

# MATCH GRANT GUIDELINES

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# Visit Mississippi Tourism Matching Grants Program Guidelines

## Overview

The goal of the grant program is to generate increased travel into and/or within Mississippi, have broad appeal targeting markets beyond the local area and make an economic impact or contribution on the grant recipients area through tourism promotion.

## Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants for funding are Mississippi convention and visitors bureaus or chambers of commerce with a designated tourism council or commission or established tourism councils with the **primary** objective of promoting tourism.\* An applicant organization receiving grant funding must be the responsible party for placement of advertising.

\*For auditing purposes, we must have an established tourism entity designated as a financial base for the payment of the grant monies.

## Items eligible for funding consideration include:

Projects eligible for funding consideration include only those directly related to the promotional efforts targeted to markets outside your immediate area (more than 100-mile radius or out-of-state). The following are the only projects eligible for match grant funding consideration - these projects may receive up to 50 percent of all eligible and applicable costs after submission and approval of the applicant's final report, which must be submitted to the director of Visit Mississippi within 60 working days of the project's completion:

- Advertising through mass media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, billboards and internet advertising, including social media (eligible up to 50% of total project cost).

**\*PLEASE NOTE THAT ADVERTISING IN THE MISSISSIPPI TOUR GUIDE IS INELIGIBLE FOR SUBMISSION.**

## Process and Selection Criteria

The selection process will be carried out by a five-member committee made up of the president (or his designee) of the Mississippi Hotel & Lodging Association, the Mississippi Restaurant Association and the Mississippi Tourism Association, plus two additional member appointed by the director of Visit Mississippi.

The committee will meet in August 2017 to review projects. All projects for consideration must be submitted to Visit Mississippi by 5 p.m. July 28, 2017. All grant recipients must be notified in writing of the eligibility of their submitted project 40 working days after submission to Visit Mississippi. All projects submitted must be completed within one year from the date of approval.

**FUNDING WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLY AFTER PROJECT COMPLETION (REIMBURSABLE GRANT).**

Each applicant will be judged objectively and solely on the merits of the project through the approved Performance Evaluation Expenditure Review (PEER) Rating System. The decisions rendered by the grant committee are final and are not appealable to the state tourism director.

## Checklist for Project Requirements

All projects receiving a grant must adhere to the following rules. If any of these rules are not followed, a project will be deemed ineligible for consideration, and the director of Visit Mississippi will withhold funding designated to the project.

The rules are: 1) Display Mississippi's logo and grant phrase.

All funded projects must display the Visit Mississippi logo.



All radio ads must use the grant phrase – This project is partially funded by Visit Mississippi.

Projects will receive NO funding if the logo/grant phrase are not included on project(s).

2) Display organization's contact information.

All funded projects must list the contact information such as address, telephone number and/or website for general inquiries.

3) Copy should generate interest in local tourism offerings (product). Ineligible material includes quality of life, industrial/retirement recruitment. No photocopies or quickprint materials are allowed.

4) Grant monies cannot be used to match state-generated or appropriated funds.

5) If organization receives state appropriated funds, the organization is ineligible for match grant funds under this program.

## **Attachments for Application**

**The following material must be attached/included with the application:**

### **1) Potential for economic return.**

Number II in the Matching Grants Application. All applications must identify target audiences and demonstrate the potential for economic return. (IF THIS IS A REPEAT PROJECT, PLEASE REPORT RESULTS IN SECTION V OF THE TOURISM MATCHING GRANTS APPLICATION).

### **2) Project distribution/media plan/marketing plan.**

Number IV in the Matching Grants Application. All applications must identify means of distribution, in other words, how will your target audience receive information. When using paid media, list the name of the publication, size of the ad, dates the ad will run and the actual ad cost. This is necessary whether newspaper, radio, television, magazine, billboard or digital/online advertising including website banner ads, Facebook ads, Twitter ads, etc, is used. Because the Visit Mississippi Tourism Matching Grants Program is designed to bring new visitors into an area, local advertising is ineligible. Your marketing plan must reflect the project's strength and appeal in bringing new visitors into your area. An advertising placement schedule must be included.

### **3) Project research.**

Number V in the Matching Grants Application. All applications must provide methods for research tracking measurement of each project's results. Research results must be submitted to Visit Mississippi within one year of project completion. The procedure used to research the effectiveness of advertising and promotional efforts must be included.

#### **Examples:**

- \* To use a redeemable coupon in print and/or paid media, place a different tracking code on each of the coupons. When the coupon is redeemed, identify the medium used and determine which medium produced the best results.
- \* Ask callers where they heard or saw your advertisement.
- \* Conduct consumer intercept surveys on site.
- \* Specific landing page on your website to drive consumers.

