

CHICAGO SOUTHLAND CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU GUIDELINES FOR THE LOCAL TOURISM MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM

The following guidelines are provided to assist and guide you through your application for a local matching grant and are within the rules and guidelines of the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

1. PURPOSE

The Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau's (CSCVB) purpose is to promote the Chicago Southland region as a travel destination to potential visitors. More specifically, the Bureau's function is to fill the rooms of their hotel members and stimulate the development of quality attractions and events. In attracting more visitors, the Bureau positively impacts the economic vitality of the area. The CSCVB has developed a program of providing support for local programs that will enhance the marketing of the Chicago Southland to visitors. The Local Grant Program provides financial assistance to member municipalities and sponsored organizations (local and regional) for the promotion and marketing of tourism attractions and events.

2. INTENT

The intent of the Local Grant Program is to increase visitor travel into and throughout the Chicago Southland region and to increase the occupancy of the member hotels/motels, thereby positively affecting the economic vibrancy of our communities.

Priority of the available funds will be awarded to those projects that carry through the mission of regional promotion and maximization of Chicago Southland's assets.

3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- o To qualify for a CSCVB Local Tourism Matching Grant, the applicant must be:
- o A Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau member municipality, or
- o An Illinois-based nonprofit corporation or organization located within the Chicago Southland region and a member of the Chicago Southland Convention & Visitor's Bureau. Municipalities must sponsor a nonprofit organization, in which case, a letter of support from the municipality is required. The letter of support must accompany the grant application.
- o The Bureau will allow nonprofit organizations (sports, meetings or other events) to apply for a grant when hosting an event in the Chicago Southland. The event organization must have a letter of support from the Chicago Southland host municipality.
- o All first time applicants are required to attend the scheduled grant writing workshops or when necessary set up an individual consultation with appropriate Bureau staff.

4. ELIGIBLE PROMOTIONAL PROJECTS

Examples of projects eligible for funding include, but are not limited to:

Brochures/Posters

- o Grant funds are available for the production and printing of tourism-related brochures and posters. These publications must be devoted to promotion of tourism attractions and/or events.
- o To ensure that brochures/posters funded by the local grant program are of the best quality, it is recommended that applicants hire professional artists and printers to prepare copy, layout and design.
- o Applicants must use Bureau members where applicable (design, photography, website development, printing, etc.). Any vendor receiving funds from a Local Tourism Grant is required to become a CVB member, after the grant award and prior to disbursement of funds.
- o We strongly recommend that applicants exercise sound purchasing practices. Cost estimates for goods and services must be provided with the application for the grant. If the cost estimate provided by any vendor exceeds \$2,500, a minimum of two competitive cost estimates must accompany the grant application. The CSCVB Grant Committee may request additional documentation if the provided documentation is insufficient.

(Cost estimates are simply price quotes on a vendor's letterhead stating the estimated cost for completing a job. You might want to prepare a summary sheet detailing the job requirements and asking for a price quote. A list of vendors is included in the packet.)

- o If the total cost provided by any vendor exceeds \$5,000, a minimum of two competitive bids, using identical specifications, must accompany the grant application. The itemized budget in the application must reflect the low bid.

This rule is in compliance with the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity. If any individual cost is \$5,000 or more, you will need to provide two competitive bids. Bids are simply formal price quotes on a vendor's letterhead. You will need to provide all participating vendors identical specifications – details including size, color, quantity, number of pages, etc. A list of vendors is included in the packet.)

- o Samples of the proposed brochure/poster or a mock-up must accompany the grant application.

(An acceptable mock-up can range from a sketch drawing to a revised copy of a previous brochure/ad. The mock up allows the grant committee to get a picture of what you are trying to accomplish. You may also submit a brochure/ad you want to model your project after. Please note: it is sometimes easier to get a clearer picture of a project if the mock-up is a quality one.)

- o All brochure or poster final layouts must be reviewed and approved by the CSCVB grant coordinator prior to printing. Mock-ups are acceptable by e-mail or facsimile (FAX) transmission.
- o The date and quantity printed (10/2008-10M) must appear on the brochure or poster.
- o All printed materials (brochures, posters, rack cards, mailers, registration forms, etc.) must include travel directions and/or a map to the attraction or event being promoted.
- o Applicants bear sole responsibility for accuracy of information printed.
- o Brochures funded through the Local Grant Program must be distributed *outside* the greater Chicago Southland region.

