



Chautauque County Occupancy Tax Tourism Product Development Grant Application

For Fiscal Year 2021 Projects

Program Description

Chautauque County has established a 3% occupancy tax program for the purpose of promoting, developing, and protecting the area's tourism industry. Through this grant program, it is deemed important to establish programs and opportunities to promote or support the development of *specific themes or significant attractions and events that enhance the level of visitor experience in the area*. Examples include new or expanded attractions; unique festivals/events; projects that support tourism aspects of the County Comprehensive Plan, County Greenways Plan, and Economic Development Strategic Plan; and initiatives in town/city/village areas that will attract greater numbers of visitors to the area.

Programs and initiatives should help create destination awareness of Chautauque County as a place to visit and/or improve the likelihood of repeat visits to the area. A key objective for Chautauque County's tourism industry is to create and promote products and experiences that will attract more visitors, particularly for overnight visits and in the pre- and post-summer seasons. Grant funds are not intended for facility maintenance or ongoing operational costs, but rather, the funds are intended to be developmental in nature, i.e., for new or enhanced events or marketing activities, as well as planning and pre-development activities for the creation or enhancement of new attractions and destinations

A portion of the occupancy tax is intended to provide grants for projects that will achieve and/or support the following types of projects:

1. *Event Development and Marketing Projects*

- New or enhanced events that are non-duplicative, unique, and demonstrate appeal and outreach to visitors from outside the county; and
- New or enhanced marketing activities aimed at stimulating additional overnight visits to the County.

2. *Attraction/Destination Development and Enhancement Projects*

- Predevelopment: Feasibility studies; conceptual planning; small area plans; business plans; cost analysis; design; pre-engineering; engineering; and, grant writing; and
- Development: Acquisition of property or fixed assets; construction; and working capital.

Application and Selection Procedures

Attractions, festival/event organizers, and tourism product development groups may apply for occupancy tax funds from the available pool of occupancy tax funds pursuant to the following stipulations:

- Project applicants will submit a funding request to the Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Development – Division of Economic Development, 201 W. Third St, Jamestown, NY 14701 by October 1st for consideration for funding in the subsequent year.
- Funding requests will consist of the enclosed Tourism Product Development version of the County Occupancy Tax Application and supporting materials including, but not limited to, a budget breakdown and detailed program description(s).
- Funding request applications must indicate the total project budget, amount being sought from the Occupancy Tax program, project contributions from other sources, and an itemized breakdown of project spending (particularly marketing costs). Additionally, the application's financial information should indicate *evidence of long-term sustainability* for the proposed project.
- Determination for funding will be based on a project review and ranking by a review group, County Legislative approval, and the County Administration's budgeting process.
- Applicants may be requested to provide additional information as part of the application process.
- Selection process and grant award notification will occur between October 1st and the end of December prior to the project year (i.e., October 1, 2020 application, December, 2020 notification, 2021 project implementation).
- **Eligibility Criteria and Restrictions**
 - Awardees may only receive funding for up to three years for a specific project, and must reapply each year for said funding. Applicants may apply for more than three years of occupancy tax funding; however, only for a new/significantly different project.
 - Grant applicants must demonstrate fulfillment of a need in terms of attracting visitors to the area.
 - Project awards typically range from \$2,500 to \$10,000, and will not exceed \$10,000.
 - Project funding must be matched with a minimum 1 to 1 commitment with at least 50% of the applicant's match being cash.

Application Ranking Criteria

Each project will be ranked using a scale for specific parameters including those listed below. Ranking will be conducted by a selected number of adjudicators/review group members (up to seven). Projects will then be prioritized for funding based on their score and an averaging of adjudicators' recommended project funding levels based on the following considerations:

For Event Development and Marketing Projects:

- Will the project increase overall visitation to the county?
- Does the project directly or indirectly create overnight visits?
- Will the project increase pre- and/or post-summer season visitation? If not, why is it important as a summer project?
- Does the project emphasize a new or significantly enhanced event or marketing effort rather than simply ongoing operational activities or maintenance?

