

SPECIAL EVENT GRANT GUIDELINES

FISCAL YEAR 2017 (1/01/17 - 12/31/17)

Purpose:

Visit Bloomington has set aside up to \$40,000 in funding for the marketing of events exhibiting positive tourism potential to the Monroe County area. These funds are to assist qualified organizations with the promotion of tourism activities striving to directly increase hotel/motel occupancy and create positive image building publicity for Monroe County.

Qualifying Applicants:

Applicants must be organizations seeking to produce and promote a well-defined tourism-oriented festival or event. Grant funds are issued to qualifying applicants through a reimbursement process. Applicants must submit a reimbursement form (supplied by Visit Bloomington) along with proof of payment to receive grant funds. Proof of event liability insurance, including a certificate adding Visit Bloomington to the liability policy, and a completed W-9 tax form will need to be provided to Visit Bloomington prior to the organization receiving any funding reimbursement.

Visit Bloomington reserves the right to provide funding to organizations outside of the grant program. This funding will not affect the Special Event Grant funds. Any outside funding provided will be at the discretion of Visit Bloomington.

Timetable & Evaluation Procedure:

FY17 application requests for funding are for events scheduled January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. Applicants are urged to schedule their events at times of the year when hotel occupancy rates are not at a peak in Bloomington. Dates of the event will be considered in the evaluation criteria when applications are scored. See the grant application section for details. Guidelines will be available online at www.visitbloomington.com starting March 1, 2016.

Visit Bloomington will accept and evaluate completed applications beginning March 1, 2016 until 5pm on July 1, 2016. Approximately \$40,000 in funding is available in the program and only those applications received before 5pm on July 1 will be eligible for consideration. Applications submitted at or after midnight (July 2) will not be accepted.

Applications will be reviewed for completeness or missing information by Visit Bloomington staff immediately after they are turned in. Visit Bloomington will contact those organizations with incomplete applications requesting appropriate information to make them complete. A complete application does not guarantee funding. Visit Bloomington reserves the right to reject any application for any reason. Visit Bloomington staff and representatives of the Board of Directors will review and score the applications. The Visit Bloomington Board of Directors will approve all funding decisions.

Once the final decision on funding is determined, applicants will be notified. Successful applicants will receive letters of agreement with funding levels, instructions on exact items that were approved for funding, as well as more information on invoicing, reimbursement and reporting. Those letters will need to be signed and returned to Visit Bloomington prior to the organization receiving any reimbursement funding.

Grant Guidelines and Requirements:

1. The maximum funding level for any one application is \$5,000.
2. An organization may submit only one application, requesting funds for one project/event.
3. All applicants must designate a Project Manager for their application and event.
4. All events must be held within Monroe County.
5. Events that have been awarded grant funding three times must apply for new projects, which can include new target markets or new mediums. Funding will not be awarded for the same projects/markets more than three times.
6. All events must show the potential to generate overnight hotel stays, attract visitors from outside of a 50-mile radius of Monroe County, create a positive economic impact through food, beverage and retail expenditures, and ability to project a positive image of Monroe County. Please see the grant application section for exact scoring measurements.
7. No event may have as its primary purpose the promotion of a specific candidate, political party or platform.
8. No event-related marketing efforts may promote lodging facilities located outside Monroe County.
9. All events must have a hotel partner or multiple hotel partners, through which they can offer a trackable room block (for artists/performers and attendees). Events with additional restaurant, retail and attraction partners will receive additional points during evaluation. Visit Bloomington can assist with finding a hotel partner.
10. If an event has a history of attendees or participants creating negative experiences or damages to Monroe County lodging, restaurant or attraction partners, funding may be affected.
11. Events must be open to the general public, not exclusive in regard to attendance, and handicapped and programmatically accessible.
12. Visit Bloomington reserves the right to disqualify any applicant or application for any reason.
13. Visit Bloomington must give advanced approval on all funded marketing activities, including advertisements, flyers, posters, programs, websites and electronic marketing. Visit Bloomington will provide a signed agreement outlining the projects for which the grant funds can be used.
14. If, for reasons beyond your control, you are unable to complete the marketing project for which your original application was submitted and approved, you may submit a request to Visit Bloomington to substitute the current project with another that is comparable in quantity and scope. Failure to notify Visit Bloomington of changes can affect both current reimbursement and future funding opportunities.
15. If applicant cannot complete the approved event for which funds have been allocated, Visit Bloomington must be notified immediately. Failure to complete an event as submitted in the approved application may have an impact on future funding decisions and allocations.

