



2017-2020 EXPLORE MINNESOTA GRANT GUIDELINES FOR NEW EVENTS

GRANT REVIEW PROCESS AND DEADLINES:

Bid and operation requests will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and the applicant will be notified within three weeks of application receipt.

GRANT GUIDELINES FOR NEW EVENTS

OVERVIEW

This New Event Grant program is administered by Explore Minnesota to generate economic impact and awareness of Minnesota through new events held throughout the state.

PRIORITIES/GOALS

The goal of this event funding program is to increase the economic impact of visitors on state and local economies, increase spending by visitors, generate media awareness of Minnesota, and enhance the quality of life for Minnesotans. The program provides funding to secure and operate new events throughout the state. This program creates a coordinated approach for funding events in Minnesota, including (1) competitive bidding and (2) operating/hosting new events that have the potential to generate significant economic impact for the host community.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

THERE ARE TWO FUNDING CATEGORIES:

- **BIDS:**

- Grants range from \$1,000 - \$24,000
- Funding will be allocated to an eligible applicant who meets the minimum grant criteria, receives at or above the minimum threshold and secures the bid.
- Successful applicants will be notified within three weeks of submitting their application.

- **EVENT OPERATION:**

- Grants range from \$5,000 - \$200,000
- Funding is allocated to an eligible applicant that meets the minimum grant criteria and receives at or above the minimum threshold.
- Successful applicants will be notified within three weeks of submitting their application.

Event bid and operations requests are considered on an ongoing basis. All grants awarded are based on available funding.

FUNDING LEVELS

State funding is capped at one-third of total cash expenditures for all grants up to \$100,000. For grants over \$100,000, maximum state funding cannot exceed 15% of total cash expenditures.

- **Bids:** A minimum of \$1,000 and maximum of \$24,000 is available for a bid fee or sponsorship fee. Documented history of an event must address well-defined criteria (e.g., number of participants or spectators, rooms booked, economic impact, media coverage). Funding for a bid where there is more than one Minnesota destination competing for the same event will be contingent upon winning the bid. Bid application fees (fees required to submit a bid application) are not eligible. Bid fees (fees due when event is awarded) are eligible. Only the successful bidder will receive state funding.

- **Event Operation:** A minimum of \$5,000 and maximum of \$100,000 per event is available for hosting/operating a new event. Funding can be used for operating and promotional expenditures, and/or to offset direct state services, such as traffic control. Maximum state funding cannot exceed one-third of total cash expenditures. Application must be for events that begin at least two months after the application submission.

In limited cases, grants of over \$100,000 (up to \$200,000) may be available for hosting/operating an event that is of a much more significant size and scale (minimum of 7,500 room nights; multi-day; regional impact; documented significant economic and PR impact). Economic impact measurements must be directly supported by the event proposed.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

APPLICANTS MUST MEET THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS IN ORDER TO BE FULLY CONSIDERED FOR A GRANT:

- Must be working with an event new to Minnesota (not held in Minnesota in the previous three years) and that is open to the public
- Demonstrate support from the local tourism organization
- Have available lodging capacity
- Agree to generate the remainder of the funding (minimally two-thirds of total cash expenses)
- The current Explore Minnesota logo and a link to ExploreMinnesota.com must be incorporated in all marketing assets
- Marketing plan must include reach outside a 50-mile radius of the local area
- Have contract(s) in place for event facilities and venues or, alternatively, letter(s) of intent reserving them (This requirement applies to events operations grant applicants only)

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS ARE:

- Legally organized non-profit and not-for-profit event or tourism organizations (501c6 or 501c3)
- Colleges and universities and major facilities (facilities with adequate staff and experience hosting events)

All applicants must demonstrate coordination with area tourism or economic development organizations by attaching a letter of support from the Destination Marketing Organization or Chamber of Commerce (DMO). For event operation applications, please also attach references from the event's rights holders or venues. (Minimum of two, maximum of five.)

Multi-organization collaboration is welcomed.

ELIGIBLE EVENTS

An eligible event is new to Minnesota (not held in Minnesota in the previous three years) operates for a limited period of time and is open to the general public and likely to be of interest to a broad number of travelers, which may include:

- Exhibitions
- Expositions
- Fairs
- Festivals
- Entertainment
- Sports competitions
- Leisure events

Any event that is one-time or periodic, free or ticketed, cultural, and conducted for the purpose of attracting revenue, support, awareness, and/or for entertainment purposes, and created by and/or for the general public is generally referred to as a public event

INELIGIBLE EVENTS

Ineligible events include:

- Political events
- Meetings and conventions
- Trade shows
- Third-party promoters, site selectors and commissions are ineligible for state funds

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to: fundraising; prize money; purchase of alcoholic beverages, leasing of motor vehicles; purchase or production of items for resale; acquisition of land or buildings; promotion of state public officials individually named; lobbyists; political contributions; late payment fees; finance charges or contingency funds; parking or traffic violations; payment of tax obligations or charitable contributions; payment of debt; travel expenses.