- Does the project emphasize promotion of niche activities and experiences that will enhance varied and/or new visitor interest in the county?
- Does the project involve collaboration and cooperative efforts among communities, attractions, and events?
- Is the project non-duplicative of currently existing programs?
- Is the project supported by appropriate follow-up capabilities such as staffed phone and/or email for information, a website that is kept up-to-date, effective customer service, and delivery of the promised product, event, or experience?
- Is there a plan for long-term sustainability by the applicant without the county's assistance?

For Attraction/Destination Development and Enhancement Projects:

- Is the project aimed at directly developing or making strides in advancing a new or enhanced attraction or destination that is non-duplicative, thereby enhancing the diversity of Chautauqua County's tourism assets?
- Does the project fulfill a need or capitalize on an opportunity in the county?
- Is the project aimed at advancing a project or initiative that is anticipated to extend visitor stays and increase overnight visitation?
- Will the project lead to the development/enhancement of attractions or destinations that increase pre- and/or post-summer season visitation?
- Does the project align with local and regional planning efforts and policies?
- Would the funding request leverage other public and private investment?
- Does the project involve collaboration and cooperative efforts among communities and/or other tourism partners?

The project ranking process will occur in October/November of the application year, after which time a recommendation will be made by the review group to the County Division of Economic Development for their consideration and final determination. Award notifications will be sent out in December/January.

Tracking/Reporting

- Funded organizations must provide a summary report at the conclusion of the project, demonstrating that the grant awardee fulfilled the project scope and itemizing how Occupancy Tax revenues were spent, to the Department of Planning & Development - Division of Economic Development, by December 1 of the project year.
- The financial report will be accompanied by a description of project accomplishments, including any quantifiable results relevant to the original application and the Application Ranking Criteria listed above, including a photo either of the event or project, or that represents your organization.
- 25% of the award will be withheld until a satisfactory summary report is received by the County.
- The financial summary and project summary will become a component of the presentation to be provided to the County Legislature's Planning and Economic Development Committee by the County's Department of Planning & Development - Division of Economic Development, sometime during the first quarter of the year following the expenditure of the award.

**Chautauqua County
2021 Occupancy Tax Funding Application
Tourism Product Development - Due October 1, 2020**

Purpose--to increase tourism and related business revenues in Chautauqua County [please refer to attached Application Guidelines]

1. ORGANIZATION/AGENCY: _____

2. ADDRESS: _____

3. PROJECT DIRECTOR: _____ EMAIL/PHONE: _____

4. PROJECT NAME: _____

5. PROJECT TYPE (choose one):
____ *Event Development or Marketing*
____ *Attraction/Destination Development or Enhancement*

6. PROJECT TIMETABLE: _____

7. TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET: _____

A. Amount of occupancy tax funding requested: _____

B. Funds to be provided by Applicant: _____

C. Other Funding Sources: _____

D. Expense Itemization—Please specifically identify which expense item(s) the requested occupancy tax funds will be allocated to [attach additional page(s) if necessary]:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Please attach an overall financial plan, including a means for making the project self- sustaining.

8. **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** [please attach additional page(s) if necessary]

9. **DESCRIBE HOW THE PROJECT WILL BENEFIT THE AREA**—include responses to Application Ranking Criteria listed in application guidelines, as they apply to your project: [please attach additional page(s) if necessary]

Do you plan to submit an application for this project again in the future: ___ yes ___ no
[If you answered yes, you will still be required to submit subsequent year applications as this is not a 3-year application]

If your organization/project is awarded a grant, you will be required to enter into a contract with Chautauqua County which requires that you provide proof of insurance as follows:

- liability coverage insurance (\$1M)
- worker's compensation insurance (C-105.2 form); if no employees use form CE200
- disability insurance form (DB-120.1)
- if receiving money for the first time, use form W-9

Failure to enter into the contract process by April 1st, and/or a failure to supply the required insurance documentation, will result in a loss of funding for that year and may jeopardize future grant funding opportunities.

The applicant's signature below indicates that the grantee (if awarded) agrees with the terms listed herein, and that the content contained in the project application is true.

Applicant Signature _____

Applicant Name/Title _____

Date _____

Submit application by October 1, 2020 to:
Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Development
Division of Economic Development
201 W. Third Street, Suite 115
Jamestown, NY 14701