



Revised February 14, 2024

CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Description of the Program

The Johnston County Visitors Bureau (Bureau) provides Capital Grant funds in four categories to foster community growth through tourism development projects. These funds have been established to stimulate economic growth by supporting non-profit visitor attractions of Johnston County in developing new visitor attractions or enhancing and restoring existing structures. Primary consideration will be given to those projects that have the greatest potential for positive economic impact for tourism. Highest priority will be given to those projects which promote travel from outside Johnston County which may generate overnight stays in our area accommodations. Funds will be granted for projects such as new bricks and mortar construction, existing building repair and improvements, cultural and historical acquisitions, and conservation of artifacts.

The Bureau operates under the guidelines established by the General Assembly for the use of Occupancy Tax, following the General Statutes: **153A-155. Uniform provisions for room occupancy taxes.**

Eligibility

The Bureau does not fund for-profit agencies. All qualified agencies must be located within Johnston County, be a government body, or defined as those having **501(c)(3) designations**, and meeting the legal requirements of the State of North Carolina and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Only one application per organization will be accepted in each fiscal year, July to June. Two agencies recognized as the organizers or partners of a capital project can not apply for the same funding. All agencies that apply for funding must have been in operation for at least three (3) years prior to being considered for a grant award.

General Funding Assistance

A funding award in one year's budget is not a guarantee of future funding. Priority will be given to applications that most closely align with the Johnston County Tourism Authority's (Authority) priorities and mission to attract visitors that generate overnight rooms and economic impact in the County. The Authority board reserves the right to authorize funding to qualified non-profit organizations at its sole discretion.

An application may not be considered if the application packet is incomplete or submitted after the established deadline.

The Authority board reviews and approves all applications and determines amounts which may differ from the agency request.

Categories for Grants

Categories for grants have been established and organizations may apply in **only one** category in an annual grant cycle, July to June, with the exception of the Museum Conservation and Municipalities grant categories.

- Bricks and Mortar
- Museum Artifact and Conservation
- Municipalities without Hotel Taxes
- Chamber of Commerce Visitor Centers

Definitions for each grant category established for funding are as follows:

Bricks and Mortar

Grant funds are awarded for traditional bricks and mortar including construction for new projects or needed repairs or improvements to existing visitor-related structures. Funds may not be used to purchase land for future projects or to pay off loans for projects. Brick and Mortar grants require a dollar-for-dollar match with a cap of \$50,000 per organization, over a five-year period.

Museum Artifact and Conservation Care

Grants may be awarded to museums in Johnston County for the purpose of preserving and protecting the valuable artifacts through conservation practices, staffing, supplies, and in rare instances acquisition of artifacts of significance to the museum. No match is required for this grant which is capped at \$10,000 and available on an annual basis.

Municipalities without Hotel Tax

The Authority recognizes that municipalities with hotels and city-based room taxes benefit more from marketing and investment from these hotel's revenues and Bureau programs. And furthermore, realizes that smaller municipalities may not have matching funds for tourism and recreation projects, therefore, a \$5,000 non-matching grant is available to the towns of Archer Lodge, Micro, Pine Level, Princeton, and Wilson's Mills for tourism related or community enhancement projects such as parks and recreation improvements, walking and biking trails, signage to tourism attractions nearby, and tourism-related projects of merit to the town.

Chamber of Commerce Visitor Centers

Since its inception, the Bureau has worked with chambers in the county to distribute tourism-related brochures via visitor centers. The capital grant program is open to those chambers in the county that own their building, operate a visitors center, and need to make capital improvements or repairs to the building. Funds are not available to use for operations, general office needs, purchase or lease of buildings expenses. Chambers may apply within the 5-year cycle for up to \$50,000, based on a one-to-four dollar match.

Purpose - Capital Funding

Projects performed under this program must be for travel and tourism related development **only** and may not contain or include elements not vital to the destination's development. Projects not adhering to this provision will not be considered. All projects approved for funding must be designated by the Authority as a visitor attraction or community development project that may attract and serve visitors to Johnston County.

Eligibility - Requirement of Non-profit status

Any legally chartered non-profit Johnston County organization representing a visitor attraction or tourism related community development project, which includes tourism promotion among its major activities, is eligible to apply for a grant under this program. Documentation of legal status, tax exemption, federal identification number, budget, and organizational purpose is required with each application. The organization applying for funds must show that they own the property, and it is not leased by the organization.