GRANT PROVISIONS

- Broad distribution of grants awarded geographically as well as among varied eligible applicants is a priority in determining funding.
- A maximum of two bid applications and one event operation application will be accepted from a single destination in any one quarter of the year.
- Border communities: Event and lodging must primarily occur in Minnesota. Incorporated convention and visitor bureaus/chambers with a Minnesota Tax ID that represent an area in Minnesota and another state are eligible to apply when they meet requirements. Explore Minnesota funds may only be used to promote Minnesota and its travel products. Proportional funding from border states or provinces must be provided for events that cross borders.
- For event operation, the financial records of the event and the ongoing result will be available for audit for up to six years.
- For event operation, approved funding will not be paid out until funding from other sources is confirmed (usually by letter of intent). EMT will not indemnify events.
- A minimum of 25% of total program funds are reserved for use in greater Minnesota.
- Explore Minnesota reserves the right to limit the funding available in each category (bids and operations) to provide the most impact and statewide balance.
- Explore Minnesota reserves the right to award all or partial funding for any proposed event.
- Applicants who are awarded a new event grant for a bid application are also eligible to apply for an operations grant for the same event, after the event has been awarded to the bid applicant. Total amount awarded for a single event cannot exceed the maximum grant funding amount of \$200,000.
- In the case of event cancellation, repayment of the entire grant amount awarded will be required.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

Events that receive funding from this program must minimally measure and provide the economic impact of the event on state and local economies, and links or other documentation of media exposure of the state as an event destination. Measurement must minimally include lodging room nights, visitor spending, and lodging and non-lodging sales taxes attributable to the event, with a comparison to lodging during the same timeframe in previous year(s).

For events that receive operation funding, a final summary is required after the event and before the final payment will be approved. As part of the final summary, the applicant will be required to complete the **New Events Grant Post-Event Follow-Up Form**. Applicants will also be required to document how the event increased media awareness of the state as an event destination.

GRANT PAYMENTS

If selected, successful applicants may only commit event-related funds when the grant contract is fully executed and has reached its effective date.

Bids: Explore Minnesota will release funds upon receipt of an invoice and documentation of bid fee payment.

Event operation: Explore Minnesota will reimburse for funds with receipt of the appropriate grant reimbursement form, along with a copy of the vendor invoice(s) and all other supporting documentation showing the grantee's two-thirds cash expenditure match.

A minimum of 40% of the funds will be withheld until after the event takes place and EMT has received the following documents:

- 1) Summary document outlining:
 - Outcomes of the use of grant funds
 - How the event increased media awareness of the state as an event destination
 - The economic impact the event had on the local and state economy
- 2) EMT New Events Grant Post-Event Follow-Up Form (replace the anticipated values with actual)
- 3) Updated final budget (replace the anticipated values with actual in “Exhibit B – Budget”)
- 4) Income Statement and Balance Sheets
- 5) Final receipts and all other supporting documentation showing the grantee’s two-thirds cash expenditures match (invoices, receipts and proof of payment)

SELECTION CRITERIA AND WEIGHT

Eligible applications will be reviewed and grants awarded based on time and date the application was received and the applicant responses to the following review criteria:

EVENT BID APPLICATIONS: (A MINIMUM OF 16 POINTS IS REQUIRED FOR ELIGIBILITY)

• Economic Impact (0-60 points)

- Whether event will be in Minnesota for more than one year, number of days per year
- Regional impact
- Room nights – capacity, off peak, mid-week or weekend
- Room rate
- Anticipated occupancy
- Event revenue potential and economic impact
- Financial review (see Financial Review Process on page 7)

• Marketing/PR (0-16 points)

- Media exposure for destination
- Promotion of Explore Minnesota brand

• Other (0-8 points)

- Includes elements of Diversity through programing / marketing or outreach (Racial and ethnic communities; LBGTQI communities; Disability status; Veterans; Geographic diversity, Minnesota including greater MN, urban/metro)
- Local Participation
- Coordination and support from DMOs in the area
- Other considerations

EVENTS OPERATION APPLICATIONS: (A MINIMUM OF 53 POINTS IS REQUIRED FOR ELIGIBILITY)

• Organizational Capabilities (0-16 points)

- Planning group
- Contracts for event and facilities
- Risk Management Plan
- Volunteer and staff plan
- Budget and finances
- Financial review (see financial review process on page 7)

• Economic Impact (0-60 points)

- Whether event will be in Minnesota for more than one year, number of days per year
- Regional impact
- Room nights – capacity, off peak, mid-week or weekend
- Room rate
- Anticipated occupancy
- Event revenue potential

• Marketing/PR (0-28 points)

- Promotion of Explore Minnesota brand
- Media exposure for destination

• Other (0-16 points)

- Includes elements of Diversity through programming / marketing or outreach (Racial and ethnic communities; LBGTQI communities; Disability status; Veterans; Geographic diversity, Minnesota including greater MN, urban/metro)
- Local participation
- Coordination and support from DMOs in the area
- Other considerations

APPLICATION CONTENT

You must submit the following in order for the application to be considered complete:

