



# Tourism Marketing Grant Program

Applicant Packet

Fiscal Year

'25/'26

Dear Potential Local Tourism Grant Applicants,

The City of Columbia Tourism Committee appreciates your interest in the Tourism Marketing Grant Program. The funding for this program is generated from a local tax applied to overnight stays at hotels in the City of Columbia. The purpose of the program is to promote tourism and conventions within the City of Columbia or otherwise attract nonresident overnight visitors to the City by providing funding assistance to promote events, attractions, hotels and venues that bring people to our community. Therefore, preference will be given to projects that encourage overnight stays, in accordance with State Statutes.

This packet is designed to provide you with all the documents needed from beginning to end of the funding cycle. Please refer to the checklist provided in the packet to assist you throughout the process. Funding will cover expenses in Fiscal Year 2023/2024, which runs from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025. Expenses can occur only during this time period. Please be thorough on your application. For those questions which do not apply to your application, simply insert "n/a" or "not applicable." You may also attach additional documentation as you feel necessary.

One electronic copy and one hard copy of your application must be received at Columbia City Hall, 208 S. Rapp Ave., Columbia, IL 62236 – no exceptions. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. The applications should be marked to the attention of the Clerk's Office. Electronic versions should be sent to [mrose@columbiall.gov](mailto:mrose@columbiall.gov).

All applications will be submitted to the Clerk's office, and referred to the Assistant to the City Administrator. Based on guidelines of the attached policy, the Tourism Committee shall make funding recommendations to the City's Accounting Manager. Following a review and recommendation by the Accounting Manager, the awarding of funds concludes via adoption of a Resolution by the City Council.

If you have any questions regarding the process and/or City requirements, please refer to the "City Contacts" list provided within the packet. Thank you for your interest in this program. We look forward to receiving your application.

Respectfully,

Bob Hill  
Mayor

## CHECKLIST

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

- Grant application (Form "A") is completed and signed
- One electronic copy and one hard copy is submitted to the City's staff liaison

### Post Award Requirements

- Form "B" (Tourism Marketing Grant Funding Agreement) completed by both parties
- Form "C" (Waiver and Release) completed and signed by organization
- All applicable permits / licenses have been acquired
  - Not Applicable
- All insurance requirements/forms have been submitted
  - Not applicable
- Form "D" (Post-Project Report) has been completed and returned to the City

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### Below is For Committee / City Use Only

<input type="checkbox"/> Considered by Tourism Committee			
<input type="checkbox"/> Tourism Committee Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting Manager Recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> \$	<input type="checkbox"/> Funding Amount

### Post Award Requirements:

- Form "B" (Local Tourism Grant Funding Agreement) has been completed by both parties
- Form "C" (Waiver and Release) has been completed and signed by organization
- All applicable permits / licenses have been acquired by the organization
  - Not Applicable
  - Reviewed by Assistant to the City Administrator
  - Reviewed by Liquor Commissioner
- All insurance requirements/forms have been submitted
  - Not applicable
  - Staff review / initials
- Funds distributed
- Form "D" (Post-Project Report) has been completed and returned to the City

## City Contacts

Name	Title	Phone #	Email
Doug Brimm	City Administrator	618-281-7144 x. 122	dbrimm@columbiail.gov
Kelly Mathews	Deputy Clerk	618-281-7144 x. 104	kmathews@columbiail.gov
Linda Sharp	Accounting Manager	618-281-7144 x. 112	lsharp@columbiail.gov
Marla Rose	Community Relations Coordinator	618-281-7144 x. 110	mrose@columbiail.gov

City of Columbia  
208 S. Rapp Ave.  
Columbia, Illinois 62236

**CITY OF COLUMBIA**  
**TOURISM MARKETING GRANT PROGRAM**  
**CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**About the Program**

The City of Columbia Tourism Marketing Grant Program (Program) provides *matching support* up to \$2,500 to promote local tourism. This may include marketing campaigns (Projects) that:

- Promote Columbia hotel properties or venues to help attract non-resident visitors to our community, or
- Promote Columbia attractions or events that are intended to attract out-of-area visitors and develop the culture and heritage of our community.  
*Attractions and events must be located within the City of Columbia City limits or in sufficiently close proximity as to reasonably attract tourists to the City.*
- Cultivate our community as a point of destination for the traveling public
- Support the overall goal of increasing and extending hotel stays in Columbia. Increased hotel occupancy and visitor travel into and throughout the City of Columbia positively impact the economic vibrancy of our community and support our local economy.

