

Henderson County Tourism Development Authority  
Tourism Product Development Grant Program  
Overview

**Introduction**

The Henderson County Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors has worked to strengthen the Henderson County's economy and generate adequate reserves to reinvest back into the local tourism industry. These investments will ensure future economic growth through tourism and sustain this county's ranking as one of North Carolina's top twenty counties in positive economic impact.

**Eligibility**

Any organization or business including public or private, for-profit or non-profit will be eligible to submit an application for a Tourism Product Development Grant. Specific things not eligible include fundraising efforts, operational costs, supplies, prizes, rental equipment/facilities, and other similar requests.

**Funding**

Tourism Product Development Grants will require applicants to provide matching funding for grant requests. This provision qualifies the project as one that has a higher percentage chance of being sustainable when the applicant proves vested in the project. Many grants offered throughout the nation adopt this stipulation as a tool to measure the strength of the project.

The HCTDA Board of Directors will determine the amount available for HCTPD Grants annually based on available funds in its Fund Balance.

**Project Compliance**

HCTDA's Grant Committee will oversee the annual grant cycle by: updating grant application, determining grants selection process, and awarding grants.

HCTDA Staff will be responsible for tracking expenditure of grant funds, initiating payments to recipients, ensuring grantees provide required recognition of HCTDA funding, and following up with each grantee on submission of required project documents.

**Documentation**

Completed documents will be required during application process, updates during project development, and after-project evaluation. Copies of paid invoices must be submitted with the after-project evaluation for reimbursement. Invoices not approved through application and award processes will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Expenditures approved on grant application must match repayment submissions. All invoices must be submitted at one time. Only one check will be issued for grant reimbursement.

**TDA Recognition**

Specific requirements will be given to grantees for inclusion of TDA recognition before-during-after project development. TDA Staff will monitor grantee adherence to this requirement.

# Henderson County Tourism Development Authority

## Tourism Product Development Grant Program Criteria

### **Background:**

In an effort to promote tourism in Henderson County by financially supporting sustainable tourism development activities that attract visitors from outside of our community and enhance the tourist experiences, the Henderson County TDA establishes this program. Its aim is to support the development of additional services, attractions and other tourism products that will attract people to Henderson County to stay overnight and spend money.

### **Eligible Projects:**

Organizations (private; governmental or non-profits) may apply for grants that do one of the following:

1. Development of Plans/Studies that support the tourism industry
2. Historic Preservation projects
3. Art projects; festivals; performances and exhibits (Funds may be applied for any existing event providing that the funding is only used for new or expanded components.)
4. Promote or enhance our culture; heritage and nature based attractions
5. Directional signage that meets the TDA Master Wayfinding Program
6. Other projects that will expand, strengthen and sustain local tourism

### **Requests:**

The intent of this grant program is to assist groups with programs and/or infrastructure that will create, enhance, and attract visitors to our community. These funds are not intended to be used for marketing purposes nor fund any administrative costs. Applicants are required to provide a complete and detailed project description and budget for the request and any local cash match for the program. All requests must demonstrate the requirement of attracting visitors from beyond twenty-five miles of Henderson County with the potential to generate over night stays in order to be considered for funding.

### **General Criteria:**

The TDA Board will consider many important standards in its review of any funding requests. Some of these are:

1. Will the project/program increase overall visitation?
2. Does the project/program directly/indirectly create overnight visits?
3. What are the estimated numbers of increased visitation expected from project annually?
4. Will the project/program increase 'off season' visitations?
5. Does the project/program emphasize the promotion of the overall activities and experiences that will attract visitors?
6. Is the project non-duplicative of current activities?
7. Does the project allow for the development of a database that will allow future contacts of our visitors?
8. Are there opportunities to partner with other tourism related groups/businesses?

### **Requirements for Grant Recipients:**

- All applicants must send a representative to a workshop provided by HCTDA to be eligible to submit a grant request.
- First priority will be given to projects that offer either/or year round or winter experiences.
- Applicant must show proof of ability to match 50% of requested Grant funds.
- Proof of matching funds must be provided at time of application submission.
- Awarded grant funds must be used by agreed upon designated completion date.
- Applicant will be required to submit project summary documents (provided in application) in a timely manner following project completion.
- Certified cost estimates of project must be provided at time of application submission.
- Copies of project invoices for expenditures must be provided as documentation.
- All marketing materials promoting the development of funded project must provide HCTDA recognition (logo and other HCTDA specified information).
- Applications submitted after advertised deadline will be ineligible.

The TDA Board will review and make a decision concerning the request with funds taken from its available fund balance in a timely manner. The TDA Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all funding requests.

## Examples of Potential HCTDA Product Development Projects

HCTDA will continue to seek new projects that will develop long-term sustainable experiences for future visitors. The following is a list of potential projects that was derived from visitor inquiries to the Visitor Center and our community.

- Chapels, gazebos or other facilities to host weddings.
- Year round gem mining.
- Stables for horse back riding experiences.
- River access ramps for boating.
- Recreational facility that will bring large groups for major events.
- Bicycle trail system to attract avid bikers.
- Step-On-Bus Guide Service to accommodate growing group sales.
- Wayfinding signage.
- Major off season festival or event.
- Wine and Beer Trail.
- Month long Christmas/New Year Holiday experience.
- Improvements to Ingress/egress access to accommodate groups.
- Update rails into Hendersonville to accommodate excursion trains from Greensboro, etc.
- Waterpark.
- Zipline adventure.
- Fun Park – indoor family fun.