



2016-17 TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

Overview: The 2015 legislative session appropriated \$750,000 in funding to the Department of Commerce Tourism Division to be granted to one or more new tourism attractions that can bring more visitors to North Dakota.

Mission: The Tourism Divisions works to create new wealth for North Dakota by attracting more visitors who will stay longer and spend more money in our state.

Program Objective: The intent is to fund new tourism operations capable of attracting visitors from outside of North Dakota for a least one overnight stay. New attractions funded would help give the state another experience to deliver on the Legendary brand promise the division uses in marketing the state.

What projects are eligible?

Grant funds are to be used for building new visitor attractions, major expansions offering a new experience, and supporting services for visitors. They cannot be used for marketing or ongoing operating expenses.

What makes a strong project?

1. Projects that clearly demonstrate their role as a tourism & recreation attraction in their community and region, and the benefits the project will provide through enhancing or expanding this visitor attraction.
2. All project funding is in place and grant funding will complete a project rather than provide “seed money” to start a project.
3. The demand for the tourism-related project is clearly demonstrated through research and analysis.
4. All infrastructure needs are important and each application is judged on its own merit. Projects that retain or attract visitors – out of state visitors and North Dakota residents from outside the community – based upon cultural, adventure, recreation, or interpretive significance will score higher.

What are the requirements for matching dollars?

The required match is 1:1. For every dollar of grant money being requested, the sponsor must provide one dollar. Matching dollars cannot be from other State of North Dakota grants.

The match must be in “hard” dollars, an actual money investment. In-kind services will not be considered as part of the hard match amount.

Money that has been put toward the project in the current and previous fiscal year may be considered as part of the hard match but must include documented verification.

Due to the timeframe of this program, pledges for future donations will not be considered part of a cash match.

What is the timeframe for completing projects?

The grant-eligible portion of the project must be completed by June 1, 2017. Under certain circumstances, a project may be funded if the construction has begun, a final construction schedule has been approved, and all construction projects are signed.

Please address each section below on a separate, typewritten document:

Selection Criteria: (A maximum of 300 points to be awarded for the application's sections I-III) **LATE or INCOMPLETE applications will not be considered.**

I. Project Description & Operating Plans (100 total points for this section)

- A) Provide a clear, concise description of your project. Be sure to include project location, facility owner (if different than applicant), what cash matching funds will be used for (\$1 hard match for every \$1 in Grant Funds requested/awarded), and how the project complies with the purpose of the grant program, which is to attract new visitors, encourage visitors to stay longer and strengthen North Dakota as a tourism destination. You may include project description documents such as architectural drawings as an addendum to the application. *(30 points)*
- B) Provide budget and timeline details. *(20 points)*
- 1) A development and implementation timeline for your project and the investment of grant funds in it.
 - 2) A development and implementation budget for the entire project, specifically identifying the amount of grant funds to be used for each phase of your project.
 - 3) A budget of all other funds for the entire project, specifically identifying the amounts to be used for each phase of the project and the source of all matching funds.
 - 4) Budget totals.
- C) Sustainability *(20 points)*
- 1) Present an operating budget for the facility's ongoing costs (staffing, maintenance, utilities, supplies, insurance, marketing, etc) once this project is complete and explain how these ongoing expenses will be paid for.
 - 2) Identify any increased ongoing operation and maintenance costs expected because of the project and how those costs will be covered.
- D) Marketing Plan *(20 points)*
- 1) Outline the marketing strategies for this attraction or facility now and once the project is completed and how the marketing is financed.
 - 2) Provide details of media used, target markets, any marketing partnerships or cooperative efforts involved.
- E) Describe the tourism and/or hospitality experience of those involved in the development and operation of this project. *(10 points)*

II. Project Compatibility & Appeal (100 total points for this section)

- A) Describe how the project will provide broad, long term tourism appeal. *(40 points)*
 - 1) If this is an existing business or attraction, include information about your facility's annual visitation numbers, percentage of out-of-state and North Dakota visitors, hours and season of operation, and if you expect any changes in these areas once the project is complete. Will the expansion attract new visitors?
 - 2) If this is a new project, what are your anticipated visitation numbers? What research have you done to arrive at these numbers?
- B) Uniqueness-Describe what sets this project apart from others in your area or the state of North Dakota *(30 points)*
- C) Length of Stay-Describe the components of this project which will extend the time that visitors will spend in the area. How will it enhance other existing or planned tourism development and marketing efforts in the area? *(30 points)*

III. Need for Project (100 total points for this section)

- A) Describe how the proposed project will have an economic benefit on the local area, region and state. What is the payroll anticipated to be generated, tax base to be created and amount of visitor spending to result from this project? *(20 points)*
- B) Describe the cultural heritage, traditions, values and other "quality of life" aspects the proposed project will have on the local area, region, and state. *(20 points)*
- C) Describe how the proposed project fits into the goals of the North Dakota Tourism Division as stated in the Program Objective on page 1. *(30 points)*
- D) Letters of support from local and regional community, civic, business and other stakeholders expressing support and commitment for the development of the proposed project. These letters of support must be current and specific to the grant application being submitted. These letters of support must be submitted with your application. *(30 points)*

Application Deadline:

Please ensure that you address each of the criteria above in your application on a separate document. All application materials must be received at the Tourism Division office no later than Thursday, October 1, 2015. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered by the review committee.

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