Chautauqua County 2024 Occupancy Tax Program for Grants for Lakes and Waterways

Part One: In-Lake Program Guidance

Overview

Chautauqua County has a five percent (5%) occupancy or "bed tax" for the rental of lodging units within the County. Three fifths (3%) of the revenue that is generated from this tax is utilized to increase tourism, conventions, trade shows, special events and other directly related and supporting activities including business in the county. The two fifths (2%) bed tax is utilized solely for the enhancement and protection of lakes and streams in Chautauqua County through two competitive grant programs, both of which are intended to increase tourism and recreation opportunities. **This grant application is for in-lake projects located within Lake Erie, Chautauqua, Findley, Bear and Cassadaga Lakes.** A separate grant program is available for projects within the watersheds of Lake Erie, Chautauqua, Findley, Bear and Cassadaga Lakes. The projects funded by both programs must demonstrate clear evidence how it will provide a public benefit.

Available Funds

For 2024, the minimum grant amount available for the in-lake program is **$5,000** and the maximum grant amount is **$50,000**.

Eligibility:

- Not-for-profit organizations
- Governmental agencies
- Businesses and corporations
- All landowners of Chautauqua County

In-Lake Program Outcomes:

Recent revisions to Chautauqua County's 2% Occupancy Tax Program are driven by changes to New York State legislation, which empowers Chautauqua County to collect an Occupancy Tax and use those revenues to improve the County's Lakes & Waterways. The changes are intended to use Occupancy Tax revenues to fund in-lake projects with outcomes that improve tourism and recreation opportunities.

Chautauqua County's five lakes (Erie, Chautauqua, Findley, Cassadaga and Bear) have a substantial impact on our economy. Each lake is a world unto itself. Some lakes are big and some are small. Some lakes are densely developed, but some are not. Most, but not all lakes are located in multiple municipal jurisdictions. Most, but not all lakes have one or more Lake Associations. All Lake Associations monitor lake health and perform lake maintenance tasks. All of Chautauqua County's lakes are special in their own way.

Project Categories:
There are six in-lake project categories that Lake Associations and other stakeholders commonly undertake that are eligible for competitive funding from the In-Lake program:
- Shoreline Maintenance
- Mechanical or Biological Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Management
- Chemical Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Management
- Invasive Species Management
- Harmful Algal Bloom Mitigation
- Dredging and Flood Mitigation

In addition, there is a New or Unique Project Category to encourage the implementation of new in-lake projects that are likely to have a positive impact on tourism and recreation, but may not fit into the above project categories.

Since each of Chautauqua County's lakes have different needs, it is unrealistic to establish a single scoring rubric that can be applied equitably across all lakes and all project categories without bias. The following examples illustrate this challenge:
- Excessive submerged aquatic vegetation (SAVs) impairs the use of some of our lakes for tourism and recreation, and the ability to manage SAVs is often limited to available funding. Competitive funding from the In-Lake Program might be used to expand and improve existing SAV management programs or simply offset annual costs. Project metrics could include tons of SAVs removed or acreage treated.
- Excessive sedimentation impairs the functionality of boat launches, marinas and promotes flooding at tributary inlets, which impairs tourism and recreation. Dredging to remove the sediments is expensive and requires engineering services, environmental permits, and implementation expenses, often over several years. Competitive funding from the In-Lake Program might be used to reimburse these costs, but there are no annual costs to offset. Project metrics could include minimum depth, tons of sediment dredged, aerial extent or reductions in flood damages.
- Invasive Species sometimes displace native species creating nuisance conditions the render our lakes unnavigable and un-swimmable, which has a negative impact on tourism and recreation. Prevention is a wise investment because it is proactive, rather than reactive and is less costly than eradication. Eradication is rarely 100% successful and typically requires continuous monitoring, subsequent treatment activities and may require several years of funding. Prevention and monitoring may have annual costs, but costs for eradication and follow up treatments would likely be periodic and based on the size of the infestation. Metrics could include number of boats inspected or decontaminated, tons of invasives removed, aerial extent of treatment or percent reductions of the target species.
- Additionally, new or unique in-lake projects may serve a need not previously realized and have a positive impacts on tourism and recreation, but they may have project outcomes for which no metrics have been defined.

The legislative intent of the In-Lake Program is to deliver funding for in-lake projects that will improve tourism and recreation opportunities in all of the County's five lakes. Because

the needs are great and the funding is limited, the In-Lake Program is competitive and applicants are encouraged to submit applications that reach or collaborate with multiple stakeholders to deliver the most impactful projects.

