

2021-2022

Nebraska Tourism Marketing Grant Program

Description of Program

The Nebraska Tourism Commission administers this grant program, per Nebraska Revised Statute 81-3725, to provide innovative tourism grants to communities or organizations that provide tourism and visitor promotion services, host events, or promote attractions which result in either (a) an increased number of nonlocal, in-state visitors or (b) an increased number of both nonlocal, in-state visitors and out-of-state visitors.

Nebraska Tourism welcomes applicants from both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and encourages ideas in support of diversity, equity and inclusivity for all. **An individual grant will be awarded for an amount no higher than \$25,000.** No more than one grant will be awarded in the grant period to any grantee applying for a grant independently, but the same grantee can participate in a cooperative activity awarded a grant. For example, a convention and visitors bureau can receive a grant by itself and additionally be in a group of convention and visitor bureaus jointly applying for, and receiving, a grant. A federal identification number is required in the submittal of an application. Federal and State government agencies are not eligible to apply for grant funds.

Grant Schedule

October 18, 2021
December 10, 2021
February 1, 2022

Guidelines become available
Application deadline (postmarked date)
Grant recipients are announced

Grant recipients must complete projects and pay in full all items (grant and match) prior to reimbursement. Grant recipients will be required to submit only one (1) reimbursement request within 90 days after the completion of the project/event or no later than *May 31, 2023 (whichever occurs first)*.

Grant Match and Eligible Expenses

All grantees must provide at least a 25% match. At least half (12.5%) must be cash *spent towards the project*, the other half (12.5%) can be in-kind services and/or donated materials towards the project; however, documentation must be provided for any in-kind match. Volunteer work is valued at \$10/hour and must be documented, including dates and list of volunteers, the services they provided and their hours of service.

Note: Nonprofit organizations who cannot meet the match requirement can qualify for grant funds by including hardship financial documentation in their application, describing their financial situation and budget.

Notice: This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document.

Directed-Marketing Projects eligible for funding under this grant cycle include items listed in 1-6 below:

- 1. Develop professional photography content to promote your destination or event to travelers.** Need funding to create a photo library to use in print ads or online advertising? Grant funds can be utilized towards service fees of a professional photographer. Applicants are encouraged to develop diverse and inclusive photography, representing individuals of different races/ethnicities, genders, ages, abilities and/or body types. (Lodging and transportation costs are not eligible for grant funding, but can represent matching funds.)
- 2. Attend 2023 ABA Marketplace.** Promote your community's group destinations directly to tour operators at the American Bus Association's premier event. Grant funds can assist with registration fees to attend virtually or in-person. (Lodging, transportation and membership dues are not eligible for grant funding, but can represent matching funds.)
- 3. Attend 2022 ESTO.** The US Travel Association's Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations is a national forum where destination marketing professionals gain critical tools to grow tourism in their area. Grant funds can assist with registration fees to attend virtually or in-person. (Lodging, transportation and membership dues are not eligible for grant funding, but can represent matching funds.)
- 4. Purchase an ad in the 2023 Official Nebraska Travel Guide.** The guide is the primary advertising response piece for Nebraska Tourism, and a cost-effective way to increase exposure to an audience interested in Nebraska travel. (Distribution 200,000 guides).
Ad sizes and costs available: \$10,000 - Full Page Ad \$7,000 - 2/3 Page Ad
\$5,000 - 1/2 Page Ad \$4,000 - 1/3 Page Ad \$3,000 - 1/6 Page Ad
- 5. Advertise on VisitNebraska.com** between May 1, 2022 and April 30, 2023:
Leads Program – receive weekly email leads of visitors interested in your destination. **Full year: \$2,000**
Banner Ad – graphic ad inserted between search results on most pages which links to a website of your choice. **3 month period: \$500 Full year: \$2,000**
- 6. Participate in a Nebraska Tourism Commission sponsored social media blitz.** Our ongoing Visit Nebraska Facebook campaign will spread the word to target audiences about what you have to see and do. Work with our social media specialist to select a 3-day date range to launch your promotion, get help creating your content, and sit back while we track the results and report back to you.
Cost per blitz: \$2,000 Note: Limit of 2 blitz promotions per applicant.
(Blitz promotion must take place between May 1, 2022 and April 30, 2023.)

