



The Wisconsin Department of Tourism recognizes meetings and conventions as a niche tourism market with significant growth potential. To help make Wisconsin destinations competitive in their efforts to attract regional and national meetings or conventions, we offer a grant program designed to assist Wisconsin destinations with financial assistance for facility costs or host destination expenses.

The purpose of the fund is to assist destinations as they bid for national or Midwest regional meetings and conventions that generate hotel overnights and a significant economic impact for the area where they'll be held. Such meetings may be held by a variety of different kinds of businesses, trade shows organizations, groups, etc. The purpose is to bring meetings or conventions into the state, but not to fund existing in-state events that are regularly scheduled or which routinely rotate to destinations within the state.

Reviewed: 3 times/year (April, September, January)
Applications are due by 11:59 PM on the first day of the review month.

Max Award: up to \$30,000 per fiscal year per DMO (may be for multiple applications)

Guidelines:

- The fund has \$110,000 per year available for matching grants
- Applicant should be a Destination Marketing Organization or Native American Tribe
- Destinations may apply for 50% of the costs for convention facility rental, in-community convention transportation and/or host costs
- Applicant must match the granted dollar amount
- If event is secured, application must be received 180 days prior to event
- If event is not secured, application must be received 90 days prior to event
- Organizations receiving funding from the Meetings Mean Business fund may not also request funding from the Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grant fund for the same event, during the same fiscal year
- Organizations or events funded through statutorily required expenditures (earmarks) are not eligible for funding.
- This grant does NOT fund in-state events that are regularly scheduled or which routinely rotate to destinations within the state
- Meetings or conventions that have been previously hosted in Wisconsin will be considered for grant funding based on the competitive nature of the bid, as well as prior event evaluation and documented economic impact
- Grant funds may not be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages or other items deemed inappropriate for the use of state funds

- To be funded, the application must be received at least 90 days before the event.
- 70% of the award amount will be paid to the applicant directly from the Department of Tourism following receipt of a signed contract, and when the Department receives documentation that the meeting or convention has been awarded to the destination
- The remaining 30% will be paid to the applicant upon submission of an approved post-convention evaluation no later than 90 days after the convention has concluded
- If meeting or convention for which the grant is approved fails to materialize, a full reimbursement of paid-out grant funds must be made within 30 days of officially canceling the event.

Applications will be scored on number of hotel room nights, return on investment, visitor spending estimates, off-peak scheduling and visitor spending vs. financial commitment. Applications should include:

- Total event budget
- Comprehensive history of at least the three (3) previous years of the meeting or convention, including room night pick-up, attendance and estimated visitor expenditures
- Documentation showing the required costs of event, i.e. RFP or contract or estimate from vendor for transportation and/or facilities

Evaluations must be submitted before final 30% of funding will be released. Evaluations should include:

- Survey from the meeting planner/organizer
- Documented room nights
- Samples of meeting or convention collateral materials
- Analysis of the event's success or opportunities for improvement

Applications can be submitted at grants.travelwisconsin.com. Resources for writing a successful MMB application are available at Industry.TravelWisconsin.com.

For additional questions or assistance, please contact Heidi Schultz, Grant Coordinator, at 608-261-6272 or email hschultz@travelwisconsin.com.