The Project Application:
The Instructions and Application is included as Part 2. The application begins with basic information such as the name of the lake on which the proposed project will take place, name of the project, name of the project applicant(s) and contact information. More detailed and specific information follows the basic information, including Part 1 of the New York State Environmental Review form. Each project application will be competitively scored by the Review Panel, who will determine numerical scores for the project narrative, the project's impact on tourism and recreation and stakeholder collaboration.

Project Narrative:
Each application is expected to contain a strong and compelling project narrative that justifies the investment of Occupancy Tax funding. The project narrative should fully define the need for the project, what tasks must be accomplished to satisfy the need, who is going to do the work, what permits are required, what environmental impacts are likely, whether the project is being phased, what other funds are being used to implement the project and what is the project schedule. The project narrative is an important part of the competitive scoring process and has a scoring value of up to 20 points.

Project Impact on Tourism and Recreation:
The project's anticipated impacts on tourism and recreation should be fully discussed in quantitative measures or at least in terms of qualitative outcomes. Recent revisions to New York State's Occupancy Tax legislation requires that Occupancy Tax –funded projects have a positive impact on tourism and recreation in Chautauqua County. This part of the application also has a scoring value of up to 20 points and helps to assure that the projects funded are consistent with the intent of New York State legislation.

Stakeholder Collaboration
We can accomplish more if we all work together. In-lake projects are likely to reach a large number of stakeholders, including tourists, boaters, fishermen, lakeshore property owners, businesses and attractions. The probability of achieving success is increased with the number of stakeholders involved in or impacted by the project. This part of the application has a scoring value of up to 10 points.

The maximum achievable score for any application is 50 points (20 points for the narrative, plus 20 points for impacts on tourism and recreation, plus 10 points for stakeholder collaboration).

Limitations
- Applications are limited to one project category, so combining several different project categories into one application is not allowed.
- Multiple applications by an applicant or group of stakeholders are not allowed unless the applications are for projects on multiple lakes.
- A project involving multiple municipal jurisdictions on one lake must be combined

into one application.

Selection Process

All applications submitted for the In-Lake Program will be evaluated by a Review Panel. The Review Panel will rank projects based on the quality and content of the narrative, the project's impact tourism and recreation, and the degree of collaboration with stakeholders.

During the review period, each member of the Review Panel will independently score and rank each project. Panel members will meet as a committee to discuss each project, where in members may adjust their scores based on peer interaction. Final scores will be compiled by the Watershed Coordinator and a ranked list with be prepared. The Watershed Coordinator will then provide a draft Resolution with the ranked list of projects and suggested funding amounts to the Legislature for their approval.

Funding Agreement:

Each project selected for funding will enter into a contract with Chautauqua County that defines the obligations of the applicant and the County. This includes, but is not limited to, items such as; reporting, payment schedule, terms of the agreement, use of funds, cancellations, reporting, insurance, disability, and workman's compensation. During the term of the agreement the applicant must allow access to the project area to the County Watershed Coordinator. Applicants are responsible for securing all permits necessary for work and fulfilling New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requirements. Funding will only be applied to costs incurred under the agreement after the agreement has been signed.

Project Timeline

All projects will be finished by December 31, 2024. Recipients of approved projects that are not completed within the allotted timeframe may request an extension in written form to the Watershed Coordinator explaining why an extension is being requested. The extension requests will be reviewed and a determination will be provided on a case-by-case basis. Extensions shall not be extended beyond December 31, 2025.

Reporting Requirements

As the project progresses, reporting with photographic documentation must be submitted to the Watershed Coordinator as defined in the agreement, which is typically at the initiation of the project, while work is underway, and at the completion of the project. All reporting will be consistent with the work plan (scope of services), timeline, and budget submitted as part of the application. Within 60 days of the completion of the project, the applicant must submit a project final report, which includes detailed financial information to the Watershed Coordinator in order to receive final payment.

