

Marshall County Tourism Commission **Granting Program Framework**

I. Introduction

The Marshall County Tourism Commission is pleased to offer grant funding to support projects and events that enhance tourism within Marshall County. Through this program, we aim to promote local initiatives that contribute to the tourism growth of the area.

This program is funded through the Innkeepers Tax and is available to both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, including municipalities. The program is designed to support a variety of tourism-related projects, including but not limited to community events, business developments, and other initiatives that attract visitors to Marshall County.

This granting program supports both nonprofit and for-profit entities to strengthen the county's tourism ecosystem. Nonprofits often enhance tourism by preserving cultural, historical, or natural assets, offering community-focused events, and providing amenities that enrich visitor experiences. For-profits more directly impact tourism by developing attractions, events, and services that increase overnight stays and drive visitor spending. By funding both sectors, the program ensures a balanced, diverse, and sustainable approach to growing tourism in the county.

II. Eligibility Criteria

Nonprofit Organizations and Municipalities

Nonprofits and municipalities based in Marshall County or those whose activities directly or indirectly impact the county's tourism may apply. Eligible entities include:

- **Nonprofit organizations:** Local chambers of commerce, cultural organizations, event organizers, educational institutions, tourism promotion agencies, historical societies, parks and recreational groups, arts organizations, environmental groups, volunteer organizations focused on tourism, and any other nonprofit directly or indirectly enhancing tourism or regional appeal in Marshall County.
- **Municipalities:** Local government entities, such as cities and towns, that are planning or hosting tourism-related initiatives.

For-Profit Organizations

For-profit businesses in Marshall County whose activities directly impact the county's tourism may apply. Eligible businesses include:

- Hotels, inns, and lodges
- Restaurants and other hospitality services
- Event venues
- Tour operators
- Other for-profit organizations that directly impact tourism in the county

General Criteria for Both Categories

To be eligible for funding, the project or event must:

- Directly or indirectly demonstrate a measurable impact on tourism, such as attracting visitors, improving tourism infrastructure, or increasing regional appeal.
- Be open to the public and encourage visitor attendance.
- Be completed within a set timeline and budget.
- Meet the matching fund requirements (see "Grant Funding Details").

Requirements Specific to For-Profit Organizations

- Direct impact on increasing the number of overnight visitors and visits to Marshall County.

- Projects should have long-term benefits for the county's tourism industry and be sustainable beyond the initial funding.
- Support and enhance existing tourism infrastructure or create new services that contribute to the broader tourism ecosystem in Marshall County.
- Organization must be in good standing with the Indiana Department of Revenue
- A detailed business or project plan must be submitted, outlining:
 - Specific goals and objectives of the project.
 - A clear marketing strategy to attract tourists.
 - A timeline with measurable milestones for success.
 - A detailed budget, including breakdowns of all anticipated expenses and revenue generation.

Definitions of Direct and Indirect Tourism Impact

Direct impact refers to measurable increases in overnight stays within the county due to the attraction, event, or initiative funded by the granting program. This includes activities and amenities that directly lead visitors to book accommodations, such as:

- Events that draw attendees from outside the county who require overnight lodging.
- Attractions that are significant enough to motivate an extended stay.

Indirect impact refers to activities or initiatives that enhance the overall appeal of the county as a tourist destination but may not immediately result in overnight stays. These include:

- Improving regional reputation through unique attractions or events.
- Providing engaging daytime activities that increase visitor satisfaction and extend their time spent in the area.
- Enhancing infrastructure or amenities that contribute to a more appealing and functional destination, such as trails, parks, or cultural experiences.

III. Grant Funding Details

Nonprofit Grants

- **Target Grant Amount per Project:** \$1,000–\$10,000. The Marshall County Tourism Commission reserves the right to adjust grant amounts based on project needs and proposal quality, while staying within the annual budget allocated for nonprofit grants.
- **Match Requirements:**
 - Grants of **\$1,000 or under** require **no match**.
 - Grants from **\$1,000 to \$5,000** require a **25% match** (cash or in-kind).
 - Grants over **\$5,000** require a **50% match** (cash or in-kind).

