not exceed \$50,000. The same applicant can apply for up to two different projects as long as the total of the two projects requested does not exceed as stated above, 10% of the operating budget up to \$50,000.
  - Applicants should be able to demonstrate the ability to execute their project without depending on the continued financial assistance from these funds.
  - A legally binding funding agreement will be entered into between the Tourism Co. and successful applicants. All agreements require a final report due at the date specified in the agreement.
  - Some requests for capital projects may fit into a multi-year award. Multi-year projects may submit a longer-term budget in the application and if awarded, an annual progress report will be required in the agreement.
  - Successful recipients will receive 50% of the project funds upon signing of the funding agreement and 50% upon the completion of the project and submission of completed documentation.
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# WHO MAY APPLY

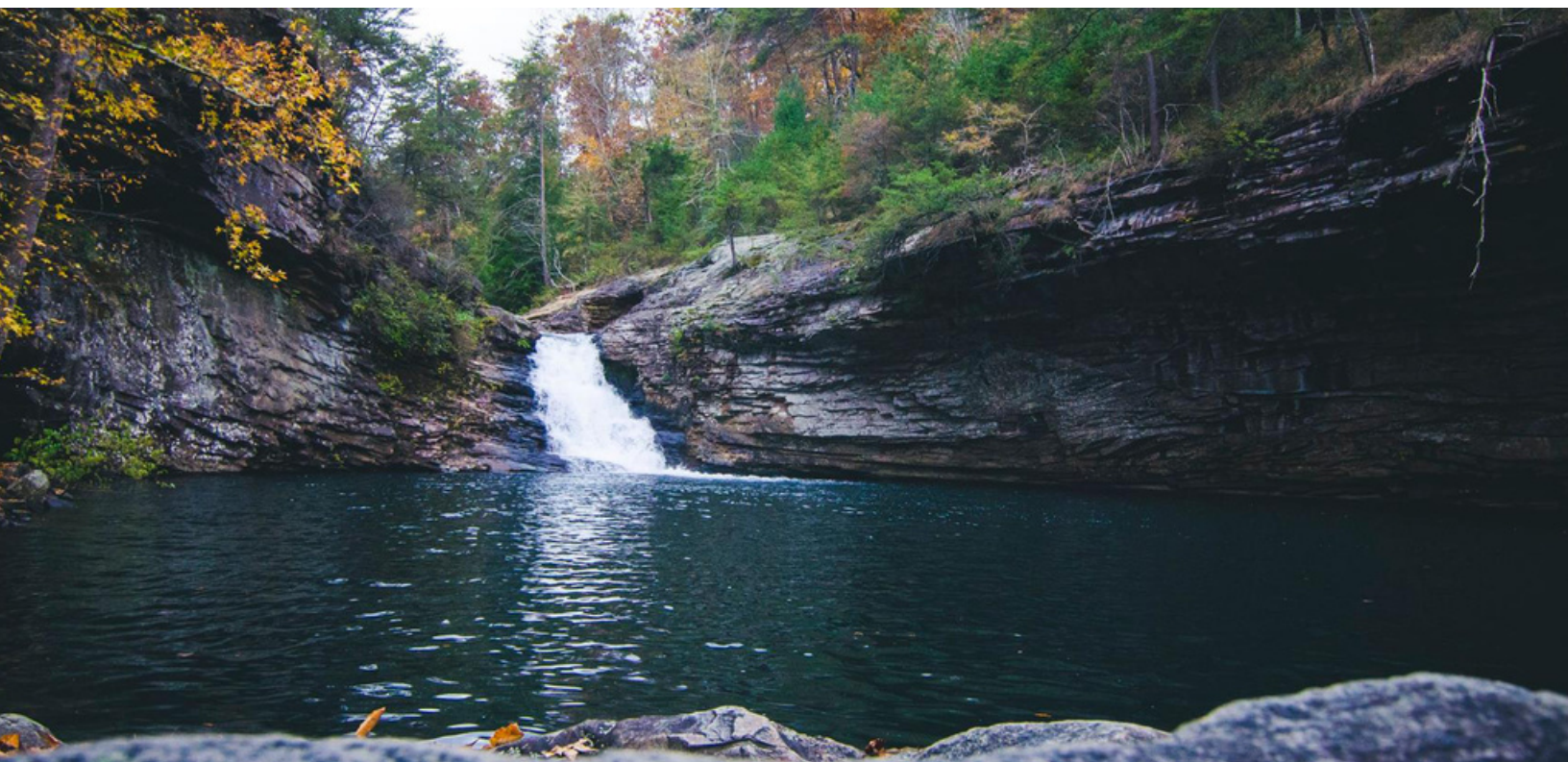
Applications are accepted from non-profit, non-governmental organizations and for profit businesses who demonstrate the ability to complete the proposed event or activity. Businesses and organizations must also have been in operation for more than two years. The entity that applies must be the primary financial agent and agreement signer.

## CRITERIA

In awarding funds, greatest consideration will be given to projects that closely match the goals and mission of the Tourism Co. The grant program is designed to encourage wide participation and innovative projects. Potential grants can be cultural, informational, recreational, or artistic in nature. All projects must take place within Hamilton County.

