

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism recognizes the growth potential of the sports marketing niche as an economic driver in the state. It's an especially competitive segment of tourism - attracting amateur and professional sports events. It is also a lucrative and growing segment. To assist destinations in securing competitive sporting events that require an upfront cash or financial commitment, we offer a unique sports partnership program.

The purpose of the fund is to assist destinations as they bid for national or Midwest regional competitive sporting events that generate hotel overnights and a significant economic impact for the area where they'll be held. Examples include, but are not limited to, NCAA AAU tournaments, baseball/softball tournaments, rodeos, sailing, drum and bugle corps competitions, hockey, basketball, triathlons, marathons, snowmobiling and skiing. Sports camps are not considered a competitive event.

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 must be the recognized DMO in the area
- Generates visitor spending by securing or creating competitive sporting events with a structure that draws both a spectator/athlete base for the event and an economic impact for the area
- Destinations may request 50% of the bid/commitment fee or 50% of the event site costs (hard costs for the preparation of the site for the event)
- Applicant DMO 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 Ready, Set, Go! 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
- Events 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 event has been awarded to the destination
- The remaining 30% will be paid to the applicant upon submission of an approved post-event evaluation no later than 90 days after the event has concluded
- If event 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 tangible criteria that measure return on investment, including number of room nights, visitor vs. financial commitment, off-peak scheduling and media exposure. Applications should include:

- Complete event marketing and public relations plan
- Total event budget
- Revenue generation & sponsorship
- 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 required costs of event, i.e. RFP or contract

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

- Complete financials
- Survey from event holder
- Documented visitor spending
- Samples of marketing collateral
- Analysis of the event's success or opportunities for improvement

Applications can be submitted at grants.travelwisconsin.com. Resources for writing a successful RSG 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.