

2017 Lancaster County Visitors Improvement Fund Grant Guidelines
(Revised June 2017)

1. Any visitor attraction in Lancaster County, owned by the public or non-profit organization, whose primary purpose is to operate a visitor attraction, is eligible for fund allocation. **Funding for new or existing event related operational costs and expenses are not eligible for grant funding.**
 - a. For minor grant applications under \$10,000 annually, only one request per facility, per year.
 - b. For major grant applications that exceed \$10,000 annually and that are part of a multi-year contract, further requests for the same project or facility may be submitted after the multi-year payout has been complete.
2. **Major grants that exceed \$10,000 and may include new construction and improvement of an existing attraction, will need initial review* by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. Applicants must also fill out the attached Lancaster County Visitor Improvement Fund Grant Request.**

Please contact: Kerry Eagan, Keagan@lancaster.ne.gov, (402) 441-7447

***Initial review by the County Board will include a referral to the Visitors Promotion Committee for a recommendation after the VPC reviews applicants presentation and completed grant request. This recommendation will then be presented back to the County Board for final approval.**

3. All grant applications are reviewed for the economic impact the fund allocation will have on Lincoln and Lancaster County lodging tax collections. Grant applicants must assume the responsibility for providing inclusive and comprehensive information in this application so that the review committee has all pertinent and relevant details in order to arrive at a decision.
4. Allocation of *Visitor Improvement Fund* money will be prioritized as follows:
 - a. Expanding and improving any existing visitor attraction or construction of a new attraction.
 - b. Planning or developing such expansion improvements, exhibits or additions.
 - c. Acquiring or expanding exhibits for existing visitor attractions.
 - d. Promotion and advertising costs associated with such exhibits, provided the Visitors Promotion Committee has determined that the visitor attractions in Lancaster County are adequate and do not require improvement.
5. Grant funds may not be used for the following:
 - a. general operating expenses
 - b. additional or current personnel salaries
 - c. supplies and equipment
 - d. items not included in the approved grant application.
 - e. event related operational costs and expenses
 - f. general maintenance or replacement of an existing structural component of an existing facility.
 - Per the IRS, a structural component is defined as: the term "structural components" includes "such parts of a building as walls, partitions, floors, and ceilings, as well as any permanent coverings therefor such as paneling or tiling; windows and doors; all components (whether in, on, or adjacent to the building) of a central air conditioning or heating system, including motors, compressors, pipes and ducts; plumbing and plumbing fixtures, such as sinks and bathtubs; electric wiring and lighting fixtures; chimneys; stairs, escalators, and elevators, including all components thereof; sprinkler systems; fire escapes; and other components relating to the operation or maintenance of a building.

6. Fund applicants must complete the enclosed *Visitor Improvement Fund* application outlining use and benefits of requested funds. Failure to complete the entire application may result in the rejection of your fund request.
7. Grant funds may also not be used in any manner that would violate the Nebraska Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3117, et seq. (as amended from time to time). All grants are discretionary, based upon available fund balance, other anticipated uses, and anticipated effectiveness of proposed use.
8. Funding requests must be accurately submitted in the appropriate funding categories as defined in the grant application. Requests which do not conform to the proper funding categories may result in the rejection of your fund request.

9. Grant program schedule

Minor Grant Review (\$10,000 or less): **May** (April 30th due) **November** (October 31st due)

Major Grant Review (\$10,000 or more): **February** (January 31st due) **August** (July 31st due)

Grants are due to the Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau and will be presented to the VPC at its quarterly meeting in the months in BOLD as indicated above. A recommendation for acceptance or denial will then be passed on to the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners.

Applicants will have a chance to present to the Visitors Promotion Committee.

10. Minor and **Major** grant awards will **each** be made twice **yearly** unless determined otherwise by the Visitors Promotion Committee and/or the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners.
11. Approved applicants will be notified by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners **and** applicants will be required to enter into a grant contract with Lancaster County in order to receive funding.
12. **All applicants are required to submit preliminary **facility and project** budgets with this application. Please see that the following support paperwork accompanies your application. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the Visitors Promotion Committee.**
 - a. Completed application with project description & budget
 - b. Operating budget
 - c. Marketing budget
 - d. Contractors bid(s)
 - e. Support letters and or entity board approval
 - f. Proof of 501 (c) 3or 6 status
 - g. Any contributions budgeted or raised for the project**
 - h. Fifteen copies of the application, stapled
13. **Visitor Improvement Funds will be paid to you only upon completion of your project, unless otherwise agreed to in the grant contract with Lancaster County.** To request the reimbursement award fund, your organization must either supply a detailed listing of all expenditures and a professional external audit of your organization that covers the period of those expenditures or your organization must supply a detailed listing of those expenditures and copies of all receipts, cancelled checks, contracts and/or other documents that substantiate those expenditures. Current payment of funds will not take place until this audit is supplied.

14. At the conclusion of approved projects, support given through the grant must be acknowledged through appropriate use of a plaque, sign or appropriate visual notification will be placed on websites, materials or within the facility at the cost of the grantee. Lancaster County will furnish the appropriate specifications for acknowledgement.
15. Larger grant awards of more than \$10,000 may require updates at the request of the VPC and County Board. These updates will be regarding new construction or renovations that happen over an extended period of time.

LANCASTER COUNTY VISITORS IMPROVEMENT FUND
GRANT REQUEST

Name of Organization _____

Contact Person _____

Address/City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Organization Status: Non-Profit ____ Association ____ Civic Group ____ Other ____
(If other, please attach explanation)

Applicant Government/organization Federal ID number _____.

If tax exempt organization, designate IRS classification: _____ 501(c)3 _____ 501(c)6.

Provide a detailed description of your exhibit/attraction:

Number of attendees estimated: Out of town _____ Local _____

Check all that apply:

- _____ Expanding and improving any existing visitor attraction.
- _____ Planning or developing such expansion improvements, exhibits or additions.
- _____ Acquiring or expanding exhibits for existing visitor attractions.
- _____ Promotion and advertising costs associated with such exhibits.

Please describe project as indicated above.

Project Start Date _____ Completion Date _____

Is this project part of a larger renovation project? _____

If yes, please describe the entire project:

As it pertains to the grant related project, provide breakdowns of radio and television advertising, showing individual costs, call letters and cities of origin. Also give breakdowns of magazine advertising by individual publications and costs. Similarly, separate the costs for brochures, travel shows by location, billboard advertising, etc. Include target market demographics

Do you anticipate submitting future applications for projects relating to this project? _____

Total projected budget (attach detailed budget)

Total Revenue \$ _____

Total Expense \$ _____

How will your project impact new visitor recruitment and lodging tax revenues?

Estimated annual visitors: Local _____ Outside of Lincoln _____

Estimated Annual economic impact of your facility and/or project based on lodging tax use
(Use multipliers listed below)

Is this based on annual use of the facility or for a specific event/exhibition? _____

of hotel **overnights** utilized _____ x _____ (* Multiplier – see below *)

* National/Regional event Multiplier - \$375 per night

* State event - \$350 per night

* Local event (**no overnight stays expected**) - \$245 per night

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT BASED ON FORMULA _____

Is this grant request in addition to other project related grant requests?

If yes, then list other grant requests _____

Grant amount requested from Visitors Promotion Committee

\$ _____

Signature of Applicant _____

Date _____

Return **17 copies of your Application to:**

Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau
Attn: Jeff Maul, Executive Director
1128 Lincoln Mall, Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68508

For more information:

(402) 434-5343

jmaul@lincoln.org