Matching Grant Amount for Bricks and Mortar Grants

The matching grant formula will be one grant dollar for each dollar spent by the organization, up to \$50,000 per project. Due to the number of grant applications received each year, expect that the full amount of your organization's grant may not be awarded. Grant awards are capped at \$50,000 per organization, and once this amount has been distributed to an organization, they must sit out of the grant application process until the Authority opens up a new round of grants. Multiple non-profits *may not* apply for the same project, and multiple departments of a town and town owned facilities, all fall under the town's \$50,000 cap. The Authority will annually budget the dollars to be awarded for capital projects based on projected funds available.

Funding in Consecutive Years

Organizations may apply for grants every year that capital funds are available until they reach the \$50,000 cap. Recipients will be awarded one grant at a time, therefore, giving all eligible organizations equal opportunity for consideration. Should your grant project take more than one fiscal year to complete, it will be classified as "continued", and funding will be carried-over for one additional year. Organizations so designated will have to give an update to the JCVB Special Projects Committee on the continued project each grant cycle, with status for completion, budget, and funding totals. Grants that are encumbered for more than 24 months will be released and the organization may reapply when the project gets back on track for completion. Grants for museum conservation and municipalities without hotels are annually recurring with no cap as long as budgeted by the Authority.

Pledge of Support

Should your organization be in the fund-raising stage for any tourism-related capital project, and not ready to start construction in the year of the grant application, it is possible to request a resolution of support from the Authority to assist in securing funding and/or grants.

Requirement to submit an application

Grant applicants must show proof with written documentation that 50% of the project funding has been secured by the time this application is submitted to the Bureau office.

Deadline for the Receipt of Applications

Five complete sets of applications must be received no later than **5:00 pm on March 29, 2024**. Emails of applications will not be accepted as the Bureau staff will not copy and assemble grant applications. Capital grants must have the written approval or a formal resolution of the governing board, relevant municipal government, and/or chamber of commerce endorsement and proof of other contributions to the project. Before an organization can apply for a grant or capital donation, they must have a projected budget outline prepared and a business plan for any additional funding for the project.

Notification of the Grant Awards

Applicants will receive written notice as to the status of their request for matching funds by **June 30, 2024**. No information regarding grant status will be given over the phone or by the staff of the Bureau. The Authority reserves the right to refuse any application.

JCTA Participation

The Bureau must aptly be recognized for the grant or donation at the project site on donor boards or room naming opportunities, ground breakings, and in media articles. Tourism Authority Board Members and Bureau staff should be invited to events related to the project.

Reporting the withdrawal of a project

The grantee must notify the Bureau in writing no later than **January 1, 2025** for any grant project that has been changed in scope, delayed, or canceled. Failure to report the withdrawal of an approved project will affect the grantee's application for matching funds in a future year. Forfeited funds for allocated projects for any given fiscal year may be distributed to other projects as approved by the Authority.

Disbursement of Funds

Once the project is completed, the grantee will be required to submit invoices and copies of checks to the Bureau staff for reimbursement. Grants funds **will not** be disbursed in advance of the project for any reason.

Tourism Related Asset

The organization must keep the tourism related asset open to the public a minimum of five years after grant funds are awarded, or partial return of grant funds may be requested by the Authority.

Examples of expenses that WILL NOT be granted or reimbursed:

- Event or festival operational costs
- Routine administrative costs
- Routine postage and shipping charges
- Telephone and communication charges
- Lodging/travel/entertainment costs
- Office supplies
- Salaries for full-time, part-time, or temporary employees
- Any publications or items for sale
- Office equipment purchasing or leasing
- In-kind services by suppliers, vendors, or consultants
- Familiarization tour expenses
- Advertising or marketing expenses
- Housing projects
- Political projects
- Sporting events
- Funding to individuals
- Public art projects
- For-profit organizations
- Streetscape or lighting improvements or expenditures
- Non-tourism related wayfaring signage
- Church construction
- Public or private school projects

Municipal services or utility improvements
Projects on leased lands or buildings
Water/sewer improvements
Sidewalks or appearance improvement projects
Landscaping or plant materials
Road construction or paving projects
Feasibility studies for projects
Christmas or holiday decorations

Mission Statement

The mission of the Johnston County Visitors Bureau is the marketing and development of the destination's brand experiences to targeted visitor markets for economic growth and quality of place.