### **4) Verifiable research data.**

If funding permits, this program will be available next fiscal year. Please keep in mind all repeat projects will require verifiable research data. Cost per inquiry may be considered a factor.

### **5) Professional fees.**

Visit Mississippi will not be responsible for any professional fees incurred in this project. These fees include production costs and commissions.

### **6) Authorizing signatures.**

All submitted projects must bear the signature of the authorizing officer of the organization and/or the chief financial officer.

## **General Grant Fulfillment Information**

### **1) Notification of the grant awards.**

All projects approved for funding must receive written confirmation from Visit Mississippi within 40 working days. No oral approvals will be allowed.

### **2) Modifications to grant projects.**

If a project changes during the development stages, a letter must be written to Visit Mississippi for approval before modification. The letter must state what has been approved for funding, the requested change, the reasons for the change and any alterations in cost. Project changes must be submitted to Visit Mississippi for approval prior to modification. Any modification to a grant resulting in a cost increase up to 10 percent more than the original designated amount may be approved by the grant coordinator.

### **3) Acceptance letter.**

The letter of acceptance must be returned to Visit Mississippi within 15 working days after notification of grant approval.

### **4) Final reports.**

Completed grant reports must be received by Visit Mississippi within one year of grant award date or the project may be rejected for funding.

## Final Report Checklist \_\_\_\_\_ Grant Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Grant Coordinator

- 1) Is backup documentation arranged in same order as listed on original application?
- 2) Is copy of vendor's invoice included? Eligible/applicable expenditures should be highlighted – sales tax is not eligible.
- 3) Is copy of canceled check(s)/front and back or bank statement providing proof of payment included and attached to invoices?
- 4) Is one original advertisement/tear sheet, recording or brochure included? If a project is completed with ineligible material (quality of life, industrial/retirement recruitment) included, it will NOT be funded.
- 5) Is the Visit Mississippi logo/grant phrase included on the project? The Visit Mississippi Director will withhold funds if the logo is not included.
- 6) Is the signature of the director or chief financial officer of the applicant, verifying the project has been completed, included?
- 7) Is the sample invoice for receipt of payment complete and included?
- 8) Is a written description of the event or project and the impact or contribution it had on tourism included? (Media, billboard advertisements include description, name of media, location and dates ads ran.)

**The above items must be checked off and included in the final report submitted to Visit Mississippi in order for projects to be processed for final payment.**

## Awarding of Funds

Approved projects will receive all of the funded amount (up to 50 percent of total eligible costs) after submission and approval of the applicant's final report, which must be submitted to the Visit Mississippi Director of Tourism within one year of the grant award date. All funds awarded must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the applicant. Matching contributions must be in cash, not in-kind contributions. The match must be budgeted and allocated funds earmarked to the proposal. Applying organizations are accountable for all funds awarded and responsible for submission and tracking of all research and measurement of project results. The tourism organization receiving a grant from Visit Mississippi, as well as any organization participating in this grant, will be subject to an audit by the State Auditor's Office. If the completed project cost is higher than the estimate, the organization will receive the amount originally approved when awards were made on project proposals. If the total cost of the completed project is less than the provided estimate, the organization will be awarded the designated percentage of the lesser amount. For example: If a project with a total estimated cost of \$4,000 received an award of 50 percent or \$2,000, and the actual cost was \$3,000, then the project would receive 50 percent of the final cost, or \$1,500. The maximum of up to \$50,000 total grant monies is available per tourism entity/community for October 1, 2017 - September 30, 2018. No amount of funding is guaranteed through this program. If funds exist following the grant allocation distribution, monies will be open to all applicants once the grant coordinator sets a second deadline.

## Sample Invoice

Retype this invoice on your letterhead, fill in the information for your project and include your final report.

Invoice For Receipt Of Payment	
Contact Name: _____	<i>Organization Name (As Listed On The Tax ID Form)</i>
Mailing Address: _____	<i>City, State Zip</i>
Project Title: _____	
Project Code: _____	<i>(This number is listed in the letter of confirmation from Visit Mississippi)</i>
Estimated cost of the project listed on the application	\$ _____
Actual Cost of the Project <i>(Only approved expenditures relating to grant project from original application)</i>	\$ _____
Match Grant Amount Due <i>(If project cost is less than estimate, you may receive only the designated percentage of the actual cost; If project cost exceeds the estimate, you may receive only the original grant amount awarded.)</i>	\$ _____

For more information on the Visit Mississippi - Tourism Matching Grants Program, please contact:  
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