Advertising

- Grant funds are available for the placement and production costs of newspaper, magazine, radio and television advertising to promote tourism attractions and/or events. The program will not reimburse advertising agency fees, marketing studies, research or consultation.
- Grant monies should be directed towards advertising to areas *outside* the greater Chicago Southland region. All advertisements must be placed outside a 100-mile radius from the event/attraction being advertised.
- A typed transcript or an audio/visual cassette copy of all advertisements must be submitted with the application. The advertisement should also include an address or phone number to contact for more information.

Billboards

- Rental of billboard space, as well as the artwork, design and production of billboard advertising is an eligible expenditure.
- The billboard must promote attractions, events, availability of lodging, camping or other travel related services.
- Billboard advertising cannot mention specific privately-owned business or attractions.
- Placement for promotion of events must be a minimum of 30 miles from the location of the event, placement for promoting attractions must be a minimum of 15 miles from the area being promoted. Traffic count and visibility will also be major considerations.

The Internet

- With today's technology and the "Information Superhighway," the Internet/World Wide Web is a good vehicle for promotion aimed at markets outside the Chicago Southland. There are many existing options to choose from, including your own site, or participation with an organization's site. Eligible costs include the design of the site and maintenance. Web hosting is an eligible expenditure for new websites only. Projects for new websites can submit expenditures for web hosting for one year.

(If you are going to include maintenance costs in your project, you may only do so up to the expenditure deadline date. For example, if you are applying in June, you can submit maintenance costs ending in December; if you are applying in December, you can submit maintenance costs ending in June.)

E-Marketing and E-Newsletters

- Grant funds are available for the development and execution of e-marketing programs. Eligible costs may include the development of an e-marketing message or newsletter and account creation and initial e-mail list set-up for a bulk e-mail program such as Topica or Constant Contact.

Specialized Promotions

- The Local Grant Program is open to specialized promotions or niche marketing for your attraction, event or community. In fact, the more specialized and original a project is, the more likely it will be awarded funding. Be creative!

(In the past few years the following types of projects have been funded: Combination advertising in niche publications with a brochure for various events, Website development along with hyperlinks, Niche brochures – Corporate Reach Brochures, Group Tour Market Brochures, Sporting Event Brochures. Also see the enclosed Local Grant Awards History list.)

5. FUNDING

- A Total of \$66,000.00 is awarded each fiscal year. The grants are awarded in January, March, July, September and November.
- The local tourism grant can be up to 60 percent of the cost for the tourism promotional projects, when the remaining 40 percent of the project cost is financed by local funds with no more than 50 percent of the local funds being in the form of “in kind” services. Example: A total project of \$1,000 may receive \$600 from the Bureau if at least \$200 cash is expended by the applicant and no more than \$200 of donated (in-kind) services are used to develop the project.
- The Chicago Southland CVB Local Grant Program is contingent upon the receipt of state funding. The CVB may be unable to process grant applications if state funding is not received or is reduced.
- **NO ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS WILL BE ALLOWED IN THIS PROGRAM.** Soft cost of development will be provided by the applicant, or when practical, by the Bureau staff.
- **The overall budget for a particular event or promotion must accompany the application.**
- **Grant monies shall be paid only after the project has been completed and invoiced.** Grant checks will be written to the vendor(s). All checks must clear the CSCVB bank within 60 days from the check issue date. * Please allow a minimum of 10 business days for processing.
- Up to one project a year may be selected by the grant committee which may not meet all of the local grant guidelines, but which, in their opinion, advances the area’s hospitality industry and promotes tourism in the greater Chicago Southland region.
- Equal consideration will be given to municipalities with or without a Bureau member hotel or motel in their community.
- The grant committee may choose to fund a portion of any request based on availability of funds.
- The committee may not want to support event/attraction advertising outside the area for an event/attraction that has shown a decrease in attendance over the past year(s).
- The CSCVB grant committee reserves the right to make adjustments to projects as necessary to coincide with grant guidelines.
- Projects will generally not exceed requests of \$7,500 as the grant amount from the CSCVB during any single grant cycle.

(The average amount awarded for the past five years has been \$4,032.43)

- Priority will be given to Chicago Southland communities and organizations that have not received local tourism grant funds in the past year(s).
- Priority will be given to the projects that are original and first-time promotions of its kind for the particular municipality or organization. The Local Grant Program is not intended to be a continuous source of funds for a particular attraction or event year after year. Applicants submitting the same qualified projects year after year will receive a lower percentage of funding or possibly no funding at all. Applicants who file projects yearly are encouraged to submit new promotions.
- The Local Tourism Grant is geared toward funding projects submitted by municipalities and non-profit organizations, not private businesses or philanthropic organizations. Priority of the available funds will be awarded to organizations that do not have other sources of income.
- If the total amount of requested grant funds exceeds the total amount of funds available, the committee has the prerogative to prioritize and award matching funds.
- Communities may file joint projects.
- All projects must include Chicago Southland hotel(s) in their promotions. You can either work with a hotel(s) and secure a room block with special rates or use the Bureau’s online hotel reservation system. If you use the Bureau’s online hotel reservation system, you will be assigned a special url to promote.