For-Profit Grants

- **Target Grant Amount per Project:** \$5,000–\$20,000. The Marshall County Tourism Commission reserves the right to adjust grant amounts based on project needs and proposal quality, while staying within the annual budget allocated for for-profit grants.
- **Match Requirement:** A **1:1 match** (cash or in-kind).

IV. Reallocation of Unused Funds

- **For-Profit Funds:** Any unused for-profit funds remaining after the Q1-Q3 cycles will be reallocated to nonprofit projects in the Q4 round.
- **Unused Funds for Both Categories:** Any unused funds not granted in Q1, Q2, or Q3 for either nonprofit or for-profit organizations may be reallocated to nonprofits for tourism-related operational expenses only if there are no qualifying proposals that meet the criteria for a grant. Operational expenses may include staffing, marketing, or other direct needs related to enhancing tourism. All operational expenses

funded must be directly related to tourism activities. No match is required for operational expenses funding.

V. Application Rounds and Review Schedule

There will be four application rounds each year, with reviews occurring within 2-4 weeks after the end of each quarter. The final meeting to approve grants for the previous year will take place in January to ensure all remaining funds are expended for each calendar year. Applicants can submit proposals during the following periods:

- **Q1:** January – March (Review between April 15 and April 30)
- **Q2:** April – June (Review between July 15 and July 31)
- **Q3:** July – September (Review between October 15 and October 31)
- **Q4:** October – December (Review for unused for-profit funds and operational expense grants in January)

A proposal not approved in its first review may not be resubmitted unless explicitly requested by the tourism commission.

Submitting multiple proposals within a single year is discouraged and may reduce the likelihood of approval. We encourage applicants to prioritize well-developed, high-quality proposals that align closely with the goals of the granting program to maximize its overall impact

VI. Required Documentation

Applications must include:

- A completed grant application form.
- A detailed project or event description.
- A proposed budget.

- Proof of nonprofit or municipal status (for nonprofits and municipalities).
 - A description of the tourism impact and expected outcomes.
 - Letters of support from community partners, local government, or previous event participants (preferred).
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VII. Proposal Submission and Review Process

- **Proposal Submission:** Applicants must submit their proposals by the last day of each quarter (March 31, June 30, September 30, December 31).
 - **Distribution:** Proposals will be sent to Tourism Commission members by the Secretary two weeks prior to the scheduled review meeting to allow time for review.
 - **Applicant Presentation:** Applicants will have five minutes to present and justify their proposal during the review meeting.
 - **Public Access:** All meetings are live and open to the public, allowing for community input and transparency.
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VIII. Grant Reporting and Accountability

Progress and Final Reports

Grant recipients must submit:

- **Final Report:** A final report detailing project outcomes, how funds were spent, and tourism impact. Reports are due one year from grant approval or within 30 days of project completion, whichever comes last. Failure to submit reports on time may result in forfeiture of future grants.

IX. Monitoring and Compliance

The Tourism Commission reserves the right to monitor the use of granted funds to ensure compliance with the program guidelines and Indiana state law, which mandates that Innkeepers Tax funds be spent on tourism-related initiatives as defined in **Indiana Code Title 6, Article 9, Chapter 18, Section 4**. These funds may be used for the following purposes:

- Advertising and promoting tourism development.
- Operating tourism-related facilities like convention centers and visitor centers.
- Promoting cultural and tourism-related activities and events.
- Funding the construction or renovation of tourism infrastructure.
- Any other purpose directly related to the promotion and development of tourism.

The Commission may request additional documentation and conduct site visits to verify the proper use of funds. Any misuse of funds may result in penalties, including the forfeiture of the grant.

X. Terms and Conditions

- **Non-transferability:** Grants are non-transferable and must be used for the purpose specified in the approved application.
- **Acknowledgement:** Grant recipients must acknowledge the Marshall County Tourism Commission in all promotional materials for the project or event, including brochures, social media posts, and event signage. This acknowledgement must use approved materials, such as logos and other branding assets, provided by the Tourism Commission.

- **Compliance:** All grant recipients must comply with local laws and regulations, including tax reporting requirements.
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Contact Information

For any questions about the program, please contact:

Marshall County Tourism Commission

Email: mctc@co.marshall.in.us

Date of Approval and Adoption: _____

President, Marshall County Tourism Commission

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____