FY27 MDA | Visit Mississippi
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GRANT GUIDELINES
FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

SCOPE AND PURPOSE: The goal of the Tourism Development Grant is to assist with festivals and events that Visit Mississippi believes have the potential to grow substantially within three years. Priority will be given to new festivals and events that are in their early stages or growing and/or expanding.

All projects receiving a grant must adhere to the following guidelines. If any of these guidelines are not followed, a project will be deemed ineligible for consideration, and the Visit Mississippi director will withhold funding designated to the project. Application submissions will be limited to two per organization. Please note that this is a COMPETITIVE grant program.

- The applicant organization receiving grant funding must be the responsible party for all expenditures – no exceptions.
- Awarded funds are ineligible to be transferred from one organization to another.
- Eligible applicants for funding must have local financial support and provide a letter of support from the local tourism entity or unit of local government along with the application. The letter of support must be from an entity other than the one applying for funding.
- FESTIVALS AND EVENTS – Priority will be given to festivals or events held in a concentrated time period or multi-weekend of music, arts and/or heritage cultural events.
- Event(s) dates must be secured – TBD will not be accepted.
- Total available funds for this program are $299,000. One application may be selected for Category 1, which provides up to $5,000. Another application may be selected for Category 2, which provides $5,000 to $10,000. Please make your selection on the application.

- The application for grant funding must be received by **5 p.m. Friday, July 17, 2026. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected and returned to sender**. No exception will be made for any reason, including force majeure.
- Events that occur from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027, are eligible for funding.
- The anticipated media breakout form must be submitted with the application. The form can be found in section 3 of the TDG Application. Failure to email the media breakout form to TDGprogram@mississippi.org will result in an incomplete application, which will not be considered.
- Events should attract overnight visitation.
- Events should promote Mississippi's culture, history and unique story.
- Shows, sales and auctions are not eligible for funding.
- If Visit Mississippi agrees to fund an event, payment will be made after the event and upon full completion of the Project Clearance Report. The grantee is to maintain accurate financial records on the receipt and use of these funds and be prepared for an inspection by the Mississippi Development Authority, the Office of the State Auditor or other authorized agency for a period of no less than three years. Documentation to be kept for the specified period of time includes invoices, receipts, canceled checks, ledgers and any other similar accounting records. Invoices must be paid by the award recipient organization – no exceptions.
- Completed project reports must be received by Visit Mississippi 45 days after project completion, or the project will be rejected for funding – no exceptions.
- If the event is during the month of June, the closeout must be sent in by July 15 due to fiscal year-end with our accounting department.
- The primary use of grant funds is for advertising and marketing. **Fifty percent of funds granted must be used for advertising and marketing. In-kind advertising and marketing will not be accepted as the 50 percent requirement.** The grant recipient must provide an invoice and canceled check for each eligible expense and a copy of the ad for all advertising to be eligible for payment.
- All funded projects are REQUIRED TO DISPLAY THE VISIT MISSISSIPPI LOGO as part of marketing for event. Radio advertisements must use the phrase, "*This project is partially funded by a grant through Visit Mississippi.*" The Visit Mississippi logo can be found at https://visitmississippi.org/press-room/ .

- If the funds anticipated for the continuing fulfillment of the program are at any time not forthcoming or insufficient, the Authority shall have the right to terminate the program without damage, penalty, cost or expenses of any kind whatsoever to the Authority.

- The organization must be setup with a tax ID number. Individual/personal social security numbers will not be accepted.
- The organization must have a State of Mississippi vendor number. Please visit https://bit.ly/1wcQitK.
- Mississippi requires all vendors to receive payments electronically via Bank of America's PayMode® electronic payment solution. Please visit paymode.com/mississippi.
- If a project changes during the development stages, a letter must be submitted to Visit Mississippi for approval before modification. The letter must state what has been approved for funding, the requested change and the reasons for the change. Visit Mississippi will notify the grant awardee in writing if changes are accepted.
- Grant funds cannot be reallocated to a different event if the original event submitted for funding does not occur.
- If an organization has closed a grant with a remaining balance, the organization will NOT be allowed to submit a subsequent request for reimbursement.
- All grant awards are final.
- Any unused grant funds cannot be reallocated for other events.
- If the event does not take place, any expenses incurred are not eligible for reimbursement, including force majeure – no exceptions.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

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TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GRANT ELIGIBILITY LIST

Eligibility list:

- Media placement and production (print, online, outdoor, broadcast and radio)
- Visit Mississippi logo must be displayed on printed materials and broadcast
- Radio advertisements must use the phrase, "*This project is partially funded by a grant through Visit Mississippi.*"
- Public relations/media communications
- Strategic planning and research
- Visit Mississippi logo must be displayed on website development
- Signage
- Equipment purchases or rentals* (stages, trailer stages, flat beds, portable bathrooms, lighting, venues, etc.)
- Musician fees
- Security
- T-shirts as promotional items and not for sale
- Professional horse shows and professional sporting events

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TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GRANT NON-ELIGIBILITY LIST

Non-eligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Agency commissions, consulting and other fees
- Office supplies
- Items for resale
- Lobbying
- Educational conferences, advocacy programs, expos and membership dues
- Travel expenses, including accommodations and non-public relations- or marketing-related transportation (travel to and from meetings will not be reimbursed)
- Operational costs such as employee salaries, rent, utilities, postage, logo design fees, event cleanup/trash removal, employee t-shirts or other administrative costs
- Infrastructure
- Construction of facilities or modification/cosmetic enhancements
- Expenses incurred before the date of the award letter
- Pre- and/or post-parties, breakfast, brunch, lunch, snacks and dinner
- Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages
- Food of any type
- Gifts for judges or contestants (trophies, plaques, gift cards, cash prizes, medals, engraving, ribbons or any type of award)
- Exhibitor tents, booth space or stalls
- Miscellaneous purchases (flowers, pumpkins, hay, firewood, fence post, candy, decorations, coolers, etc.)
- Cost of mailing Tourism Development Grant application and/or final report to Visit Mississippi
- Youth sporting events
- Theatre productions (plays and/or musicals)
- Community events held in casinos

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TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GRANT CHECK LIST

- ☐ Is the grant application typed?
- ☐ Is the grant application signed?
- ☐ Did you use only the space provided on the application?
- ☐ If mailing, have you enclosed one original and three copies (total of four) of the application and media breakout form?
  OR
- ☐ If e-mailing, was the application and media breakout form e-mailed prior to 5:00 p.m. on July 17, 2026?
- ☐ Did you include your Letter of Support?
- ☐ Does the organization have a tax ID number? Social security numbers will not be accepted.
- ☐ Does the organization have a State of Mississippi vendor number?
- ☐ Is the organization set up to use Paymode?

If you have any questions, please contact TDGprogram@mississippi.org or 601-359-9403.

Visit Mississippi mailing address:
Visit Mississippi
Tourism Development Grant
P.O. Box 849
Jackson, MS 39205-0849

Visit Mississippi physical address:
Visit Mississippi
Tourism Development Grant
Woolfolk Building, 5th Floor
501 North West St.
Jackson, MS 39201