

Indiana Dunes Tourism's Promotion Grant Program

The Tourism Promotion Grant Program has been established by Indiana Dunes Tourism to foster and fund projects and events that promote the growth of tourism in Porter County. If your business or organization is seeking funding for a project that will attract visitors from outside of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties to experience a Porter County community, we invite you to apply.

2022 Guidelines and Requirements

Please carefully read all the information to ensure that you qualify for the grant program, you understand the timeline, the match, what is funded, what is not funded, and what information is required to receive approved funding.

Purpose of program: Grants will be awarded to events and projects that bring in visitors from outside of Northwest Indiana (Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties), help visitors book hotel rooms, and have a positive economic impact on other businesses and attractions.

Grant deadline: *All grant applications are due Friday, January 28, 2022, by 4:00 p.m.* to Sandy Remijas, Operations Director located at: 1215 N. State Road 49, Porter, IN 46304.
Email: sandy@indianadunes.com

Grant approvals: The Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors will vote on the grant recommendations given by the grant committee on
Thursday, February 17, 2022.

1. There are five (5) grant application categories, which include:
 - a. Conventions, meetings, and seminars
 - b. Festivals and special events
 - c. Marketing
 - d. Product development
 - e. Sports sponsorships

2. Here are the types of projects funded for each grant application category:
 - a. **Conventions, meetings, and seminars:** this grant supports conventions, meetings, and seminars that are hosted within Porter County, have a large number of attendees, *are longer than one day*, have participants from

outside of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties, and encourage overnight stays in Porter County lodging.

- b. **Festival or special event:** this grant supports festivals or special events that are hosted within Porter County, have a theme that will attract a sizable number of attendees—including people from outside of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties—are *longer than one day*, and encourage overnight stays in Porter County lodging.
- c. **Marketing:** this grant supports marketing projects that utilize marketing tools to attract visitors from outside of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties to experience a Porter County community, a special aspect of a Porter County community, etc. These criteria are not date specific. For example, a city park department may seek a grant to market all their programs to outside visitors for a particular year.

The marketing tools we cover include website development, digital advertising campaigns (Facebook ads, banner ads, content placement ads, search engine optimization, etc.), traditional marketing tools **zoned outside of Northwest Indiana** (direct mail, print ads, radio ads, TV ads, and other broadcast media), and print or digital brochures. Our organization favors marketing projects that are driven from a marketing plan and utilize a variety of marketing tools.

Private sector grant applications will be considered if the marketing efforts target visitors from outside Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties. An effort to rebrand would not be eligible, however, a billboard would be considered.

We are less likely to fund a brochure or website being developed that does not advertise to visitors outside of Northwest Indiana.

- d. **Sports:** this grant supports state, regional (Midwest states), national, and international sporting events or tournaments that take place within Porter County, attract a sizable number of participants and spectators, are longer than one day, and encourage overnight stays in Porter County lodging. **This grant does not support local sports groups or events nor any sporting event or tournament that draws mainly local participants.**
- e. **Product Development:** this grant supports development of new products or the enhancement of existing products within Porter County or sites located on the Beaches and Beyond Outdoor Adventure Trail* that will attract visitation from outside of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties, complement our destination, and be supported by local residents.

Examples of product development projects include: constructing a birding tower, enhancing or developing a trail for visitor engagement, assisting with a feasibility study to develop a new attraction, etc.

*NOTE: Product Development grant applications for projects that are approved sites on the Beaches and Beyond Discovery Trail that are outside Porter County are eligible for grants.

3. Indiana Dunes Tourism does not award grant money for:
 - Seasonal or holiday events celebrated by most communities (Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.)
 - One-day athletic events (running races, biking events, etc.) that primarily have a local draw. If it can be demonstrated that a seasonal event has unique characteristics that will attract a sizable number of attendees from outside of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties, the grant committee and board of directors will review and consider the event for funding.
4. **Indiana Dunes Tourism does not compensate for alcohol; therefore, alcohol expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.**
5. Applications are due **Friday, January 28, 2022, by 4:00 p.m.** Applications **WILL NOT** be accepted after this deadline. Exceptions are made for brand new events, festivals, sporting events, marketing projects, and product development projects established after the grant deadline. Staff will review each situation on a case-by-case basis.
6. Businesses and organizations can only apply for grant funding for the same festival, event, meeting, seminar, convention, and marketing projects for three years. After the third year, your festival, event or marketing project will no longer be eligible for funding. The purpose of the grant program is to get festivals, events and projects established so they can successfully sustain themselves in the future.

IMPORTANT: a festival or event CANNOT apply for a festival or event grant for three years and then after the third year, apply for a marketing grant for that same festival or event (no exceptions). For example, if you received a festival or event grant for three years for the ABC festival, in year four you cannot apply for a marketing grant for the ABC festival.

Businesses or organizations can apply for multiple grants; however, they cannot apply for the same product, festival, or marketing project. (Example: an organization might have four sporting events throughout the year, and can apply for all four events, however, know that it is unlikely that all would be funded).

7. This grant program is a 50% matching, reimbursable grant. For example, if you are approved for a \$2,500 grant, you must spend \$5,000 in qualified marketing to

receive the \$2,500. Also, you will only be reimbursed for your expenses after your event or project is completed.