Need to pay a marketing firm to develop ads, produce a video, or create other ad materials to utilize in the above directed-marketing projects? Include the request for **additional funding** in your application - be sure to include at least two (2) bids from professional firms.

The Directed-Marketing projects listed in items 1-6 on the previous page are recommended by the Tourism Commission this grant cycle and will be prioritized over Non-Directed-Marketing promotions in the application-review process.

If your community or organization wishes to participate in additional promotions not listed on the previous page, you can also request funding for non-directed marketing projects this grant cycle. Be creative and innovative, tell us what marketing tools your community, event, destination or region is lacking that will help you attract more visitors. Outline your needs in your application and include how, when, why, and where you plan to implement the tools.

Eligible grant expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Internet website development, enhancement and online marketing
- App development and enhancement
- Regional cooperation promotions, brand creation/planning
- Image marketing (photo/film libraries, logo/ad development, new artwork)
- Tourism awareness programs and customer service programs
- Brochure design and printing
- Media advertising (TV, radio, newspaper, magazine, billboard, etc.)

The following expenses are NOT eligible for grant funding:

- Equipment or capital facility development or improvements
- Food, lodging, mileage and transportation costs
- Telephone expenses, postage and handling expenses
- Brochure racks
- Envelopes, letterhead, business cards and miscellaneous office supplies
- Membership dues, salaries
- Talent/dignitary honorariums or awards
- Physical construction of billboards/physical construction of roadway signage
- Gift cards, t-shirts and items for resale

Grant Application Instructions

Applicants must complete the following steps:

1. Complete the cover page and include a federal identification number.
2. Describe the project in no more than three (3) typed pages of narrative. Remember, the goal of the program is to increase nonlocal, in-state visitors and out-of-state visitors. **Target markets must reach outside of the local area of the community, event, destination, or region you are promoting.** Describe the following:
 - What you are promoting?
 - How will your community, event, destination or region be marketed?
 - What audience are you trying to attract? Is this a new target market?
 - What is your overall marketing plan for the project?
 - Who is involved, outline local and regional support for the project.
 - What goals do you have for bringing in tourism dollars to the area?

3. Complete a budget worksheet listing what the grant and match dollars will be used for. Clearly show where your match is coming from.
4. If you choose to apply for funding for non-directed marketing promotions, you must include coverage-area maps for all media buys (print or electronic media including TV, radio, newspaper, magazine, etc.). Be sure to include information that shows their audience and reach, and why this target market was chosen.
5. Include a minimum of two (2) written bids for all printing and advertising projects for which you are requesting grant dollars. Projects such as website design, traditional and online marketing campaigns carried out by an advertising agency, booth displays, logo enhancement, graphic design services, app development, image marketing, brochure printing and ***any project that can be completed by a variety of marketing firms must provide at least two (2) written bids.*** If two bids are not included, that portion of the application may not be considered.
6. After completing steps 1-5, submit one (1) original and three (3) copies of the entire application. Paper-clip each complete set. Do not staple all 4 sets together and do not place applications in folders or binders.

DEADLINE: If submitting via US Postal Service, the application must be postmarked no later than December 10, 2021. If delivering application by hand, the application must be turned into the Nebraska Tourism Commission office no later than 5:00pm on December 10, 2021.

Reimbursement Details

Once notification is given to projects selected for a grant, a contract will be made between the Nebraska Tourism Commission and the applicant to outline what can be funded with grant dollars. The grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis. It is the responsibility of the applicant to initially pay all expenses in full to complete the project. After completion of a project and after verification that the entire project was paid for, the State will reimburse for the pre-approved portion of the project.

