



FY26 COASTAL MISSISSIPPI CULTURAL EVENTS GRANT GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau d/b/a Coastal Mississippi ("Coastal Mississippi Tourism") supports its sales and marketing programs through lodging tax, governed by Mississippi law. Coastal Mississippi's Cultural Events Grant is a fiscal allocation of funds dedicated to providing tourism marketing and production support for cultural events in Harrison, Hancock, and Jackson counties.

The grant's purpose is to assist with the marketing and production of established events, growing attendance, enhancing the visitor experience, and promoting Coastal Mississippi as a premier year-round leisure destination—ultimately increasing overnight visitation and regional economic impact.

Note: This is a revised program and differs significantly from previous Coastal Mississippi event grants. This grant supports *multi-day events* that take place in Coastal Mississippi and generate room nights in the region.

FUNDING

- Maximum award: \$10,000
- Awards are limited by available funds and subject to commission approval.
- Funding is not guaranteed and is not intended as a sustainable funding source.
- Eligible tourism partners may receive funding for a maximum of three (3) years.

RULES & ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be tourism partners promoting music festivals, food and beverage festivals, cultural celebrations, or sporting events occurring in Coastal Mississippi (Hancock, Harrison, Jackson counties).

To qualify, the event must:

- Be at least two consecutive days (minimum 8 hours each day)
- Show at least two years of prior attendance and a minimum of 1,000 attendees
- Generate overnight visitation and identify a lodging partner
- Occur between October 1, 2025, and September 30, 2026

This grant will not fund: start-up events, one-day or intermittent events, events under 1,000 attendees, agency commissions, resale items, lobbying, expos, construction, operational costs, or expenses incurred before the award letter. Community and civic events are not eligible.

The application deadline is August 1, 2025.

75% of funds will be distributed 30 days prior to the event, but not before October 1, 2025.

The remaining 25% will be distributed after the event upon receipt of all required documentation.

IMPORTANT: If your event does not qualify for the Cultural Events Grant, it will automatically be considered for the Community Grant and the Marketing & PR Grant.
Please note: Application to any Coastal Mississippi grant does not guarantee funding.

USING FUNDS FOR MARKETING

Funds must be used for marketing to out-of-market DMAs. Eligible media include digital, OTT, paid social, print, radio, TV, and billboards. All ads must include Coastal Mississippi branding and receive prior approval.

USING FUNDS FOR PRODUCTION

Production expenses must enhance visitor experience and promote overnight visitation. Examples include staging, concessions, artisan markets, accessibility improvements, and crowd management.

FUNDING LEVELS

- Tier 1: Up to \$5,000 (1,000–2,499 attendees)
- Tier 2: Up to \$10,000 (2,500–4,999 attendees)
- Tier 3: Up to \$15,000 (5,000–7,499 attendees)
- Tier 4: Up to \$20,000 (7,500+ attendees)

Proof of attendance and room night generation must be submitted with the application.

SCORING

Applications are scored on a 100-point scale. Strong marketing plans, production that enhances visitor experience, and documented performance metrics will score higher. The final award may differ from the requested amount.