



Visit Dublin GA's Tourism Grant Program
Tourism Grant Funding Request Guidelines

MISSION AND OVERVIEW

Visit Dublin GA is pleased to offer the FY2024 Tourism Grant Program. The program is designed to enhance visitor and tourism promotion efforts in Laurens County, Georgia that will foster local economic impact, result in increased overnight visitors, and enhance destination appeal.

Through the Tourism Grant Program, Visit Dublin GA designates a fixed amount of funds annually to assist local organizations with marketing and promotion, special events, tourism product development, and attractions. **The 2024 Tourism Grant Fund is set at \$15,000 which will be divided among awarded grant requests through two funding cycles for the fiscal year 2024.** The Tourism Grant Program is designed for qualified applicants whose project(s) or event(s) clearly align with Visit Dublin GA's mission to enhance the economic base of the community through tourism.

QUALIFYING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Visit Dublin GA assists businesses, nonprofit organizations, and tourism partners in giving new life to existing resources and in fostering new tourism products for economic development. Applicants must be based within Laurens County.

Products can be related to (but are not limited to) the following areas:

Arts and Culture
Culinary
Nature and Adventure
Agritourism
Lodging

Heritage / Historic Preservation
Sports and Recreation
Festivals and Events
Downtown

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To function in accordance with Georgia Hotel-Motel Tax law and the state legislation regarding lodging tax dollars, all grant money must be used for promotional and marketing efforts, or for the purpose of tourism product development. Both must have the express intention of destination marketing, with the specific goal of increasing the number of overnight visitors staying in Laurens County.

Items eligible for funding assistance include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Development of new events, qualifying major exhibits, and activities geared to potentially generate overnight visitors to Laurens County.
2. Successful expansion of established programs or events that have previously generated overnight visitors and economic impact for Laurens County.
3. Destination marketing activities: advertising, printed materials, billboards, online marketing, and social media geared toward “out-of-market” tourism. For purposes of this grant, “out-of-market” is considered 50+ miles outside of Laurens County. Local media outlets such as a local newspaper and printed flyers intended for distribution within the Laurens County community do not meet the intended purpose of this grant and will receive less consideration than projects targeting markets 50+ miles outside of Laurens County.
4. Tourism Product Development (TPD) – TPD is new product development, adding to the local tourism portfolio. Examples include: wayfinding destination signage, arts and cultural facilities, and other capital projects specifically related to tourism.

Items ineligible for funding consideration include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Expenses incurred or obligated before grant project approval;
2. Projects restricted to private or exclusive participation;
3. Administrative costs including salaries, travel, food, beverages, lodging and entertainment for personnel and/or volunteers of organization;
5. Tangible personal property including, but not limited to, office furnishings or equipment, permanent collections of individual pieces of art, etc.;
6. Interest, reduction of deficits, or loans;
7. Scholarships, endowments, or cash awards of any type.

Please note that artist and speaking fees are not considered administration or salaries, and are therefore considered eligible.

GUIDELINES

Factors considered in grant approval include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. High probability of significant economic impact on the Laurens County hospitality community, specifically through the generation of overnight stays in Laurens County;
2. Overall impact or potential for Laurens County’s overall tourism portfolio;
3. Organizational stability, management capacity, responsibility, and accountability of organization;
4. Advance marketing and public relations planning; advance budget planning;
5. Grant applications with financial input from organization are typically graded higher than those requesting 100% assistance;
6. Marketing efforts must be shown to target “out-of-market” which is considered 50+ miles outside of Laurens County.

If feasible, the product must include the Visit Dublin GA logo on printed materials or event website as a partner.

Project must be completed as approved.

Organizations receiving a Tourism Grant must have a reciprocal link on their website (if applicable) to VisitDublinGA.org.

Any media obtained through this grant program must be shared with Visit Dublin GA for promotional use.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The 2024 Tourism Grant Fund has been set at a total of \$15,000. Amounts awarded toward each application will be dependent on the number of applications received and number of applications awarded. Award amounts are at the sole discretion of Visit Dublin GA. Even though a product application may qualify, limited funds may not allow all products to receive assistance. In addition, Application score may be taken into consideration when determining funding amount.

Two (2) funding cycles are available for the fiscal year 2024. Available funding amounts will vary from year to year and are dependent on the final budget of Visit Dublin GA; the organization reserves the right to refuse any and all grants.

Tourism Marketing Grant Funding Cycles for FY 2024:

1st Funding Cycle

Application Due Date: Friday, September 29th, 2023 by 5PM

Recipients Notified: Friday, November 3rd, 2023

Project Completion Deadline (if applicable): Friday, November 1st, 2024

Final Project Report Deadline: Friday, November 15th, 2024

2nd Funding Cycle

Application Due Date: Friday, March 29th, 2024 by 5PM

Recipients Notified: Friday, May 3th, 2024

Project Completion Deadline (if applicable): Friday, May 2nd, 2025

Final Project Report Deadline: Friday, May 16th, 2025

Applications received after the submission deadline will not be considered.

Applicants are responsible for securing all appropriate and necessary state, federal, tribal and local permits and/or individual or landowner consents required to execute the product prior to application submission.

A COMPLETE APPLICATION CONSISTS OF:

- A. Application Checklist
- B. Signed Application
- C. Responses describing tourism product and how it relates to tourism in Laurens County
- D. Product marketing plan
- E. Budget describing the financial aspects of the product. The budget should address and include projected expenses for the product in line-item detail.

Applications are reviewed by Visit Dublin GA and Dublin-Laurens Tourism Council, Inc. Eligible grants will be evaluated and scored based on the point system of the Application Checklist and the thoroughness and quality of Responses. See the Application Checklist for details.

Once applicants are selected for funding, a W-9 form must be completed and a contract must be signed by the applicant and Visit Dublin GA prior to distribution of funds. Visit Dublin GA will provide grant funds to the applicant within 30 days of the execution of the contract. The contract may be for a term of no more than one year.

A FINAL REPORT MUST BE SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE TOURISM GRANT FUNDING REQUESTS

Any applicant that wishes to be considered for subsequent funding cycles is required to provide a written summary of the results of the funded project, as well as event/project images for Visit Dublin GA to use at its discretion. Summary should include attendance figures for festivals/events, pictures, any media coverage, etc.

Visit Dublin GA reserves the right to request: a summary of all expenditures (copies of invoices may be requested); a summary of all revenues generated by the funded project (sponsorships, grants, gate receipts, concessions, etc.); samples of advertising and promotions from the completed project.

Please contact the executive director with any questions:

Miriam Ponton Lewis
Executive Director of Visit Dublin GA
miriam@visitdublinga.org
478-272-4002

Visit Dublin GA is the marketing brand of the Dublin-Laurens Tourism Council, Inc., a 501(6) nonprofit organization. Specifically, Visit Dublin GA (1) promotes the community as a destination for tourists and conventions of state and national organizations; (2) invests in local community resources that will encourage tourists and conventions to visit the community; and (3) coordinates and stages events with regional and state-wide interest.