

# Occupancy Tax Tourism Product Development Application Guidelines

Chautauqua County has established a 3% occupancy tax for the purposes of promoting, developing, and protecting the area's tourism industry. A portion of the occupancy tax is intended to provide grants for projects that will achieve and/or support special tourism product and event development initiatives.

Through this grant program, it is 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, learning vacation experiences in support of the World's Learning Center brand, projects that support tourism aspects of the County Comprehensive Plan and County Greenways 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 Chautauqua County as a place to visit and/or improve the likelihood of repeat visits to the area. A key concern for the future of Chautauqua 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 long-term, operational costs. The funds are intended to be developmental in nature.

## 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.

- ✓ Project applicants will submit a funding request to the Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Economic Development, 201 W. Third St, Jamestown, NY 14701 by October 15<sup>th</sup> 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, budget breakdown and detailed program description(s)
- ✓ Funding request applications must indicate the total project budget, amount being sought from Occupancy Tax, project contributions from other sources, and an itemized breakdown of project spending, particularly marketing costs. Additionally, the application financial information should indicate *evidence of long-term sustainability* for the proposed project.
- ✓ Determination for funding will be conducted based on project review and ranking by a review group, County Legislative approval and County Administration 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 15 and the end of December prior to the project year (ie. October 15, 2018 application, December, 2018 notification, 2019 project implementation).

## **Eligibility Criteria and Restrictions**

- ✓ There is a three year maximum for a specific project. Applicants may apply for more than three years, but only for a new/different project.
- ✓ Grant applicants must demonstrate fulfillment of a need in terms of attracting visitors to the area.
- ✓ Project awards typically range between \$2,500-\$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 match being cash.

## **Application Ranking**

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.

### Important Ranking Criteria Include:

- ✓ 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 season visitation? If not, why is it important as a summer project?
- ✓ Does the project emphasize marketing and/or new development, 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 collaborations 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, website that is kept up-to-date, effective customer service, and delivery of the promised product, event, or experience?
- ✓ Demonstrate a plan for long-term self-sustenance.

The project ranking process will occur in October/November of the application year. A recommendation will be made by the review group, to the County Legislature in December. Award notifications will be sent out in December/January.

## **Tracking/Reporting**

- ✓ Funded organizations must provide a post project summary of revenues and expenses to the Clerk of the Legislature, including itemization and proof of how Occupancy Tax revenues were spent by December 1.
- ✓ The financial report will be accompanied by a detailed description of project accomplishments, including quantifiable results relevant to the original application and the Application Ranking Criteria listed above.
- ✓ The financial summary and project description report will be provided to the County Legislature's Planning and Economic Development Committee and the Chautauqua County Planning and Economic Development office.
- ✓ Each award recipient will be required to make a brief (5-10 minute) report to the County Legislature's Planning and Economic Development Committee.

**Chautauqua County  
Occupancy Tax Funding Application, 2019  
Tourism Product Development Version—Due October 15, 2018**

**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 TIMETABLE: \_\_\_\_\_

6. 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 if necessary]:

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

7. **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** [please attach additional page if necessary]

8. **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 if necessary]

Do you plan to submit an application for this project again the future: \_\_\_\_\_yes,\_\_\_\_\_no  
[if you answer yes, you will still be required to submit subsequent year applications; 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 and to 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 contract process by April 1<sup>st</sup>, and/or supply the required insurance documentation will result in loss of funding for that year, and jeopardize future grant funding opportunities.

Signature below indicates the applicant's agreement with the terms listed herein, and that the content contained in the project application is true.

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Submit application to the Chautauqua County Department of Planning & Economic Development 201 W. Third Street, Suite 115, Jamestown, NY 14701 by October 15<sup>th</sup>