



# Destination Event Grant Guidelines

## **A. Introduction**

The objective of the Henderson County Destination Event Grant program is to support the execution of tourism-related events in Henderson County in order to generate overnight visitation to the county. The Henderson County Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA) is empowered to make grants to its tourism partners under the authority granted by its enabling legislation, Session Law 2013-61, House Bill 545, Section 1, (e) Use of Tax Revenue: “The county shall, on a quarterly basis, remit the net proceeds of the room occupancy and tourism development tax levied under this act to the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority. The Authority shall use at least two thirds of the net proceeds of the room occupancy tax levied under this act to promote travel and tourism in Henderson County and shall use the remainder for tourism related expenditures.”

HCTDA and a grants committee comprised of representatives from the Henderson County tourism sector and appointed by the HCTDA Board will determine the eligibility of applicants and make recommendations to the HCTDA Board for funding. The HCTDA Board makes all final decisions regarding the awarding of any grants. This program is funded entirely by occupancy taxes paid by overnight visitors staying in lodging in Henderson County.

## **A. General Eligibility Requirements**

To qualify for a HCTDA Destination Event Grant, the applicant must:

- a. Represent an event held in Henderson County, NC that will attract attendees from outside Henderson County and help generate overnight visitation to the County
- b. Be organized under the laws of North Carolina or, if organized under the laws of another state, registered to do business in North Carolina
- c. Be registered as a federally-recognized non-profit, if applicable
- d. Not be a property primarily used for lodging
- e. Have a specific plan for how the requested funding will be invested in the event and the attraction of attendees from outside Henderson County

## **B. Limitations**

Limitations imposed by HCTDA upon the Destination Event Grant program include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Organizations may apply for funding for multiple events held during a single twelve-month period but cannot apply for multiple years of funding. Applicants must complete a separate application for each event for which they are seeking funding.
- b. The amount requested in the application must be for a minimum of \$500 and no more than \$20,000 per event.
- c. HCTDA reserves the right to cancel the Destination Event Grant program at any time and for any reason. HCTDA is not obligated to fund any request, nor is it obligated to expend the entire amount budgeted for the Destination Event Grant program in a given fiscal year. Recognizing that its resources are limited, HCTDA may, in its sole discretion, grant funding that is less than that requested by the applicant.
- d. HCTDA will not make payment directly to any vendor or individual. Payment will only be made to the applicant organization.
- e. Applicants who are approved for funding will be reimbursed for expenses based upon invoices submitted in accordance with the funding agreement. Pre-payment of expenses will not be considered.

- f. The grantee may be forced to return some or all funding plus interest if the grantee is found to have used the funding inappropriately or otherwise violates the funding agreement.
- g. Funding granted through this program must be utilized within twelve months of the approval of the HCTDA board.
- h. Applications received after the published deadline will not be considered.
- i. The applicant assumes the burden of all expenses associated with this application.

### **C. Permitted Uses**

Examples of permitted uses of Destination Event Grant funding include but are not limited to the following types of expenses associated with the event

- a. Entertainment expenses
- b. Expenses associated with overnight lodging in Henderson County for performers and others associated with the event
- c. Operational expenses directly related to operating the event
- d. Local government expenses, such as police and fire personnel assigned specifically to the event, or similar expenses such as private security
- e. Signage
- f. Equipment
- g. Officiating crews for sporting events
- h. Apparel for officials and staff working the event

### **D. Ineligible Uses**

Examples of ineligible uses of Destination Event Grant funding include but are not limited to:

- a. Operational expenses not directly related to operating the event
- b. Advertising and other marketing expenses
- c. Brochures and other print collateral
- d. Website design and hosting
- e. Fundraising expenses

- f. Debt reduction
- g. Prize money
- h. Trophies, certificates, medals, and other items of recognition
- i. Tee shirts and other apparel for participants of the event

Types of events that are not eligible for funding from the Destination Event Grant program include but are not limited to:

1. Events that are not intended to generate overnight visitation to Henderson County
2. Family reunions
3. College and school reunions
4. Fundraising events
5. Pageants
6. Fashion shows
7. Garage sales, flea markets, and similar kinds of retail-oriented events
8. Church or other religious events

## **E. Evaluation Criteria**

Criteria to be used by the HCTDA grants committee to evaluate applications include the following:

1. Compliance with the stated requirements of the program
2. Detailed information providing for how the funding will be invested
3. Ability to help generate overnight visitation to Henderson County
4. Eligibility of the applicant as a tourism-related business or organization
5. Alignment with the goals of HCTDA and the destination brand of Henderson County

Incomplete applications will not be considered. The grants committee will look especially favorably upon events that help drive visitation during non-peak periods of visitation. Peak months for visitation to Henderson County are June, July, and October. Applicants which are not funded may reapply in future application cycles, but the application should seek feedback from HCTDA staff before doing so.

## **F. Schedule**

1. The HCTDA will determine the amount of funding to be budgeted for the Destination Marketing Grant program during its annual planning prior to the start of the new fiscal year in July.
2. The HCTDA will notify tourism partners of the opening of the annual grant cycle at least 30 days prior to a pre-application conference.
3. The pre-application conference to discuss funding requirements and answer questions of potential applicants will be held approximately 30 days in advance of the application deadline. Attendance at this conference is not mandatory for applicants.
4. All applications must be submitted online. A grants committee of the HCTDA will evaluate all applications for funding and make final recommendations to the HCTDA Board. The HCTDA Board will then review and approve recommended applications for funding. All decisions of the Board will be final.
5. A signed funding agreement between the applicant and the HCTDA will be required of any applicant prior to receiving funds through this program.

## **G. Recognition**

Applicants that are awarded funding from this program must include the Hendersonville tourism logo or credit HCTDA in any signage, banners, apparel, press releases, etc. recognizing event sponsors.

## **H. Notice of Public Record**

Because HCTDA is a public entity subject to the laws of the State of North Carolina, this application and any materials submitted as part of this application and the funding received are subject to public scrutiny as mandated by North Carolina public records laws.