**Chautauqua County
2024 Application for Occupancy Tax
Grant Program for Lakes and
Waterways
Due February 15, 2024**

**Part Two: In-Lake Instructions
&Application**

1. Failure to include accurate and complete information will result in the removal of the application from the review process.
2. The electronic version of the application is provided in Microsoft Word format. Please note that the application for the 2024 grant program provides the Applicant with flexibility to describe their project and to facilitate scoring by the Review Panel. Please do not attach additional information unless otherwise instructed on the application. Please utilize the 12 point Times New Roman font to prepare your application. Applications are found online at: www.chqgov.com click on the link to the Legislator home page and navigate to "Occupancy Tax Forms", or www.planningchautauqua.com, clink on the watershed management link and navigate to 2% bed tax grants, or contact the County Watershed Coordinator for a paper version of the application at the Chautauqua County Department of Planning and Development; 201 W. Third Street; Jamestown, NY 14701; (716) 661-8915; email: McCoyD@chqgov.com.
3. You may consider using the services of a Technical Services Provider (TSP) to assist you with preparing this application for Occupancy Tax Grant funding; however, you are not required to do so. Examples of TSPs include Not for Profit Environmental and Conservation Organizations, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Services and Professional Engineers.
4. When completing your application for Occupancy Tax Funding, please review the scoring criteria identified in the attached Application Ranking and Evaluation form. This form is used by the Review Panel to provide a consistent means of scoring and ranking each application. This form should not be completed by the Applicant or returned as a part of your completed application.
5. The project budget must be submitted on the worksheet provided. Please identify the sources of funding for the project on the Project Budget Worksheet. Sources of funding may include (A) Occupancy Tax Funding, (B) Monetary or in-kind contributions provided by the Applicant, and (C) Monetary or in-kind contributions provided by a Partner or by another Agency or Organization, such as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, US Fish & Wildlife or Nature Conservancy.
6. The Occupancy Tax Grant program does not limit who is eligible to apply but the applicant must provide clear evidence as to how the project will provide a public benefit and improve tourism and recreation opportunities. Only projects from the following Chautauqua County lakes are eligible for In-Lake Program: Lake Erie, Chautauqua Lake, Bear Lake, Cassadaga Lakes and Findley Lake.

7. Required Application Attachments: (provide in digital format).
    a. Location Map: A US Geological Survey (USGS) Quadrangle Map, or equivalent identifying the project location.
    b. Project Plans: Depicting the aerial extent of the proposed project.
    c. Completed Part 1 Environmental Assessment Form (SEQR).
    d. Photographs: include no more than 6 color photographs, taken from multiple directions that clearly depict the need for the proposed project.
8. Completed applications can be submitted electronically by clicking on the following link: Submit Occupancy Tax Applications by 4:00pm, February 15, 2024. Alternatively, hardcopies of the completed grant application can be delivered by 4:00pm, February 15, 2024 in-person to: Mr. Dave McCoy at; Chautauqua County Department of Planning and Development; 201 W. Third Street, Suite 115; Jamestown, NY 14701.

Chautauqua County
2024 Occupancy/Bed Tax Application
In-Lake Program

LAKE NAME:

PROJECT NAME:

APPLICANT:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT PERSON: PHONE:

E-MAIL:

<u>Required documents for the application package</u>

1. PROJECT NARRATIVE

    a. Limit one page

2. PROJECT'S IMPACT ON TOURISM AND RECREATION

    a. Limit one page

3. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

    a. Limit one page

4. PROJECT PLANS

    a. Location map: USGS Topo at 1:24,000 scale

    b. Plan: Depicting the aerial extent of proposed project

    c. Completed Part1 Environmental Assessment Form (SEQR)

5. PHOTOS (Limit 6)

    a. As applicable to show the need for the project.

6. WILL THE PROJECT REQUIRE A PERMIT? IF SO, FROM WHAT ENTITY?

7. PROJECT BUDGET ON ATTACHED FORM

FUNDING PARTNER(S) NAME / TITLE (Printed): _____

_____

_____

_____

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____

APPLICANT'S NAME / TITLE (Printed): _____

_____

DATE: _____

Project Budget Worksheet

A. Amount of occupancy tax funding requested: _____

B. Funds to be provided by Applicant (monetary/in-kind): _____

C. Partner Funding Sources (monetary/in-kind): _____
   (All partners must be listed and <u>letters of commitment provided</u> in order to be counted)

D. Expense Breakdown (A+B+C)

Project Labor Costs

Task	A, B, or C	Time Allotted	# of individuals	Total hours	Rate/hour	Total
					$ /hour	
					$ /hour	
					$ /hour	
					$ /hour	
					$ /hour	
					$ /hour	
					$ /hour	
					$ /hour	
Other:					$ /hour	

Labor Total = _____

Material or Equipment Costs

Material/ Equipment	A, B, or C	Unit Cost	Multiplier	Total
Other:				

Materials & Equipment Total = _____

Total (D) = _____