

Tourism Grant Guidelines

Purpose

The **Tourism Grant program** is offered through Visit Jackson to enhance visitor and tourism promotional efforts and tourism product development for events and attractions held in the city of Jackson. The Tourism Grant program assists entities with tourism marketing, promotion, tourism product development, attractions, special events, and festivals that will foster increased visitation from outside of the Jackson area, while enhancing the visitor's experience; ultimately resulting in heightened local economic impact.

The purpose of this grant program is to provide funds for marketing, product development, and other qualified expenses directed towards increasing the number of Jackson, MS hotel occupancy and enhanced restaurant visitation. Events and attractions must demonstrate the propensity for the funded promotion/event/activity to generate a major positive economic impact for the City of Jackson.

Funding is available to nonprofit & government organizations that promote inbound tourism through public venues.

Applicable Projects/Categories:

- **Attraction, Museum & Public Use Facilities Support:** Zoological parks, botanical garden, historical houses, historical buildings, museums, stadiums, auditoriums, etc.
- **Festival & Cultural Event Support:** A festival is a cultural event, or a group of events planned, produced and promoted in a well-defined period and organized to occur at regular intervals, usually on an annual basis, all related to a common cultural form, theme or vision.

Maximum Funding Levels

- **Attraction/Museum/Public Use Facility Support: \$ 20,000**
- **Festival & Cultural Event Support: \$ 10,000**

Tourism Grant Eligibility Requirements

All grants must be used for expenses directly related to the project. Grants must be used for marketing and other qualified expenses directed toward increasing hotel/motel room nights (overnight visitors) and toward bringing people to Jackson from outside the metropolitan area.

The list below is a guide but is not comprehensive. Eligible allowable and disallowable expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

Items eligible for funding assistance include, but are not limited to:

- Development of new events, quality major exhibits and activities geared toward generating overnight Visitors and/or increasing restaurant revenue in Jackson
- Successful expansion of established events or attractions that have previously generated overnight Visitors and/or increased restaurant revenue in Jackson
- Media Placement: Print, Digital, Out of Home, Television, Social & Radio. Advertising that includes a tourism message through mass media.
- Creative advertising production (Print, Digital, Out of Home, Video, Social and Radio)
- Content development (written, video or audio)
- Print collateral
- Fulfillment costs
- Website development/website search engine optimization
- Video production
- Mobile app enhancement



Items ineligible for funding assistance include, but are not limited to:

- Expenses incurred or obligated before project approval
- Reimbursement for previously incurred expenses and/or retroactive projects
- Projects restricted to private or exclusive participation, other than certain grand and pre-opening expenses
- Expenses typically considered to be overhead
- Operating and Administrative costs *including* salaries, postage, telephone expenses, travel, food, beverages, lodging and entertainment for personnel and volunteers of organizations
- Capital expenditures (tangible personal property including, but not limited to office furnishings, office equipment, other equipment, permanent collections or individual pieces of art, street barricades, etc.)
- Rent of offices, repairs, renovation and/or remodeling of facilities
- Feasibility studies
- Funding to acquire, construct, extend or maintain a facility
- Interest and/or other reductions of deficits on loans or debts
- Scholarships or endowment funds
- Cash awards of any description
- Annual fund drives
- Events that take place outside the City of Jackson
- In-Kind Services
- Expenses not directly related to the approved program
- Activities related to any for-profit organization
- Activities or materials which violate the law
- Any organization that has received funds in a previous year but has not fulfilled final reporting requirements may be excluded from a future year funding. Omitted reporting documentation must be satisfied prior to the organization being considered for additional funding.

