



FY26 COASTAL MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY GRANT GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau d/b/a Coastal Mississippi (herein "Coastal Mississippi Tourism"), sales and marketing programs are funded by lodging tax, which is governed by Mississippi law. Coastal Mississippi Tourism revenue is earned through advertising, sales, and lodging reservations booked and actualized room nights. (Coastal Mississippi Tourism awarded federal and state grant dollars, which are strictly prohibited by law from any sub-award and are not included in any support.)

Coastal Mississippi's Community Grant is a fiscal allocation of funds dedicated to providing marketing and production support for community events or activities in Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson counties. The purpose of the grant is to assist with the marketing and production of established events to enhance the overall attendee experience to improve the quality of life within our Coastal communities.

Note: This is a revised program and differs significantly from previous Coastal Mississippi event grants and programs. This grant is for single or half-day community events that take place in Coastal Mississippi and improve the quality of life within the community.

FUNDING

The maximum award for this grant is \$500.

The number of grants is limited by available funds and commission approval. Applications meeting and exemplifying the qualifications are presented to the commission for final approval.

This program is not intended to be a sustainable funding source. Tourism partners are eligible, but not guaranteed, to receive funds for a maximum of three (3) years.

RULES & ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must be organizations planning and promoting community events or activities in celebration of the unique culture of Coastal Mississippi and take place in Coastal Mississippi (Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson counties), seeking assistance for marketing, productions, or improvements to enhance the event at the benefit of the community.

To qualify for this grant, applicants must:

- Be a single-day event or activity in Coastal Mississippi.
- Have attendance of less than 1,000 attendees.
- Benefit the community and improve the quality of life within Coastal Mississippi.

This grant will not fund:

- Start-up events
- Events that occur once a week, once a month, or intermittently over a season
- Events with more than 1,000 attendees
- Agency commissions, consulting fees

- Merchandise or items for resale
- Lobbying/advocacy
- Expos (for-profit trade shows)
- Construction
- Expenses incurred prior to the award letter
- Fundraisers
- Prizes or awards
- Operation costs – salaries, utilities, clean-up/trash, and other administrative costs

The applicant contact must be a representative of the event and will be the sole point of contact with Coastal Mississippi for application communications, payments, graphic approval, and reporting. Coastal Mississippi will not discuss the application or grant details with any other contact. Potential vendors (advertising agencies, PR firms, printers, web developers, podcasters, influencers, and media vendors) cannot be a partner in the application.

The event should attract fewer than 1,000 attendees and must improve the quality of life within the community.

The event must occur between October 1, 2025, and September 30, 2026 (FY26).

Events that are rescheduled due to circumstances beyond the partner's control may be eligible for revising their marketing and production plans and utilizing funds. Applicants must contact the Director of Marketing as soon as possible for approval. If the activity is canceled, applicants must return all distributed funds.

The deadline to submit applications for FY26 is August 1, 2025.

Funds will be distributed 30 days prior to the event, but not before October 1, 2025.

Applicants may only submit one application per fiscal year grant cycle.

USE OF FUNDS

The awarded grant may be used for marketing the event to the community, event productions, or enhancement. Examples are advertising on local radio or TV stations, updating equipment, or adding additional activities that would attract residents and benefit the community.

Eligible marketing channels include digital placement (programmatic, display), OTT, paid social media advertising, billboards, radio or TV, and print publications (magazines). The Play Coastal Mississippi logo must be included in digital, print, and TV ads. For scripted ads, "In partnership with Coastal Mississippi" must be included in the script. All ads must be approved by the Coastal Mississippi brand manager prior to placement.

SCORING

Due to limited funding for this program, awards will be based on a merit scale. Funds will be awarded based on the information submitted with the application and will be scored based on Coastal Mississippi Community Grant scoring guidelines. Submit complete applications with all requested reports and back-up. The actual award may differ from the amount requested.

Priority will be given to applications showcasing activities or improvements that positively impact the community.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

If your event does not qualify for the Community Grant, it will be considered for the Cultural Events Grant and the Marketing & PR Grant.

Application for grants does not guarantee funding through any of the grants available from Coastal Mississippi.