Once your project is complete, submit only one (1) reimbursement request within 90 days after the completion of the project/event or no later than *May 31, 2023* (*whichever occurs first*) with all of the following components:

1. **Completed Reimbursement Request Form.**
2. **Copies of vendor invoices and proof of payment: copies of cleared checks and/or paid invoices showing the actual costs incurred, obligated and paid for both grant expenses and match expenses.**
3. **Final Project Report: synopsis of the project, how grant funds were used, measurements of marketing effectiveness and impact (attendance counts, number of advertising-stimulated inquiries, etc.) and a copy of all tangible items produced using grant funds, including but not limited to, advertisements, literature, publications and videos.**

Contact Heather Hogue, Grant Administrator of the Nebraska Tourism Commission if you have questions about the grant requirements and/or eligibility of projects for grant assistance at 402-471-3774 or e-mail: heather.hogue@nebraska.gov

2021-2022 Tourism Marketing Grant Cover Page
(Complete This Page for Each Grant You Are Applying For)

Name of Grant Application/Project _____

Is funding being requested to promote an event? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes, event name: _____ **Event date/year:** _____

Name of Sponsoring Organization/Community _____

Contact Person/Title _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____ **Phone** _____

E-mail _____ **Web Site** _____

Note: the above contact information is used by the Tourism Commission to notify the applicant if grant funds are awarded. Funding notification and the required paperwork will be sent to the above contact person at the email address provided. Please ensure the information is valid and legible.

Federal ID # _____

Business/Organization Federal ID # Assigned to _____

Is applicant a State or Federal Government Agency? ☐ No ☐ Yes (Note: State and Federal government agencies are **not eligible** to receive funding through this grant program.)

Grant Amount Requested \$ _____ (Maximum: \$25,000)

Cash Match \$ _____ **In-Kind Match \$** _____

Signature of Applicant

Date

Submit one (1) original and three (3) copies of the entire application (A TOTAL OF 4 SETS OF APPLICATIONS.) Paper-clip each complete set. Do not staple all 4 sets together and do not place applications in folders or binders.

DEADLINE: If submitting via US Postal Service, the application must be postmarked no later than December 10, 2021. If delivering application by hand, the application must be turned into the Nebraska Tourism Commission office no later than 5:00pm on December 10, 2021.

NOTE: Applications cannot be modified or accepted after deadline has passed. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Office mailing and delivery address:

**Heather Hogue, Grant Administrator
Nebraska Tourism Commission
301 Centennial Mall South, 1st Floor
P.O. Box 98907
Lincoln, NE 68509-8907**

2021-2022 Tourism Marketing Grant Budget Worksheet
(Include Advertising and Contractor Bids if Applicable)

Please use this worksheet to outline each marketing activity of the project you are requesting funding towards. Multiple activities can be listed. Be specific regarding types of activities (for example: magazine ad, newspaper ad, radio ad, TV ad, visitors guides, rack cards, brochures, web sites, booth registration, conference registration fees, etc.) Each activity/advertising promotion must be listed separately in the chart below. List radio and TV advertising by both call letters and city of origin (for example, KRVN-Lexington) and magazine and newspaper advertising by individual publications and costs.

You must show how both the grant amount requested and the matches (both cash and in-kind) will be allocated among activities. Remember that a 25% match is required, and that at least half of the match (or 12.5% of the match amount) must be cash spent towards the project. The other half of the match can be "in-kind," consisting of volunteer services and donated materials towards the project. Volunteer services should be valued at \$10 per hour.

Application/Project _____
(Name of Grant)

City/Town of Applicant _____ Federal ID #: _____

Activity	Grant Amount Requested	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Source of Match	Total Funds
Column Totals:					

(Total of Grant Amount Requested + Match (Cash) + Match (In-Kind) = Final Column Total.)