Exhibitions, Festivals or Events

Funds can be used for new high-profile temporary exhibits or events that can draw significant visitors from outside a 100-mile radius. Exhibits or events considered for funding under this program will meet the following criteria:

- Exhibits will be installed in the City of Jackson for a period of no less than 8 weeks and preferably 12 weeks or more.
- Exhibits should not be available elsewhere in Mississippi.
- Events must occur within the City of Jackson, MS.
- Events, if a single day, must demonstrate a large overnight draw to be considered.
- Exhibits and events should be large and exciting enough to attract visitors from at least 100 miles away and have the potential to generate overnight stays in the City of Jackson.
- Exhibits and events need to generate media attention in the City of Jackson and beyond.
- Exhibits and events will be hosted by one or more not-for-profit organizations with adequate personnel and resources to:
 - market the exhibit or event outside the region
 - present the exhibit or event attractively
 - ensure a positive visitor experience
 - exhibit or event organizer has formed partnerships with one or more other tourism businesses to provide a larger visitor experience.

Festival & Cultural Event Support applications must be submitted at least **90** days prior to the start date of the event.

Award Consideration Criteria

Every grant application will be considered on its own merit and it is within the Visit Jackson's authority to approve or deny any grant for any reason. Greater consideration and higher priority will be given to projects that demonstrate the highest potential for causing major economic impact, especially through increasing restaurant revenue and hotel

occupancy. Applicant must realize that even though an application received may qualify for funding, limited funding may dictate that not all projects receive assistance. There are no guarantees that requests will receive assistance. All decisions regarding funding are made at the sole discretion of Visit Jackson's Board of Directors.

Tourism Impact Criteria:

- High probability of significant economic impact for Jackson and the local community
- Generates positive awareness of Jackson as a tourism destination
- Consistent with Visit Jackson's mission and goals.
- Supports Visit Jackson's brand by including Visit Jackson's logo or Jackson's Destination Brand "City With Soul" in all marketing materials.
- Contribute to our ability to attract visitors and improve overall tourism assets in the City of Jackson
- Serve a substantial number of visitors and/or restaurant visitation
- Be covered by the media, and/or Visit Jackson be publicly recognized for participation or support

Operational Criteria: (funds may not be spent on operation costs that would be incurred even without the project:

- Should be a documented not-for-profit, governmental or quasi-governmental entity. **(Privately-owned for-profit businesses are NOT eligible).**
- Should include a sponsorship benefit package equivalent to the dollar amount of grant funds awarded. Sponsorship benefits could include, but are not limited to, event tickets, website exposure, print advertising acknowledgement, press passes, etc.
- Should have completed at least one year of fiscal operation as a not-for-profit organization.
 - New events may only receive funding after proof of performance, after submission of the final grant report
- Should represent ongoing, sustainable activity.
- Should be able to provide evidence of the organization's stability, management, responsibility and accountability.
- Be in good standing, if a past grant recipient
- Should be able to demonstrate the ability to execute its project without depending on the continued financial assistance from these funds. It should be the intention of the organization to be self-sustaining.
- Evidence of a solid plan to fund the project, ongoing operating costs and maintenance.
- Evidence of a sustainable business plan, including marketing and public relations details.
- Be located within and/or take place in Visit Jackson's service area.
- Should **not** be a bricks and mortar project.

Tourism Grant Core Stipulations

- Organizations may only apply for funding in one category, per event, per fiscal year. This does not prohibit an individual working for multiple organization/entities/events from applying for separate funding so long as there is no cross-over of funds.
- Organizations/Projects that are awarded funding under the Greater Jackson Arts Council Grant Program, or from the City of Jackson, are not eligible to receive funding through Visit Jackson's Tourism Grant Program, nor are organizations/projects that have been awarded funding through Visit Jackson's Grant Program eligible to receive funding through the Greater Jackson Arts Council Grant Program.
- Failure to use funds as specified in the contract may result in penalties up to and including a full refund of grant funds.
- Project applicants cannot transfer funds from one specific tourism project to another without a written request and addendum to the contract. All modification request must be submitted and approved in advance.
- Organizations receiving a Tourism Grant must have a reciprocal link with Visit Jackson's logo on their website to www.VisitJackson.com. The consumer must be able to reach www.VisitJackson.com in one click.
- Any media placed through this grant program should be shared with Visit Jackson for promotional use.

- A final report is required for each grant and for each year during the grant. Failure to submit the final report by the deadline is unacceptable and may result in penalties. No award is made until a final report is submitted.
- Applicants who do not comply with all deadlines and procedures (including reporting) may be disqualified and ineligible to receive Tourism Grant Funds for **three** years.