FOR BID OR SPONSORSHIP APPLICATIONS:

- Completed Bid Funding Application
- Signed letter of support from DMO or Chamber of Commerce
- Financial Documents (See Financial Review Process on page 7)

FOR EVENT OPERATION APPLICATIONS:

- Completed Events Operation Funding Application
- Signed letter of support from DMO or Chamber of Commerce
- References from event's rights holders and venues (minimum of two, maximum of five)
- Selection Letter CLEARLY indicating the selected Local Organizing Committee, the selected municipality, and the event date
- Event budget showing revenues and expenditures and projected use of grant funds
- Detailed Marketing Plan
- Financial Documents (See Financial Review Process on page 7)

FINANCIAL REVIEW PROCESS

All Non-Governmental Organizations* (NGOs) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to a grant award. In order to comply with **State Policy on the Financial Review of Nongovernmental Organizations**, please submit one of the following documents with your application, based on the following criteria:

- Grant applicants with annual income of under \$50,000, or who have not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990 or audit, must submit their most recent board-reviewed financial statements.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of \$50,000 or more and less than \$750,000 must submit their most recent IRS Form 990.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of over \$750,000 must submit their most recent certified financial audit.

**A nongovernmental organization is an organization that is a nonprofit, also known as a charitable organization, that is formed for the purpose of fulfilling a mission to improve the common good of society rather than to acquire and distribute profits. The organization meets the definition in Minn. Stat. 309.50 Subd. 4 and meets the definitions defined in the Internal Revenue Service code, with the most common type being a 501 (c) (3).*

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Event operation applications must minimally specify how the Explore Minnesota logo and link to exploreminnesota.com will be used in conjunction with the event. Failure to include the following requirements will result in financial penalties of up to 10% of total state funding.

• Requirements include:

- granting Explore Minnesota usage rights of name, logo and details of event
- incorporating the current Explore Minnesota logo and a link to ExploreMinnesota.com into all marketing assets
- providing a link to exploreminnesota.com on event website
- providing media exposure for Explore Minnesota
- recognizing Explore Minnesota in all sponsor acknowledgements
- providing complimentary tickets to Explore Minnesota for media and tourism promotion (FAMs, etc.)
- distributing Explore Minnesota materials in pre-mailers and/or on-site as requested.

REVIEW PROCESS AND DEADLINES

Bid and operation requests will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and the applicant will be notified within three weeks of application receipt. **You can apply for two (2) bids and one (1) operations grant per quarter. Quarterly deadlines are as follows: September 30 | December 31 | March 31 | June 30**

If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract is fully executed and the grant has reached its effective date. The award decisions of Explore Minnesota are final and not subject to appeal.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per Minn.Stat.§16B.98 and Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OCCUR WHEN:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Department due to competing duties or loyalties
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties
- In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

CONTRACTING AND BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

- Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost \$25,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process. Support documentation of this process must be included in the grantee's financial records.
- Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be scoped out in writing and offered to a minimum of three (3) bidders. Support documentation of this process must be included in the grantee's financial records.
- Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$5,000 and \$9,999 must be competitively based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes. Support documentation of this process must be included in the grantee's financial records

GRANT MONITORING

Minnesota Statutes §16B.97 and State Policy on Grant Monitoring require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants of \$50,000 and higher
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants of \$250,000 and higher
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of \$50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

PUBLIC DATA

Per Minn.Stat.§ 13.599

- Names and addresses of grant applicants will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in §13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).

All data created or maintained by Explore Minnesota as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in § 13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).

AUDITS

Per Minn.Stat.§16B.98 Subdivision 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

CERTIFICATION OF NONDISCRIMINATION (IN ACCORDANCE WITH MINN. STAT. § 16C.053)

The following term applies to any contract for which the value, including all extensions, is \$50,000 or more: Contractor certifies it does not engage in and has no present plans to engage in discrimination against Israel, or against persons or entities doing business in Israel, when making decisions related to the operation of the vendor's business. For purposes of this section, "discrimination" includes but is not limited to engaging in refusals to deal, terminating business activities, or other actions that are intended to limit commercial relations with Israel, or persons or entities doing business in Israel, when such actions are taken in a manner that in any way discriminates on the basis of nationality or national origin and is not based on a valid business reason.

QUESTIONS AND APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Complete the corresponding application form, which can be found at industry.exploreminnesota.com.

Questions and applications may be submitted in person, by mail or email to:

Lori A. Peterson

Events Grant Coordinator

Explore Minnesota

121 7th Place East, Suite 360

St. Paul, MN 55101

Email: lori.a.peterson@state.mn.us

Phone: 651-757-1876

Frequently asked questions will be posted at exploreminnesota.com/eventgrants_faq. The Event Economic Impact worksheet can be viewed at exploreminnesota.com/eventgrants_impactworksheet.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about this grant program, contact:

Lori A. Peterson
Events Grant Coordinator
EXPLORE MINNESOTA

121 7th Place East, Suite 360

St. Paul, MN 55101

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