



**Lodging Tax Grant
PROGRAM GUIDELINES
2024 Grant Program**

What will this grant fund?	This grant funds facilities, events and activities that increase overnight and day-visitors to the City of Vancouver and result in increased tourism-related revenues.
Who can apply?	Nonprofit or government organizations within the City of Vancouver.
How much funding is available?	\$125,000 is available for grants. Applications must be for a minimum of \$5,000.
When do I apply?	Applications will be available May 31, 2023. Applications are due by 3 p.m. on July 28.
How do I apply?	All applications will be made through the city's online grant portal.
How do I ask questions?	All applicants may attend an <i>optional</i> workshop on June 7 at 4:00 in City Hall prior to submitting their first application. Additional information is available at Lodging Tax Grant Program City of Vancouver, Washington, USA Questions may also be directed to Teresa Brum at Teresa.brum@cityofvancouver.us

May 10	LTAC meeting to plan 2024 grant program
May 31	Announce availability of Lodging Tax funds
June 7	Conduct grant pre-application training workshop
July 28	Lodging tax grant applications due at 3pm
8/9 and 8/16, noon	Applicants present their applications at LTAC meeting Visit Vancouver presents their 2024 funding request at LTAC meeting
September-October	City Council approval of grants on consent agenda, date tbd
November	City enters into Agreements with grant recipients after Council approval
January 2024	Fund availability start date for reimbursement of 2024 activities

Program Goal

To invest in facilities, events and activities that increase overnight and day-visitors to the City of Vancouver and result in increased tourism-related revenues.

Background

RCW 67.28.180 allows municipalities to impose up to a 4% lodging tax on stays of less than 30 days at hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, campgrounds and RV parks. 50% of the City of Vancouver's annual lodging tax income is dedicated to the debt service on the downtown hotel/convention center. The remaining 50% is allocated to capital support for the convention center and to community and City projects through a competitive grant program.

State Requirements

Authorized uses for lodging taxes are:

- Tourism marketing including operation of a destination marketing organization (DMO);
- Marketing and operation of special events and festivals designed to attract tourists;
- Operations and capital expenditures of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by a municipality or by a public facilities district;
- Operations of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by non-profit organizations.

Program requirements include:

- Organizations eligible to receive the funds are municipalities, DMO's or non-profit organizations (which includes main street organizations, lodging associations and chambers of commerce).
- All applicants, including municipalities, must follow the same application process.

City Grant Guidelines:

- Organizations may submit more than one application each year but there must be a separate application form and budget for each project/activity.
- Matching funds are not required but are encouraged as a sign of community support and organizational commitment.
- Grants must be for a minimum of \$5,000. \$125,000 is available for grant funding.
- Special events/festivals, capital projects or facilities requesting operating funds must be located inside the City limits.
- Special events/festivals:
 - Must be sponsored by a non-profit or the City;
 - Grants funds can be used for operational expenses, including marketing and promotion, with the exception of salaries and/or benefits for event organizers or other key staff, insurance and travel. Funds may be used for security staff, traffic control, etc.;
 - Funds are available beginning in January 2024 and must be spent by December 2024.
 - For existing special events – in operation for more than three years- proposals must be for expansion or enhancements for the event and those expansions and/or enhancements must be clearly defined and measurable.
- RCW 67.28 requires the city to report back to the state about the number of annual overnight stays that are generated by each even and how many people will be travelling more than 50

miles to the event. The applicant will be asked to provide estimates of the following in their application:

- Total Attendance
 - Attendance, 50+ miles
 - Attendance, out of state and out of country
 - # of attendees who paid for overnight lodging
 - # of attendees who did not pay for overnight lodging
 - Lodging nights
- All advertising must acknowledge the City of Vancouver as sponsor.

Criteria for Grant Awards

Priority will be given to lodging tax grant proposals that:

- Demonstrate potential to result in overnight stays by tourists in lodging facilities within the City of Vancouver or to attract day visitors from outside Clark County.
- Provide, maintain, operate, or enhance City-owned tourism related facilities or infrastructure.
- Promote Vancouver and/or events, activities and places in the city to potential tourists from outside the region.
- Have a demonstrated potential to result in economic benefit to Vancouver. Successful proposals will show specific strategies to draw visitors.
- Provide funds from sources other than lodging tax funding.
- Are sponsored by an organization that has a successful track record with similar projects or events.

Applicants will be invited to give a five (5) minute presentation on their proposal to the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, which makes grant funding recommendations to the City Council.

Reporting:

All lodging tax fund recipients must submit a report to the City describing the results of the project, program or event. For events/festivals, report must be submitted within 90-days after the event. For all other projects or facilities, the report is submitted annually. Per state requirements, report must include the following information:

- The number of people attending the event or visiting the facility;
- The number of people attending the event or visiting the facility who stayed overnight in paid accommodations;
- For day visitors, the number of people attending the event or visiting the facility who came fifty miles or more, one-way, from their residence or business; or
- The number of people attending the event or visiting the facility who come from another country or state outside of their place of residence or business;
- An explanation of how attendance figures were calculated.

Contracting Requirements:

Organizations receiving lodging tax funds, with the exception of the City itself, are required to enter into a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with the City of Vancouver.

- Funding is provided on a reimbursable basis and copies of receipts must be included with the reimbursement request. Expenses that are not in accordance with the approved scope of work and Agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement.

- Reimbursements will be made within approximately 30-days of submittal of request and receipts.
- Costs incurred prior to the grants being approved by the City Council and the execution of the Agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.
- The applicant must have liability insurance, in an amount commensurate with the risk exposure of the project, and which names the City of Vancouver as an additional insured.
- Funds awarded for year-round operation of a program or facility will be dispersed quarterly.

Definitions

“Capital Improvements” can include wayfinding and other signage, restrooms, and transportation options.

The “Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)” for Vancouver is Visit Vancouver WA.

“Municipality” means any county, city, or town in the state of Washington.

“Special event/festival operations” can include any expenses associated with the operation of the event or festival with the exception of staffing expenses (salaries, benefits, travel, etc.) or insurance.

“Tourist” is defined by RCW 67.28 as people who travel more than 50 miles, one way, from their place of residence or business for the day or who stay overnight in paid accommodations.

“Tourism” means economic activity resulting from people visiting the community and includes sales of overnight lodging, meals, tours, gifts, or souvenirs.

“Tourism Marketing/Promotion” means activities, operations and expenditures designed to increase tourism, including but not limited to advertising, publicizing, or otherwise distributing information for the purpose of attracting and welcoming tourists, developing strategies to expand tourism; operating tourism promotion agencies and funding the marketing of or operation of special events and festivals designed to attract tourists.

“Tourism-Related Facility” is real or tangible personal property with a usable life of three or more years that is a) owned by a public entity or non-profit organization including a non-profit business organization, DMO, main street organization, lodging association or chamber of commerce; and b) is used to support tourism or performing arts or to accommodate tourist activities.