



# GUIDELINES AND CONTROLS for the Lycoming County Travel and Tourism Marketing Grant



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**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:** *The set-aside apportionment of the Lycoming County Room Tax is specific to the support of non-profit travel and tourism related activities. It is to be used for underwriting the expense of promotional and publicity initiatives by those assets for the purpose of increasing tourism within Lycoming County. Tourism Funding is available to organizations that actively market their event or tourism asset to attract out-of-town visitors to Lycoming County. Awards are granted on a competitive basis and administered through the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau-Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.*

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## Program Structure

**A total of \$155,000 in grant funding will be provided by the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau. Per the agreement with the Lycoming County Commissioners, the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau will provide a grant of \$50,000 to the Community Arts Center and \$25,000 to the Hiawatha Inc. The remaining \$80,000 will be awarded in grants based upon the following tier structure:**

**Four (4) - \$7,500 grants**  
**Six (6) - \$5,000 grants**  
**Eight (8) - \$2,500 grants**

1. Applications for funding of Special Events that have been in existence three (3) or more years will only be considered.
2. Grant applicants per the state legislature through Act 18 of 2016 are required to provide a 25% cash match to any funding received through the county hotel tax. You will be required to demonstrate that you have the funds in place amounting to the request that you are making. An Event Budget detailing all marketing or program revenue and expenses will be required showing the minimum 25% cash match to your request.
3. Grants may be awarded to **Tourism Entities** that submit a request for such funds. To be a qualifying tourism entity, an organization must be a bona fide 501(c)(3) not-for-profit as determined by the Internal Revenue Service and must have a proven positive record of bringing patrons and audience

members from beyond a 25-mile radius of Lycoming County. Marketing plans demonstrating the uses of the funds are required as part of the application process. **Advertising to promote the Special Event/Tourism Entity must utilize media physically located outside a 25-mile radius of Lycoming County. Social media buys geo-targeted outside of Lycoming County utilizing local agencies for placement are permitted.**

- ◆ Generally, no grants will be provided for sectarian religious purposes.
  - ◆ Priority will be given to applicants that demonstrate a packaging component along with providing some type of advertising match.
4. Grants may be awarded to all qualifying Special Events separate from those conducted by the above entities that submit a request for such funds.

To be a qualifying Special Event, the event must be sponsored by a bona fide 501(c)(3) not-for-profit as determined by the Internal Revenue Service, or a program of a bona fide public benefit corporation. Preference will be given to proposals from organizations that have produced similar events with a minimum of three (3) years of event history and complete financial summaries (reported using generally accepted accounting principles) and that advertised or otherwise promoted its event at least 25 miles outside of Lycoming County.

5. Grants will be awarded competitively, on an annual cycle. Award amounts for special events and cultural entities must be used for the current calendar year in which the funds are being awarded. All funds must be expended by December 31 of the year in which they were granted. Any unexpended funds will be rolled back into the general marketing fund for the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau. No monies will be given directly to the organization receiving funding. Invoices along with proper documentation will be submitted directly to the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau for payment.
6. Awards will be given based on a fully illustrated publicity/promotional campaign for attracting tourism beyond the Lycoming County area for its program(s). Applicants will be required to detail where they will be placing the advertising along with the projected cost for each advertisement. Priority will be given to those groups and/or organizations, which can provide documentation from past publicity and promotional initiatives that document success in achieving the goals of this granting authority. Organizations that demonstrate community support through private sector support of activities through matching dollars towards advertising will also be considered. Also being considered will be the packaging of the event or organization's

activities in packaging to the leisure or motorcoach traveler. An example of this would be partnering with a local restaurant and lodging facility for a ticket to the organization's event for one price.

7. Awardees as a provision of accepting these funds must provide adequate proof that the money received was used for the intended purpose, through the submission of ad tear sheets, media billings, or any other similar documentation. The final project report must include the following:
  - ◆ Attendance figures from the prior year's event and the current event
  - ◆ Number of Lycoming County lodging rooms booked
  - ◆ Overall economic impact of the event
  - ◆ Itemized list of expenses with copies of receipts
8. Nothing shall prevent the granting entity (Lycoming County Visitors Bureau) from withholding part or all of the total monies available for annual awards should that entity feel that insufficient requests have been made justifying exhaustion of those funds. It also reserves the right to adjust the awards tier program based upon quality of applicants' tourism events and programs.
9. The granting entity shall appoint an awards review panel composed of five members. These members shall be from the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau Committee, one of whom shall serve as Committee Chair. These community members shall ideally be citizens outside of the board of directors of any of the applicant organizations or events. The Visitors Bureau Operating Committee will make the final granting decision based on the recommendation of the review panel. Recommendations for funding made by the Visitors Bureau Operating Committee must be ratified by the executive committee and board of directors of the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce.
10. Awards shall be announced no later than six weeks past the attending application deadline.
11. It shall in no way be understood or implied that there shall at any time be a 50/50 or otherwise defined split of the total award funds between cultural entities and special events.
12. Organizations receiving support or funding from the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau are required to:

- Include the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau grant program award logo in all printed event material. (See end of document for logo)
- Include the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau website, [www.visitlycomingcountypa.com](http://www.visitlycomingcountypa.com), and toll free number, 1-800-358-9900, in all correspondence with event participants and promotions.
- If your organization has a website, a visual link to [www.vacationpa.com](http://www.vacationpa.com) must be included.
- If your event accepts pre-registered participants, a list of those participants must be released to the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau allowing us to send travel information prior to the event.
- If your event or organization produces a program, one half-page ad space must be made available to the Lycoming County Visitors Bureau at no charge.