Tourism Grant Application Process

The entire application and grant process will be managed through an online portal at visitjackson.com/grants.

All request should be in line with Visit Jackson's fiscal year: Oct 1 – Sept 30.

Application Requirement (should be submitted in summary form which addresses the following:

- **Benefits to Jackson and the public**
- **Documentation of nonprofit status** (for new applicants): Charter, articles of incorporation, bylaws or other proof of status (i.e. Annual report on file with the Secretary of State).
- **Marketing Plan: Plan** for the project that describes the “who, what, where, when and why” of your proposed project. The marketing plan should address objectives, strategies, tactics and action plans and specifically include how the project will meet the Grant's required Tourism Impact Criteria.
- **Business Plan:** Budget for the project which describes the financial aspects and budgetary conditions of your project. The business plan should include project revenue anticipated to be generated by sponsorships, grants, gate receipts, concession sales, souvenir sales, in-kind services or other forms of financial contributions. It should also include all projected expenses for the project, broken out in line-item detail. The Business Plan should specifically include how the project will meet the Grant's required Operational Criteria.
- **Methods for Research/Tracking/M Measurement of the project's results:** The procedures used to research the effectiveness of advertising and promotional efforts.
- **Actual Attendance & Attendance Tracking Method**
- **Media Schedule** for promotion of the event, activity or attraction. The paid media schedule should include:
 - Name of each media outlet, size/length of ad, dates ad will run & actual ad cost.
 - Identify geo-targeted reach for each placement.
- Any other essential backup materials that support your application, as requested.

All events that apply for a marketing match grant from Visit Jackson must provide proof of liability insurance with Visit Jackson named as an additional rider on said liability insurance policy. This policy must be received by Visit Jackson 15 days prior to event.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will not be considered. Visit Jackson has the authority to disqualify incomplete applications or request additional information before presentation or recommendation to full board of directors.

Performance Criteria

- **Notification:**
 - All projects must receive written approval, as notification, from Visit Jackson of the project funding amount.
 - Applicant must accept the award by the deadline. Failure to accept timely will result in the award being void.
 - Projects must be executed as approved. Any changes must be approved by the Grant Committee in advance.
- **Monthly Attendance Reports:**
 - All attractions and Events must submit all attendance reports as requested during the funding period. Attractions should submit monthly attendance reports. Failure to meet this requirement will be considered noncompliance and will result in forfeiture of award.

Final Report Requirement

A complete final report consists of an official final report form and checklist along with the following items submitted as attachments:

- A summary of the results of the project and the impact it had on tourism in the Jackson Area
- Actual Attendance & Attendance Tracking Method (include methodology)
 - Attendance reports should be submitted to Visit Jackson on a monthly basis for all Attractions receiving funding via [Website Link](#)
- Marketing Plan results and analytics
- A comparison of the original grant application budget to actual final receipts and expenditures
- A summary of any revenues generated by the project (sponsorships, grants, gate receipts, concession sales, souvenir sales, in-kind services or other forms of financial contributions)

Note: Visit Jackson reserves the right to audit any/all information that is submitted for accuracy and request additional information/support as it deems necessary.

Application Deadlines:

Accepted:

- **Funding Year FY2020** (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020): **December 6, 2019 – January 17, 2020**
- **Funding Year FY2021** (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021): **July 1, 2020 – July 31, 2020**

Festival & Cultural Event Support applications must be submitted at least 90 days prior to the start date of the event.

Notification:

Recipients should be notified within 45 business days after the close of the application period.

Final Report Due:

- **Attractions/Museums:** No later than 15 days after the end of the Visit Jackson's fiscal year (October 15th)
- **Festivals/Cultural Events:** Within 30 days after the event, but no later than 15 days after the end of Visit Jackson's fiscal year (October 15th)

Every grant application will be considered on its own merits and it is within the Visit Jackson's authority to approve or deny any grant for any reason. Visit Jackson reserves the right to audit any/all information that is submitted for accuracy and request additional information/support as it deems necessary.