**JCVB CAPITAL GRANTS FUND
APPLICATION**

NAME OF ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

WEB ADDRESS _____

CONTACT PERSON _____

TAX EXEMPT FEDERAL ID # _____

LEGAL NON PROFIT STATUS VERIFICATION _____

ORGANIZATIONS MISSION STATEMENT:

REQUESTED AMOUNT IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORY:

BRICKS AND MORTAR _____

MUSEUM CONSERVATION CARE _____

MUNICIPALITIES W/O HOTEL TAX _____

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VISITOR CENTER _____

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR PROJECT ENCLOSED: YES NO

ORGANIZATION BUDGETS FOR PAST TWO YEARS ENCLOSED: YES NO

MOST RECENT TAX AUDIT LETTER OR COPY OF IRS 990 FORM ENCLOSED: YES NO

(25-50) SHORT PROJECT DESCRIPTION: (ATTACH 300-WORD OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT EXPLAINING THE TOURISM IMPACT AND NEED FOR PROJECT)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Attach up to five typed 8.5 x 11 pages using 12-point type including the answers to the following:

- (1) Complete project summary and how grant funds will be utilized
- (2) Organization Mission and Vision Statements
- (3) Demonstrate the need for this project in the community
- (4) Determine the economic impact on tourism for the county/community

SUPPORT LETTERS FROM LOCAL MUNICIPALITY OR CHAMBER ENCLOSED: YES NO

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS FOR PROPOSED PROJECT ENCLOSED: YES NO

PERCENT OF PROJECT DEDICATED TO TOURISM: _____

OUTLINE OF PROJECT STEPS AND/OR TIMELINE ENCLOSED: YES NO

ORGANIZATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS ENCLOSED: YES NO

HAVE 50% OF PROJECT FUNDS BEEN SECURED: YES NO

AGENCY MUST HAVE RECEIVED 50% OF PROJECT BUDGET TO APPLY FOR THE JCVB CAPITAL GRANT.

SOURCE	AMOUNT
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
FUNDING TOTAL	_____

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: _____

AGENCIES AWARDED GRANTS IN FY 2024-25 MUST HAVE PROJECTS COMPLETED BY JUNE 30, 2025.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS: At the completion of the project, requests for grant funds should be submitted to the Visitors Bureau via a cover letter with summary of expenses, invoices, and copies of checks enclosed.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS MAY BE ATTACHED WITH THE APPLICATION AS DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE APPLICANT.

The Scoring Sheet for JCVB Capital Grant Applications is directly related to the grant guidelines and will be used to assist the grant committee. <u>Applicant to complete using best estimates available.</u>		
Qualification	Response/potential points	Points Allotted
Applicant Project is 100% utilized for tourism.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, 10 points <input type="checkbox"/> No, at least 50%, 5 points <input type="checkbox"/> No, less than 50%, no points	
Number of visitors to the county per year is greater than 1,000 and less than 4,999.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, 5 points <input type="checkbox"/> No, 0 points	
Number of visitors to the county per year is greater than 5,000.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, 10 points <input type="checkbox"/> No, 0 points	
Open to the public minimum of five days a week.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, 5 points <input type="checkbox"/> No, 0 points	
Estimated number of annual room nights generated by the visitor attraction: (check one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater than 100, 5 points <input type="checkbox"/> Greater than 250, 10 points <input type="checkbox"/> Greater than 500, 15 points	
First time applicant	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, 5 points <input type="checkbox"/> No, 0 points	
Grant application completed per grant instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, 5 points <input type="checkbox"/> No, 0 points	
	Scoring Totals	

Signature of applicant: I, _____ have completed the application to the best of my ability and that numbers provided are accurate as of the date submitted _____. By signing this application, I certify that that I agree to the guidelines and conditions set forth by the Johnston County Tourism Authority.

Signature

_____ Yes, five copies of this grant application have been provided to the JCVB office by the stated deadline.

PLEASE TYPE IN 12 POINT TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY. SUBMIT FIVE COMPLETED SETS OF YOUR APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW COMMITTEE WITH ONLY ONE SET OF DRAWINGS IF APPLICABLE. RETURN GRANT APPLICATIONS TO THE JOHNSTON COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU, 234 Venture Drive, Smithfield, NC 27577. All grant applications must be received by 5pm, **March 29, 2024. Incomplete applications and emailed grants will be returned for consideration in the next grant cycle. The Johnston County Tourism Authority reserves the right to refuse any application.**