



2023 Tourism Grant Guidelines Marketing Fund

Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau
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Introduction

The Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau is pleased to announce the 2023 Tourism Grant Program that is designed to enhance visitor and tourism promotional efforts, and tourism product development for Towns County. The Tourism Grant assists entities with tourism marketing, promotion, tourism product development, attractions, special events, and festivals that will foster local economic impact and higher destination appeal through tourism ultimately resulting in increased visitation from outside of the Towns County area.

2023 Tourism Grant Changes

The Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau has made changes in the 2023 Tourism Grant that includes:

- Additional Tourism Grant Eligibility Requirements
- Additional Core Stipulations
- Additional Co-op Fund Guidelines
- Additional Product Development Fund Guidelines
- Additional Application Process and Timeline

Mission

The purpose of the Grant Program is to provide funds for marketing, product development, and other qualified expenses directed towards increasing the number of overnight visitors to Towns County from outside of the area.

Tourism Grant Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must fulfill all of the following:

- Be a documented non-profit agency as defined by the Internal Revenue Service
- Have completed at least one year of fiscal operation as a not-for-profit organization
- A final report is required for each grant
- No qualified entity may serve as a fiscal agent for a non-qualified entity

- Applicants 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
- Applicants must be located in Towns County and have a board of directors composed of at least one-half Towns County residents and must meet on a regular basis to discuss events.
- The festival/event must take place in Towns County.
- An application and all related documents must be submitted and approved by the Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- A contract must be signed by the applicant and the Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau Board prior to distribution of funds.
- A final report is required for product development grants and for each year during the grant period. It should be submitted in the form of summary which addresses the following:
 - A description of the Performance under Contract
 - Benefits to Towns County and the public
 - Actual Attendance & Attendance Tracking Method if applicable
 - Impact it had on tourism in Towns County
 - Effect on lodging if applicable
- A final report is required for co-op marketing grants and for each year during the grant period. A form will be provided to all co-op grant recipients to fill out. Information that will need to be provided includes:
 - Website traffic from co-op campaigns
 - Inquiries received from co-op campaigns
 - Visitor Testimonials
 - Visitation numbers compared to prior year

Tourism Grant Core Stipulations

- Grant money to be dispersed based upon availability of funds.
- Failure to use funds as specified in the contract may result in penalties up to and including a full refund of grant funds.
- Failure to submit the agreed upon procedures and final report by the deadline is unacceptable and 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. Submit any requests for official modification forms to Gabi Nguyen at Tourism@TownsCountyGA.com.
- Organizations receiving a Tourism Grant must have a reciprocal link on their website to www.VisitTownsCounty.com. The consumer must be able to reach in one click.
- Any media obtained through this grant program must be shared with the Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau for promotional use.
- Applicants who do not comply with all deadlines and procedures maybe disqualified and ineligible to receive future Tourism Grant funds for at least one year.

Co-op Marketing Fund Applicants

Programs: Qualifying entities may be attractions, associations, organizations, or governmental agencies which promote their products and/or services to visitors from outside the area.

Festival/Event: A festival is a cultural event or 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.

Tourism Grant Co-op marketing programs are managed by the Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau and its supporting agencies. In 2023 we will offer two rounds of co-op marketing. Applicants that apply for Round 1 that are interested in Round 2 need not reapply.

- Round 1 Co-op Marketing Program (February-mid July)
- Round 2 Co-op Marketing Program (July-December)

To review the 2023 Co-op Marketing Package presentation, email Tourism@TownsCountyGA.com.

Tourism Grant Product Expenses

Allowable Expenses:

This is not a conclusive list

- Development of new events or major exhibits and activities
- Promotional activities that compliment advertising, including materials that create awareness and build or maintain a good image of Towns County, printing of brochures or inserts for events
- Production costs of media advertising
- Marketing expenses, including outside professional marketing services
- The purchase of recognized media advertising focusing on attracting visitors to Towns County (digital, broadcast, billboard, magazine, and newspaper).
- **Advertising buys must include markets more than 60 miles from Towns County. Local media outlets do not meet the intended purpose of the grant and will receive less consideration.**

Disallowable Expenses:

- Capital expenditures
- Rent of offices, repairs, renovation and/or remodeling of facilities
- General operating or administrative expenses or business expenses
- General staff or personnel costs
- Interest or the reduction of deficits or loans
- Expenses incurred or obligated before grant project approval
- Expenditures for local food and beverage events
- Cash awards of any description, free tickets or entry fees
- Expenses not directly related to the approved program
- Activities or materials which violate the law

- Funds cannot be used for postage
- Funds cannot be used for website

Tourism Grant Application Process

Grant Review:

- Excellence and merit of the program/event
- Merit of marketing plan
- Ability to attract and service visitors
- Fiscal stability and administrative ability
- Economic impact potential – increasing visitors, restaurant sales, as well as lodging occupancy

The Tourism Grant Program consists of five basic areas:

1. Completed application
2. Grant awarded by the Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau
3. Signed contract between the applicant and the Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau
4. Attend the tourism grant workshop reviewing proper use of grant funds and procedures
5. A final report and agreed upon procedures are due to the Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau by Thursday, January 5 of the year following the award.

Tourism Grant Timeline for Application and Awards

Meeting Dates	Action
Tuesday, October 11, 2022	2023 Tourism Grant Application, Guidelines, and Round 1 Co-op Marketing Package
Tuesday, November 8, 2022	Current Grant Application deadline
Tuesday, December 6, 2022	Target date for notifying 2023 grant recipients
Tuesday, December 13, 2022	Supporting information for financial review for previous year
Tuesday, January 10, 2023	2023 Product Development and Co-op Marketing Final Reports due to Towns County Convention and Visitors Bureau for current grants