

DECATUR COUNTY VISITORS COMMISSION

PURPOSE OF THIS GRANT PROGRAM:

The Decatur County Visitors Commission (DCVC) has allocated \$90,000 in 2020-21 to directly fund organizations and entities that demonstrate a positive plan that will contribute tourism potential to Decatur County. These funds are to assist qualified organizations with the promotion of tourism activities that strive to directly increase overnight lodging occupancy and create positive image-building publicity for Decatur County. The source of funding for these grants is income derived from the County Innkeeper's Tax, which has strict guidelines for its usage. According to the State of Indiana legislation that allows for the collection of an Innkeeper's Tax, funds may be expended to promote and encourage conventions, visitors, and tourism within Decatur County.

Qualifying Applications:

Applicants must be organized, seeking to produce and promote a well-defined tourism-oriented festival, event, or community enhancement project. Grant funds can be distributed in two ways:

1. As a reimbursement: no funds will be released until receipts or other proper proof of charges have been submitted along with the Final Grant Report following the event. Reimbursement payments will be released in a timely manner.
2. Payment can be made directly to vendors (with original invoice) for approved charges matching those requested in the original grant application.

All grant requests are evaluated by the Board of Commissioners and decided on their merits.

The DCVC reserves the right to provide funding to an organization or entity that falls outside the stated grant criteria guidelines, so long as its plan or purpose accomplishes the overall mission of the DCVC to promote and encourage tourism to Decatur County. Any such outside funding provided will be at the sole discretion of the DCVC Board of Commissioners.



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2020-21 GRANT CRITERIA GUIDELINES:

1. Grant applications must be received a minimum of 60 days prior to your event.
2. All events or projects must take place within Decatur County.
3. All events or projects must demonstrate the potential to generate overnight hotel stays. Special consideration will be given to organizations that partner with local hotels.
4. Any funds awarded cannot be used for organizational salaries.
5. Events or projects must be open to the general public and no event may have as its primary purpose the promotion of a specific candidate, political party, or platform.
6. The DCVC reserves the right to disqualify any applicant or application for any reason.
7. The DCVC must be given recognition as an event sponsor on all promotional material for any event or festival that is awarded a grant. It is required that all printed pieces carry the credited line: **"Made possible in part by a grant from Decatur County Tourism."** It is also required that a banner (or banners), supplied by Tourism, be placed in a location visible to all vendors and participants, as well as mention of DCVC support in any printed materials, radio appearances, social media posts, etc. that promote your event. Banners can be picked up 5 days prior to your event and will be signed out; banners are to then be signed back in within 5 days following your event.
8. Grants will not be considered for any expenses previously incurred.
9. The DCVC will not fund programs that are designed to be fundraisers for an organization.
10. Applicants are required to make a brief presentation to the DCVC Board of Commissioners at a monthly DCVC meeting prior to the event in order to provide information about your event and answer questions. DCVC Board meetings are held at 12pm on the third Thursday of each month.

A mandatory post-event summary (Final Grant Form) is due within 60 days after the completion of any funded event. Failure to submit the summary in a timely manner could result in the award being rescinded, and will affect funding of future grant applications.

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TWO TYPES OF VISITORS COMMISSION GRANTS

1. Festival and Special Event Grants:

The purpose of the Festival and Special Event Grant is to assist qualified organizations in the marketing of festivals and events that exhibit the potential to attract visitors and develop tourism in Decatur County; striving directly to increase hotel occupancy; and to create a positive image and generate positive publicity for Decatur County.

- a. Grant range - up to \$2,500.
- b. Added weight will be given to new projects.
- c. Qualified organizations may submit grant applications more than once per year so long as they are promoting separate events.
- d. An organization may submit more than one application; however, multiple applications for the same event will not be considered. Each application will be evaluated independently, based on grant criteria.
- e. **Eligible expenditures for reimbursement: Advertising placed in media outlets outside of Decatur County--applications must be specific as to the estimated cost of any media or publicity, as well as size and number of ads to be placed. Media based in Decatur County but with a regional reach and audience is also acceptable. Production of promotional pieces to be distributed outside Decatur County--this includes brochures, posters, direct mail pieces, social media, etc. Grant applications must be specific on production costs or any other expenses funded by the grant, including social media. Event programs and other promotional material that can be placed at lodging establishments throughout Decatur county in hopes of enhancing the visitor experience by making hotel guests aware of the funded event.**

2. Community Enhancement Grants:

The purpose of the Community Enhancement Grant is to allow qualified organizations to request funding for a project or enhancement that will positively impact the overall quality of life for current residents and potential visitors, in a manner that fits into the overall purpose of the DCVC to promote tourism to Decatur County.

- a. Grant range - up to \$5,000.
- b. Organizations may only apply for this grant one time per calendar year.
- c. **Eligible Expenditures for Reimbursement with this grant could include, but are not limited to: signage and way-finding projects; video or social media projects; technology and software upgrades; graphic design; event website development, or overall enhancements to the community, which will result in a more visitor-friendly experience and drive visitors and tourism to Decatur County.**

