



2025 Tourism Gives Support Program

Hamilton County Tourism (HCT) seeks to use the tourism economy as a catalyst to give back to the community it serves. HCT strives to reduce the social, economic, and environmental impacts of traditional tourism through activities that regenerate and provide a net benefit to our communities and residents, while supporting a meaningful experience for our visitors.

HCT wishes to grow its support of community by using its resources to:

*Partner with organizations that support environmental stewardship (**Planet**).*

*Support opportunities for equitable economic inclusion for all (**Prosperity**).*

*Amplify all voices and cultures equally (**People**).*

*Make wise investments that make Hamilton County both a great place to live and to visit (**Place**).*

HCT will provide grants to tourism-focused non-profits with Planet, Prosperity, People and Place as the guiding principles.

Areas of Focus:

An organization grant request should be centered around one of the four Ps below.

PLANET: Environmental sustainability is vital to Hamilton County Tourism. Grants will be considered for environmental practices at events that draw visitors, implement action items that support education and action, or provide outdoor programs that raise awareness around a topic and new ideas that innovate and inspire.

PROSPERITY: HCT wants all partners to be economically viable. Data Intelligence, marketing and communications strategies, new ideas, growing workforce, and partner education are all examples of prosperity grant projects. Also considered in PROSPERITY is seasonality. Hamilton County sees a decline in visitation in colder months, late fall and early spring and encourages innovative ideas on how to attract visitors during these periods both indoors and out to provide year-around support to our local businesses while also balancing the pressures of visitation throughout the calendar.

PEOPLE: Hamilton County Tourism welcomes peoples of all races, ethnicities, abilities, gender identities, cultures and sexual orientation. HCT encourages organizations that produce public programs to explore how they might better represent diversity, equity, access, inclusion and belonging in those programs.

PLACE: Placemaking is an important component of community and attracting visitors. Many Hamilton County partners gather people and showcase culture through public art, festivals and other events. We encourage programs that highlight what is unique about our community's past, present and future.

Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.

37 East Main Street
Carmel, IN 46032

317.848.3181

VisitHamiltonCounty.com

Organization type

Request Amount, please note the following:

- Each organization must apply as the organization type with which they qualify (listed below).
- An organization grant request cannot exceed the corresponding level listed below.
- Organizations may apply for more than one category, but an award is not guaranteed.
- Festival attendance is measured by gate tickets, a system that attempts to accurately count visitors (e.g. people counters, geolocation data if available, zone counting)

Arts Districts, up to \$3,500

State designated arts districts that provide regular public programming on a community-wide scale.

Cities/Towns, up to \$5,000

Parks, downtown activations, city funded special events.

Festivals (10,000+ in attendance), up to \$5,000

Festivals are short-term in nature and must appeal to a wide variety of audiences, including out-of-area visitors. School festivals do not qualify. Faith related organizations can apply if the program is public, of general interest and not faith focused. Festivals with attendance under 10,000 in attendance should apply as a small, medium, or large tourism-related nonprofit organization (depending on budget).

Nonprofit Tourism-Related Small Organizations, up to \$5,000

Contributing nonprofits that have consistent operating hours, tell a story of a community to visitors, and have regular special programs. Small organizations have a budget of less than \$1,000,000.

Nonprofit Tourism-Related Medium Organizations, up to \$7,500

Contributing nonprofits that have consistent operating hours, tell a story of a community to visitors, and have regular special programs. Medium organizations have a budget of \$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000.

Nonprofit Tourism-Related Large Organizations, up to \$10,000

Iconic nonprofits with a permanent, physical location that have regular operating hours, can prove they attract regional audiences and are tourism-friendly or support a culture that is tourism focused. At least 10% of the organization's audience must come from beyond 50 miles (as proven by geolocation data or ticket sales). Large organizations have a budget of \$5,000,001+.

Using this [one page](#) form, using the key areas of focus, explain your grant project request.

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Additional requirements to receive financial support from Hamilton County Tourism:

- Must be a nonprofit that has some interest in attracting out-of-area visitors.
- [Complete this grant interest form](#), to explain your program, area of focus and budget request.
- Add your visitor-focused events to the [online Hamilton County Tourism calendar](#).
- Include a link to VisitHamiltonCounty.com on your website (if the HCT funding level allows).
- Include Hamilton County's Tourism on marketing materials (if the HCT funding level allows).
- Conduct periodic check-ins with Sarah Buckner, Director of Community Engagement (e.g. email updates, in person meetings, PR Power Hour, etc)
- Engage socially with @VisitHamiltonCo if your organization has a digital presence (HCT's links to:
 - [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)).
- HCT will review 2024's social, connection and calendar engagement to determine whether
 - previous grant recipients have been participatory before awarding a 2025 grant.
- **No support can be given without returning a signed version of this letter of agreement form AND the organizational W9 form by the identified deadline.**

Scoring Rubric

Historically complied with requirements (W9/Letter returned, adding events, engagement) – 10%

*New applications will not be graded on this requirement.

Satisfies Area of Focus – 15%

Is a Tourism Focused Nonprofit – 30%

Unique Idea That Satisfies the Hamilton County Goals – 45%

2025 Grant Timeline

January 6, 2025 – Organizations may begin to submit the project [one sheet](#) to Sarah Buckner via [email](#). This document is required to receive grant funds.

February 14, 2025 – All project one sheet documents must be submitted.

March 7, 2025 – HCT Board review of grant requests.

March 14, 2025 – Funding announced.

April 30, 2025 – All paperwork must be submitted to Sarah Buckner

If funds remain, Hamilton County Tourism will consider a fall grant cycle. Contact [Sarah Buckner](#), Director of Community Engagement, with any questions.

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