Applications will be rated on the project/program's ability to:

- Attract diverse audiences
- Create economic impact
- Encourage visitors to travel to or extend their stay in Hamilton County
- Enhance the visitor experience
- Collaborate with other local organizations and artists
- Improve the quality of life for Hamilton County residents through tourism
- Address a community need that supports the Tourism Co. mission





# ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

We encourage all partners to review the marketing and cooperative marketing opportunities offered by the Tourism Co. first in your request of grant funds for marketing. Approved requests for the co-op will be matched to your awarded grant fund. For example, if you are awarded \$10,000 in grant funds towards the co-op, you will receive a \$20,000 media buy plus professional marketing agency support and execution included. Matching funds are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Tourism Co.'s goals for marketing investment include more diverse audiences and the Midwestern US.

Other example expenses:

- Development of new visitor experiences that diversify tourism offerings in Hamilton County
- New or enhanced infrastructure upgrades to facilitate a new tourism visitor experience
- Implementation of new technology to create a new tourism visitor experience in the Chattanooga area
- Signage (wayfinding, on-site attraction, visitor info kiosk)
- Funding to support marketing a visitor experience to new audiences



# DISALLOWABLE EXPENSES

- Rent of admin offices, renovation or repairs to administrative facilities
- General operating, staff or administrative expenses (excluding marketing consultants/agencies)
- Expenses incurred or obligated before grant approval (with the exception of events that occur within the calendar year but occur before the grant award date)
- Projects restricted to private or exclusive participation
- Scholarships or endowments
- Cash awards of any description
- Expenses not directly related to the approved project or program
- Project applicants cannot transfer funds from one specific tourism project to another without a written request and an addendum to the contract
- Activities or materials which violate the law





## PROJECT PROPOSAL EXAMPLES

**MARKETING &  
EVENTS**

**PRODUCT**





## WEAK

An art museum plans a new glass art exhibit at the same time as an aquarium plans to open a new jellyfish exhibit. The two attractions work together to sell tickets. The aquarium and art museum apply for signage that cross promotes the exhibits.

## STRONG

An art museum and aquarium apply for marketing grant dollars to promote the same joint ticket outside of the Chattanooga area as a part of their strategy to drive visitors to Chattanooga. Their application includes a clear and detailed marketing plan and as well as a plan to track the joint ticket sales to measure the effectiveness of the campaign.





## WEAK

A festival in Chattanooga wants to expand its audience at the festival. The festival applies for the grant, submitting a marketing plan to run billboards, digital ads, print ads and TV spots around Chattanooga.

## STRONG

The same festival has identified a new market that shows promise based on the previous year's ticket sales. They would like to expand their marketing efforts and need additional funds to properly reach that market. The festival applies for the grant, submitting a marketing plan to run billboards, digital ads, print ads and TV spots in this new market. The application includes a system in place to track ticket sales by zip code and will provide reporting after the event is over to measure the effectiveness of the campaign.



## WEAK

A long-running film festival has a celebrity coming to Chattanooga for the upcoming event. They apply for funding to shoot a video with the celebrity. The application includes a bid from a contractor for the cost of the video production.

## STRONG

The film festival applies for funding to shoot a video with the celebrity to distribute to targeted audiences, inviting them to the festival. The application includes a bid from a contractor for the cost of the video production and a distribution plan for the video. The film festival has tracking in place to know the amount of engagement with the video and ticket sales at the time of the video release to track conversions.





## WEAK

A local museum requests funding for renovations to their exhibit and building that will enhance learning resources.

## STRONG

A local museum requests funding for renovations to their exhibit and building that will enhance learning resources. They demonstrate that 25% of their visitors are from out of area and include a feasibility study that concludes the renovations will increase visitation an additional 10%.



## WEAK

A local walking tour company requests funding for a fleet of bicycles that would enable them to expand their tour offerings.

## STRONG

A local walking tour company requests funding for a fleet of bicycles while demonstrating that a substantial number of previous visitors have requested bicycle tours. They include a plan to market the new tours outside of Chattanooga in order to attract more visitors.





## WEAK

A group of neighborhood businesses request funding for the creation of a regular, projection mapping experience on an iconic building downtown.

## STRONG

A group of neighborhood businesses requests funding for the creation of a regular, projection mapping experience on an iconic building downtown that will draw both locals and visitors. They've already collaborated with the artists and technologists necessary to complete the project and they support their application with statistics on current visitation to the neighborhood and support their application with a plan to promote the new experience to markets outside Chattanooga.



## WEAK

A group of historians request funding to design and install signage that call out important historical stories of a neighborhood.

## STRONG

A group of historians working with the city request funding to design and install signage that call out important historical stories of a neighborhood. To convey the value this would add to visitors' experience in our city, they've had conversations with multiple tourism partners that suggest visitors are looking for a historical context to their surroundings. They also include successful examples from other destinations.





## TIMELINE

- Application Open February 17
- Grant Info Session February 24
- Applications Close March 24
- Awardees notified May (mid)

**CHATTA  
NOOGA**  
TOURISM CO.