

Highland Tourism Council Marketing Assistance Program Grant Guidelines & Application

Program Description and Guidelines

The mission of the Highland Tourism Council is to stimulate targeted tourism initiatives and new marketing opportunities. Among the goals for the organization is to market Highland County as a destination that is welcoming to visitors and provides opportunities to experience its culture, traditions, history, and natural beauty. To help achieve this goal, funding was secured through a Transient Occupancy Tax.

The Tourism Council has designed the Highland Tourism Marketing Assistance Program to stimulate new tourism initiatives or assist in the growth of existing programs or events through the creation of tourism partnerships. The objective of this program is to leverage the limited marketing dollars obtained through the Transient Occupancy Tax, resulting in increased visitor spending, revenue, and jobs within the county.

The Tourism Council has appropriated up to \$3,000 in available assistance for this program. Applications will be accepted through December 6, 2021 and be reviewed during the December monthly meeting of the Tourism Council. Funds will be granted in January of 2022.

Applications will be evaluated by Tourism Council members based on the following criteria with the following weights:

- Projected impact of event on local economy – for example, increase overnight stays in lodging establishments. *20 points*
- Growth potential of event over specified period of time *20 points*
- Proposed use of marketing funds *20 points*
- Promotion of Highland culture, traditions, and natural beauty. *10 points*
- Creativity and uniqueness of event in showcasing Highland County. *10 points*
- Strength of current marketing and promotional plan *10 points*
- Potential for partnership and promotional opportunities for Highland businesses *10 points*

Program funds are for the purpose of assisting with start-up or the expansion of promotional activities for an existing event and can be awarded for the following uses:

- Advertising
- Printed promotional pieces such as posters and or brochures
- Website development and social media boosts.
- Graphic design assistance.

Full justification of how grant funds will be used & proof of utilization as described will be required.

Past examples of successful projects supported by the Marketing Assistance Program include:

- Big Fish Cider's Wassail (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgb7dWbrq70>)
- Highland Arts Academy (<https://www.highlandartsacademy.com/>)
- Tol'able David 100th Anniversary (www.highlandcountyhistory.com/tol-able-david-movie)

Program grants will be awarded for projects and marketing expenses after approval of the application. The project/event must take place within one year of approval and funds will be awarded to the applicant in one of two ways:

1. In the form of reimbursements upon completion of marketing effort
2. In the form of payment directly to a vendor upon the presentation of an invoice for a specific marketing initiative.
3. Reimburse expenses incurred after the grant is awarded, but before the funds are available.

Expenditures must be made in accordance with the approved application and within the guidelines of the program. Applicant must submit copies of all paid invoices/receipts and copies of all promotional materials used.

No entity will be eligible to be the recipient of the grant for two consecutive years.

Guidelines

- Up to \$3,000 will be made available by the Tourism Council for marketing assistance.
- Grants will be made for no less than \$250 and up to \$3,000. A grant could be for total amount to one event or for smaller amounts to more than one applicant.
- Preference is given to applicants who are starting or expanding an existing event.
- Only one application is permitted per organization per event.
- Event must be located in Highland County and benefit the area through:
 - Increased revenue for businesses
 - Increased visitation to Highland
 - Promotion of initiatives that support the culture, traditions, or natural beauty of the county.
- Grants are not open to government entities.
- Recipients of funding must meet with the Tourism Council to report on the success or recommended improvements to the project within three months of the event or project.
- Application must be made using the Marketing Assistance Program Application Form adopted by the Tourism Council and must be complete in all respects.
- Application acceptance period will be November of 2021 through December 6, 2021. Decisions are to be made by Highland Tourism Council by the end of December of 2021, and funds granted in January of 2022.
- Applications must be returned to the office of The Highland County Chamber of Commerce, located at The Highland Center at 61 Highland Center Drive in Monterey, by the end of the day on December 6, 2021. If The Highland Center is not open, please leave your application with a note at the left of the entry area and contact the Chamber at 540-468-2550 to notify them that you have done so. Applications may be emailed to director@highlandcounty.org.

**Highland Tourism Marketing Assistance Program
Application Form**

Date Submitted: _____

Business or Organization Name: _____

Contact Name & Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Event Title: _____

Physical address: _____

Is this a new event? _____

If existing event: Years in operation: _____

Current Event Attendance: _____ **Revenue:** _____

Projected Attendance: _____ **Revenue:** _____

Proposed Use of Marketing Funds (please attach current marketing plan):

How will event benefit Highland County: (Maximum of 500 words)

Total Estimated Cost of Marketing Plan: _____

Amount of Marketing Assistance Funds Requested: _____