**Eligibility**

Applicants must be:

- Non-profit organizations seeking to produce and promote a clearly defined festival, program or event within City limits, or
- Hotel properties/venues seeking to bring new business, meetings, conferences, tours or sports groups to City of Columbia hotel properties and venues.

Awards will be made based on funds available. *A maximum of three (3) grants may be awarded to a single recipient each fiscal year*; however, additional grants may become available based on the strength of the tourism fund and interest in the grant Program.

## Authorized Uses of Tourism Funds

Tourism funding is available for the following types of uses:

1. Advertising and promotional campaigns supporting events or marketing projects in media such as broadcast, web, social media, print, and distribution
2. Printing and distribution of promotional pieces, creative design, printing, copying, ad placement cost, and distribution of direct mail.
3. Creating an internet website promoting the event or campaign. Websites must include a link to the City of Columbia website to increase participation, attendance, and awareness of the event and to generate hotel nights and spending throughout the City.

*All promotional materials must include City hotel logos in their promotion and identify the City of Columbia as an additional funding source.*

## Deadline for Submission

Grant awards will be made on an ongoing basis. Applications for funding must be received at least 60 days prior to the event date. Grant recipients will be notified of their award within 30 days of receipt of their application.

## Review Criteria

All Projects must show the potential to generate overnight hotel stays, include City hotel logos in their promotion and identify the City of Columbia as an additional funding source.

Applications will be assessed based upon criteria which includes but is not limited to:

1. Completeness of application
2. Ability of the event to grow over two or more years.
3. Food, beverage and retail expenditures by out of market visitors and the extent to which the event provides economic opportunities for Columbia businesses.
4. Ability of the event to project a positive image of the City of Columbia and to increase the visibility of Columbia tourism, attractions, and events.
5. Ability or potential of the event to attract overnight visitors.
6. Consistency of the funding request as related to the potential impact of the Project
7. The organization's compliance with post-event reporting, if organization has previously been awarded Local Tourism Grant Funds.

### How to Apply

Guidelines for the Program and an application for the current grant cycle can be found on the City website at [www.columbiaillinois.com/tourismmarketinggrantprogram](http://www.columbiaillinois.com/tourismmarketinggrantprogram).

For more information on the Program, or to receive additional assistance with completion of your application, please contact Marla Rose, Community Relations Coordinator, at [mrose@columbiall.gov](mailto:mrose@columbiall.gov) or 618-281-7144, ext. 110.

*This grant is funded by the transient guest tax paid by visitors who spend the night in hotels in the City of Columbia. It is collected by the hotels, and administered by the City of Columbia.*

# PROGRAM APPLICATION "FORM A"

## General Information

1. Organizational Structure ( ) Non-profit ( ) Hotel ( ) Venue

2. Name of organization/business: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Applicant name: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Address:**

5. Contact person's name

**6. Phone:**

**7. Email:**

## Project Information:

**8. Name of event:**

9. Date(s):

**10. Location of event:**

## Grant Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to establish a priority for the awarding of grants. In the space provided, please provide your answer to each question.

12. Description of the project and purpose of funding request

13. How will the requested funds be used to promote tourism and Columbia hotel(s)?

14. Projected attendance for the event: \_\_\_\_\_

15. How will your Project success be determined?

16. Will this be a recurring Project?  yes  no

If yes, what plans do you have to grow the Project or event in the future?

17. How will your Project help Columbia businesses?

18. How many hotel rooms do you expect to book with this Project? \_\_\_\_\_

19. What is your reasoning for determining the number of hotel rooms?

20. Have you received previous tourism assistance from the City of Columbia?

Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes, please fill in the blanks below.

Year:

Project/event name:

Previous tourism amount granted:

Number of visitors attracted: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of hotel rooms booked: \_\_\_\_\_

21. Other funding sources: List the sources and amounts of confirmed/anticipated funds and contribution sources to support 50% matching of requested grant amount.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Project Expenses – Using Tourism Dollars

Please refer to authorized uses on page 6. Provide an itemized summary indicating the intended use of tourism dollars. Please be as specific as possible, including cities where promotions will occur. Indicate the total amount you plan to spend in each category.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total planned tourism dollars expenses \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Expenses – Other Anticipated Expenses Not Using Tourism Funding**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total other anticipated project expenses \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total planned tourism dollar expenses \_\_\_\_\_

Total anticipated expenses \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Submission Instructions**

Please email completed form and associated application documents to [mrose@columbial.gov](mailto:mrose@columbial.gov) and deliver a hard copy to:

City of Columbia  
Marla Rose  
Community Relations Coordinator  
208 S. Rapp Ave.  
Columbia, IL

## Funding Agreement "Form B"

This sets forth the agreement ("Agreement") between the City of Columbia ("City") and \_\_\_\_\_ (the "Organization"), with its principal place of business at \_\_\_\_\_, relating to the use of Hotel/Motel Tax Funds ("Funds").

