

2023-2024

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 16, 2023
December 8, 2023
February 1, 2024

Guidelines become available
Application deadline
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, 2025 (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.

Note: 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.

Eligible grant expenses include, but are not limited to:

- 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, merchandise or other items for resale

Now that you are familiar with items that are both eligible and ineligible for funding, below you will find additional helpful guidance to assist you in creating your project and completing your application:

When developing your grant application, 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.

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

When mapping out your marketing activities for your grant application, consider including one or more of the following Directed-Marketing opportunities on the following page within your project plan. Increased promotion of events and destinations within the Commission's marketing channels can increase exposure, draw visitors, and benefit the state as a whole. Additionally, utilizing educational resources available to tourism industry professionals will benefit the entire state by increasing marketing expertise and building industry partnerships through networking opportunities!

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 are you 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. 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.

After completing steps 1-5, submit all application components by the deadline of December 8, 2023 (including cover page, budget worksheet, description of activities, and any supporting material) **via email titled “2023-2024 Tourism Marketing Grant Application”** in .pdf, .doc, .dox, or scanned image format to:

heather.hogue@nebraska.gov

All applications received by the December 8, 2023 deadline will receive an emailed confirmation receipt.

If you don't receive a confirmation receipt, or if you have any questions regarding eligibility, timeline, reimbursement process, etc., please contact the Grant Administrator: Heather Hogue at 402-471-3774 or heather.hogue@nebraska.gov

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 activities 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, 2025* (*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.**

**2023-2024 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 _____

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2023-2024 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.)