16. Visit Bloomington must be given recognition as an event sponsor based on the level of funding. Separately, the website for the event or funded organization must have a link to the Visit Bloomington website; a homepage presence is preferred. Visit Bloomington will provide their logo and an electronic link to all funded applicants in the appropriate format.
17. Each applicant must include a detailed marketing plan and budget in their application. Only marketing efforts running outside a 50-mile radius of Monroe County are eligible for funding. Indianapolis is an eligible market for grant funded projects.
18. All grant funding is awarded on a reimbursement basis only. Proof of payment by applicant must be provided to Visit Bloomington in order to receive reimbursement. Proof of payment includes a copy of the original invoice or receipt, plus a copy of the check paid to vendor or a copy of a bank or credit card statement. For cash purchases, acceptable proof of payment is a receipt from vendors documenting received payment.
19. Each organization receiving grant funding is encouraged to conduct surveys to capture information on attendees, including demographic information, spending habits, event satisfaction, and how they heard about the event. Visit Bloomington can offer assistance in building the survey and provide suggestions on how to implement it.
20. A post-event summary is due within 90 days after funded events. A summary form will be provided by Visit Bloomington. Failure to submit the summary within 90 days or submission of summary with incomplete or missing information may effect funding of future applications. Summary must include:
 - A. Estimated attendance and hotel room nights generated. Describe method used to estimate attendance.
 - B. Summary of grant funded marketing projects used to promote the event.
 - C. Summary of any press or media coverage.
 - D. General assessment of the event, which addresses the event's success and any concerns or recommendations for changes.
 - E. Examples of advertisements and marketing pieces.

Eligible Expenditures for Reimbursement:

1. Advertising placed in media outlets that reach areas outside a 50-mile radius of Monroe County. (Indianapolis is an approved area.) Applications must include media details including media name, flight dates, potential reach, and size and frequency of ads to be placed.
2. Production of promotional pieces to be distributed outside a 50-mile radius of Monroe County (Indianapolis is an approved area). This includes brochures, posters, direct mail pieces, etc. Applications must be specific on methods of distribution, production costs or any other expenses funded by the grant. Funds may not be used for promotional pieces distributed inside a 50-mile radius of Monroe County.
3. Event website development.
4. Graphic design services.

Ineligible Expenditures:

1. Advertising or promotional pieces (production or distribution costs) placed within Monroe County or a 50-mile radius.
2. Fees associated with the hiring of a marketing or public relations company.
3. Event tickets or passes used in marketing or PR projects. Visit Bloomington considers tickets and passes to be in-kind expenses, and will not pay the cost of providing tickets to media outlets for contests or PR campaigns.

Grant Applications

Please complete an application form and submit via email as a word document or PDF. Points will be determined based on thoroughness of information and quality of the content. Basic information will not be scored, but incomplete information may result in rejection of the application. Scored content is described in detail below.

General information (unscored):

- Organization name
- Organization address
- Event website
- Project manager name, email and phone number
- Name of event
- Location of event
- Description of event
- Grant request amount

Event and marketing information (scored):

- Event start and end dates
Up to three points, evaluated on whether it takes place during weekday and/or during off-peak times of the year.
- Number of years this event has been held
Up to two points; two points for events less than 3 years, one point for events 4-10 years, no points past 10 years.
- Not for profit status
One point given for non-profit status.
- Number of years this event has won a Visit Bloomington grant
Up to three points; three points for events that have never won a grant, two points for events that have won a grant 1-3 times, two points for events that have won a grant 4-6 times, no points for events that have won more than 6 times.

- Estimated attendance
Up to three points; three points for events with reasonable potential to reach attendance over 3,000 people, two points for events that reach 1,000-3,000, one point for events that reach up to 1,000.
- Description of target audience (demographic and geographic markets with supporting data or information on how you chose these markets)
Up to five points, evaluated on viability and supporting data provided.
- Marketing plan (list of media outlets and their reach, plus ad size, frequency, and costs)
Up to ten points, evaluated on how these outlets connect with target audience, the reach of the outlets, and the potential to attract overnight visitors.
- Other partnership (hotel, restaurant, event, or attraction that help create a "package", with details on the offerings)
Up to three points for established partnership that will help create a full, multi-day experience.

A total of 30 points are possible and a minimum of 18 points are required to be eligible for funding. Visit Bloomington has a maximum of \$40,000 budgeted for this program and will accept applications through 5pm on July 1, 2016. Again, events must take place between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2017. Visit Bloomington reserves the right to offer partial funding to any applicant.

Applications must be submitted via email in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format before 5pm, July 1, 2016.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this application or program, please contact:

Julie Warren
Director of Tourism
Bloomington/Monroe County Convention & Visitors Bureau
2855 N. Walnut Street
Bloomington, IN 47404
812-330-4304
julie@visitbloomington.com