- All municipalities/organizations receiving grant funds must send letters to their respective legislators, with a carbon copy to the mayor, notifying them of the grant awards. The CSCVB will provide a sample letter at time the Local Grant Agreement is signed.
- All grant recipients must send a press release to their local media contacts. A template press release will be provided at the time the Local Grant Agreement is signed.
- All projects funded through the local grant program must incorporate the CSCVB logo. The Bureau's toll-free phone number and website must also be incorporated to assist traveler's in obtaining overnight accommodations and specific information. One-color, two-color or four-color versions of the Bureau's logo are available via e-mail.
- All award recipients must complete a results form after the completion of the project. Attached to the results page should be a copy of five promotional materials showing the Bureau's logo and other information, hotel room documentation (see next point), copy of the press release, as well as copies of the legislator notification letters. If these items are not turned in, the organization will not be allowed to submit future applications.
- All results reports must include the documentation from a Chicago Southland hotel(s) showing the number of rooms the event picked up and the room rate paid. Projects must report hotel rooms in order to apply for a future grant. Projects reporting low hotel room pick up must apply for a different promotion when filing future grants. The Bureau will not fund future grant applications showing no or little hotel room pick up.

(The form asks you to provide the results of your grant project.

For example, if you placed an ad, how many responses did you get? Out of those responses, how many came to your event? How many hotel room nights were booked? What as the increase in attendance?)

- All events that receive grant funds will be required to distribute the Chicago Southland Visitors Guide on site during the event itself.

6. AWARD DATES

APPLICATION DEADLINE	GRANT AWARD	EXPENDITURES DEADLINE
June 1, 2011	July 31, 2011	October 31, 2011
August 1, 2011	September 30, 2011	December 30, 2011
October 1, 2011	November 30, 2011	February 28, 2012
December 1, 2011	January 31, 2012	April 30, 2012
February 1, 2012	March 31, 2012	June 30, 2012

- Grant awards will be made five times a year. To be considered, an application must be received on or before the application deadline date.
- The proposed activities must not be initiated prior to approval by the Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau to remain eligible for grant funding.

7. INELIGIBLE PROMOTIONAL PROJECTS

A project is considered ineligible if it does not contribute to the overall intent of bringing additional tourists into the Chicago Southland and generate increased lodging revenue.

Examples of projects ineligible for funding include, but are not limited to:

- Any administrative expenses (stationery, envelopes, phones, rent, supplies, personnel or equipment)
- Any type of quick-print materials
- Association or organizational dues
- Bumper stickers, placemats, or any type of specialty items
- Event production expenses (audio equipment, awards, entertainment, fireworks, portable restrooms, hired labor, refreshments, etc.)
- Postage, purchase or use of mailing lists, distribution and shipping costs
- Projects containing paid advertising
- Capital improvements
- Purchase or rental of projectors, television sets or video recorders
- Street Banners
- Travel expenses (transportation, lodging, per diem)
- Travel/Trade show booth space rental and/or registration fees
- Printed materials for an event with a title sponsor (example: American Airlines Freedom Flight Festival)

NOTE: In general, a project is ineligible if it does not show intent to increase overnight visitors and visitors' travel into and through the Chicago Southland region, impacting the economic growth of the area's travel industry.

In your promotional planning, consider including travel packages. Interested parties are more apt to be converted to overnight visitors if a travel package is already in place. A travel package may include the following: overnight stay at a Bureau member hotel, dinner or other meals, transportation, attraction admission.

The grant application will not be reviewed until complete; therefore, all items listed below must be submitted:

- The grant application organized in numerical sequence – pages 1 thru 5. Do not submit applications in binders or notebooks. It is preferred that your completed application be e-mailed to kim@visitchicagosouthland.com
THE GRANT APPLICATION MUST BE TYPED ON THE APPLICATION PROVIDED. NO EXCEPTIONS. IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED, USE AN ATTACHED SHEET.
- **Bids**
- **Mock-ups**
- **Overall event/attraction budget**
- **A municipal letter of support**

Completed applications should be e-mailed to:

Kim Kislowski, Marketing Manager
Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau
2304 173rd Street, Lansing, IL 60438
Phone: 708/895-8200
kim@visitchicagosouthland.com