### 1.) Use of Funds

The Organization agrees to use the Funds for the Project described in the Tourism Marketing Grant Application. The Organization agrees that any Hotel/Motel Tax funds received can only be used to directly promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry, in accordance with State Statutes.

### 2.) General Terms

a.) Location: The Organization agrees the event must be located within the City of Columbia City limits or in sufficiently close proximity as to reasonably attract tourists to the City of Columbia.

b.) Status of Organization: The Organization must be an organization or corporation governed by a board of directors or a hotel/venue located in the City of Columbia. Applicant must also be in good financial standing and have financial safeguards in place to protect public funds.

c.) Cost Sharing or Matching: Organization must provide an equal amount of funds to the amount of tourism grant funding being requested to cover expenses for the project. Grant amount may not exceed 50% of expenses.

d.) Promotional Materials and Sponsorship: The Organization agrees that:

- promotional materials must contain City of Columbia hotel logos\*
- promotional materials must name the City of Columbia as an additional funding source
- a copy of all promotional materials for the Project will be provided to the City in the Post-Project Report

\*logos will be supplied by the City upon request.

e.) Audit: The Organization agrees the City has the right to audit the books or financial records of Organization if it receives Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax revenues

f.) Notification Requirements: The Organization agrees to notify overnight lodging establishments in writing of the upcoming Project and provide the City with proof of such notification. The organization must also provide a

statement from City of Columbia hotel(s) stating the number of overnight stays that were generated by the event.

### 3.) Permits & Licenses

If applicable, the Organization agrees to comply with all permits and license requirements of the event, and acknowledges the receipt of the Hotel/Motel Tax Grant is contingent upon a review of such by the Assistant to the City Administrator, Director of Community Development and Liquor Commissioner.

### 4.) Insurance

Any organization receiving Hotel/Motel Tax Grant Funds for events being held on City property shall be required to meet the current conditions set forth in the City's Code of Ordinances section 12.33.050 (Special Events - Insurance Requirements). Those requirements include the following:

- Certificate of Insurance naming the City as additionally insured in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 each occurrence and \$2,000,000 general aggregate

In the event liquor/beer is sold at the event, the Organization shall be required to meet the current conditions set forth in the City's Code of Ordinances section 5.2.080 (Classification of Licenses-Fees). Those requirements include the following:

- Obtain a Liquor License Class H (Special Use Permit). Applicants must submit satisfactory proof that it will provide dram shop liability insurance to the maximum limits
- Obtain a Liquor License Class I (Special Event License). Applicants must submit satisfactory proof that it will provide dram shop liability insurance to the maximum limits

### 5.) Reporting and Reimbursement

The Organization is responsible for completing the, "Post-Project Report Form D" with the finalized information explaining the Hotel Occupancy Tax Revenues within 60 days of the Project. The Organization must provide receipts for review to affirm that the expenses comply with the stated purposes during the application process. The report will be reviewed by the Tourism Committee. Failure to submit the report may result in future funding disqualification.

### 6.) Termination

Either party may terminate this Agreement if the other commits a material breach of this Agreement; provided, however, that the terminating party has

given the other written notice and the other party has failed to remedy or cure the breach within ten (10) days of such notice.

**7.) Remedies**

If the City terminates this Agreement as a result of the Organization's breach, then in addition to any other remedies to which the City may be entitled by reason of such breach, the City shall have the right to the recovery of all Hotel Occupancy Tax Revenues distributed to the Organization upon request. In addition, the City shall have the right to any attorney's fees incurred in the recovery of Hotel Occupancy Tax funds given to the Organization.

**8.) Venue**

Venue for any dispute arising out of this Agreement shall be in Columbia, Illinois.

City of Columbia

Applicant/Recipient

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Waiver and Release of All Claims**  
**"Form C"**

Whereas \_\_\_\_\_, ("Organization")  
has applied for and been approved by the City of Columbia ("City") for a grant of  
Hotel / Motel Tax funds for \_\_\_\_\_.

Now, therefore, in consideration of the grant of Hotel / Motel Tax funds from the City, Grantee hereby agrees that in the event that, or as a result of the program or event sponsored by the Grantee, the City is made a party defendant in any litigation or any claim or demand is made against the City, the Grantee shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City, its officers, agent, commissioners, and employee individually and collectively, from and against any and all suits, claims, demands, set offs, or other actions, including but not limited to judgments arising therefrom. The obligation of the Grantee shall include and extend to payment of reasonable attorneys' fees for the representation of the City and its said officers, agents, commissioners, or employees in any litigation or investigation and includes expenses, court costs, and all other fees associated with any litigation, claim, or demand, or appeal.