The grant dollar amounts available per category are:

- a. Marketing: \$2,500 (first year); \$1,500 (second year); \$1,000 (third year)
 - b. Festivals and events: \$2,500 (first year); \$1,500 (second year); \$1,000 (third year)
 - c. Meetings, conventions, and seminars: \$2,500 (first year); \$1,500 (second year); \$1,000 (third year)
 - d. Sports sponsorship: \$3,000 maximum
 - e. Product development: \$5,000 maximum
8. **Successful grant applicants may receive a grant in an amount less than requested.**
 9. Each event is limited to one grant per year.
 10. **A new application must be submitted each year and there is no carryover in the application process.**
 11. All applicants will be notified in writing of the Indiana Dunes Tourism Board of Directors decision on grant funding.
 12. Significant alterations to the project following approval requires notifying Indiana Dunes Tourism and will require reconsideration of the entire application.
 13. ***All marketing materials such as brochures, advertisements (digital and traditional), flyers, posters, Facebook ads, etc. must display the Indiana Dunes Tourism logo.***

Indiana Dunes Tourism should NOT be listed as a sponsor of any kind, but rather should be listed as a financial supporter. It is important to note that when describing Indiana Dunes Tourism in marketing materials, the full name "Indiana Dunes Tourism" must be used and **not shortened** to "Indiana Dunes". Failure to do so may result in the item not being eligible for reimbursement. In addition, the logo must be large enough to be able to read the "financial support provided by Indiana Dunes Tourism" to qualify for reimbursement.

Logos are available online or via email. Please contact Sandy Remijas for logo information. Misuse of the logo, use of the incorrect logo, or a missing logo will result in a reduction of grant reimbursement.

Radio ads must target visitors from outside of Northwest Indiana (Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties) **and** include the language "financial support provided by Indiana Dunes Tourism" to qualify for reimbursement.

Facebook expenses must include one of the following to be eligible for reimbursement:

- 1) Tag Indiana Dunes Tourism as a financial supporter in the description.
- 2) Use the Indiana Dunes Tourism financial support logo as an image in the Facebook post.
- 3) Place the Indiana Dunes financial support logo on the photos about your event.

NOTE: banners and yard signs displayed locally are not eligible for reimbursement

All marketing materials must be submitted to Indiana Dunes Tourism within the specified timeframe to qualify for full funding.

14. **All grantees receiving funding must distribute the Indiana Dunes Tourism Activities Guides at their event.** Large quantities of Activities Guides can be obtained at the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, 1215 N. State Road 49 in Porter. Contact Sandy Remijas at 219-926-2255 or sandy@indianadunes.com to order the supplies. Failure to obtain Activities Guides may result in a reduction of funding *and* future grant applications may be denied. ***It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to obtain these supplies from Indiana Dunes Tourism.***
15. The total amount requested must not exceed 50% of the cost of the project. ***In-kind contributions cannot be considered a part of an organization's match.***
16. Projects cannot have taken place prior to written notification and final approval from Indiana Dunes Tourism.
17. **Grant funds CANNOT be used for the following:** (READ CAREFULLY)
 - a. Marketing efforts *within Porter County*, unless the promotional campaign is directed to the residents to encourage visitation from their friends and relatives who live outside of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties.
 - b. Annual operating expenditures of the event, festival, or sporting event. (Example: facility rental, website maintenance, hotel expenses, porta potty, etc.)
 - c. Alcohol
 - d. Banners or yard signs distributed locally
 - e. Program brochures
 - f. Permit or reservation fees
 - g. Salaries, wages, or employee benefits
 - h. Prize money
 - i. Scholarships
 - j. Awards
 - k. Plaques

- l. T-shirts
 - m. Certificates
 - n. Buttons
 - o. Newsletters
 - p. In-kind contributions
 - q. Events or attractions restricted to private or exclusive participation
18. Applications are evaluated by the Indiana Dunes Tourism grant committee, which is comprised of members of the Board of Directors, the executive director, the assistant director, and the operations director. The grant committee's recommendations are given to the full Board of Directors for their approval. The Board of Directors will make the final decision on all applications. The board may choose to deny, fund, or fund portions of a request. A board member applying for funding under the program shall excuse themselves from the discussion and the vote.
19. Copies of paid invoices, separate copies of cancelled checks or receipts with check numbers indicated, all promotional or marketing materials, **and the post-event evaluation form will be due within 60 days after the event or by December 9, 2022, whichever date comes first.** For example, if the event date was July 1st, receipts would be due September 1st.
- a) **Reimbursement materials submitted after this date will result in a \$500.00 forfeiture of the grant award.** These policies are put in place to allow unused money to be put back into the current year grant fund. Please contact Sandy Remijas at (219) 926-2255 or 800-283-8687, ext. 225 or sandy@indianadunes.com with any questions.
 - b) The copies of canceled checks will be shredded upon review.
 - c) All grant receipts, invoices, and cancelled checks must be submitted via mail or dropped off at the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center located at 1215 N. State Road 49, Porter, IN 46304 along with the post evaluation form. No email submissions accepted.
20. If a business would like for Indiana Dunes Tourism to advertise their event on the Indiana Dunes Tourism website without cost, a written request is required or completion of the online form is acceptable.
21. The Indiana Dunes Tourism's fiscal year (January – December) is subject to County Council approval in October of most years and therefore funding for the Tourism Promotion Grant may be denied based on this fact.
22. All approved grant applicants will be required to sign a Grant Agreement acknowledging grant terms, requirements, and deadlines. (Revised 12.20.2021)