Organization / Grantee: \_\_\_\_\_

Signer: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**POST-EVENT REPORT**  
**"FORM D"**

(Submitted with receipts at least 60 days after Project completion)

**Organization Information**

Fiscal Year of the Event: 2023-2024

Name of the Project or Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of the Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Funding Amount Received: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Project or Event Recap**

The Organization must attach copies of receipts, contracts, etc. which display the use of the grant funds received.

**Income Sources/Expenses**

Tourism funds received \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total additional funding sources \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total itemized expenses  
(show itemization on separate sheet) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total income (all sources) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Profit (Loss) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

What was the actual percentage of the event's costs covered by the grant? \_\_\_\_\_ %

Actual Economic Impact

# Visitors attracted \_\_\_\_\_

# Hotel nights generated \_\_\_\_\_

Merchandise sales \_\_\_\_\_

Sales tax revenue \_\_\_\_\_

What was your actual (or estimated if necessary) attendance at the event? \_\_\_\_\_

How many room nights were generated at City of Columbia hotels by attendees at this event? (Attach proof of notice provided to hotel of upcoming project and statement from hotel of number of overnight stays generated by the event)

\_\_\_\_\_

What issues, if any, could be better addressed in the future?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What method did the hotel(s) use to determine the number of room nights generated?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What marketing initiatives did you utilize to promote hotel stays for this event? (Attach proof)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What marketing initiatives did you utilize to promote attendance at this event?  
(Attach proof)**

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**Please submit completed form to:**

**City of Columbia  
Attn: Marla Rose, Community  
Relations Coordinator  
208 S. Rapp Ave.  
Columbia, IL 62236**



## Application Evaluation - Grant Scoring Rubric

Applicant Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Exemplary – 3 points	Adequate – 2 points	Needs Improvement – 1 point
Completeness of Application	The plan is clearly outlined and identifies how the proposed funding would be used to promote tourism. All questions on the application are answered completely.	Either the plan is not clearly outlined, or the proposed use of funding is not identified.	The application is not completed in full, and key information is missing.
Growth	Proof is provided of the expertise to support the project. Project can be replicated. Evidence is provided of forward planning if project is reoccurring.	Proposal is convincing of success in future years. The project has potential of being an example to other organizations.	Expertise seems to be lacking, and the proposed project would be difficult to continue in the future, if stated as a recurring event, or the event is not recurring.
Economic Opportunities	The proposal clearly demonstrates the potential for out of market visitors to provide increased business opportunities at Columbia businesses	Proposal demonstrates some potential that out of market visitors will visit retail businesses in the City.	Proposal shows no evidence or potential of retail expenditures at Columbia businesses by out of market visitors.
Impact on Tourism	The proposal outlines how the project will reflect positively on the City of Columbia and its tourism efforts.	The proposal may reflect positively on the City of Columbia and its tourism efforts, but evidence is not provided.	There is no evidence that the project will reflect positively on the City of Columbia and its tourism efforts or the project could be considered controversial.
Overnight Visitors	The proposal demonstrates a history of 10+ hotel stays, a block of 10+ hotel rooms are reserved, or clear reasoning is provided that 10+ stays will be booked at Columbia hotels.	The proposal demonstrates a history of 5+ hotel stays, a block of 5+ hotel rooms are reserved, or clear reasoning is provided that 5+ stays will be booked at Columbia hotels.	No proof is evident that the project will attract overnight visitors and/or less than 5 rooms will be booked at Columbia hotels
Financial Information	The funding request amount is consistent with descriptive criteria provided for evaluation of funding.	The funding request amount is higher than what is necessary according to the criteria provided.	The funding request amount is inconsistent with the parameters of the grant.
Post-event Reporting	Applicant has been awarded Local Tourism Grant Funds in the past, has met full compliance in completing all post-event reporting, and number of room stays match or exceed stated room projections, or applicant has not previously been awarded Local Tourism Grant Funds.	Applicant has been awarded Local Tourism Grant Funds in the past and has completed post-event reporting in full compliance, but number of room stays did not match stated room projections.	Applicant has been awarded Local Tourism Grant Funds in the past and has completed post-event reporting, but did not meet full compliance in completing the reporting or no post-event reporting was submitted.

Total points scored: \_\_\_\_\_ / 21

TAC Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Criteria: 17+ points = 100% of funding request      15 -16 points = 75% of funding request      13 -14 points = 50% of funding request  
0 -12 points = 0% of funding request