

Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC)

Grant Program Guidelines – 2026 Update

Grant Program Purpose

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.

Guiding Regulations and Documents

According to [RCW 67.28.1816\(1\)](#), lodging tax revenues may be used directly by any municipality or indirectly through a destination marketing organization for:

- Tourism marketing
- Marketing and operations of events and festivals designed to attract tourists
- Programs focused on tourism marketing and promotion activities
- Capital expenditures and operating expenses of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by a municipality or a public facilities district
- Operating expenses of tourism facilities owned or run by qualifying non-profits

Award decisions will be made based on available funds and strength of application. Evaluation criteria will focus on alignment with the [City of Vancouver's 2023-2029 Strategic Plan Core Values](#), seasonality, geography, equity & inclusion, environmental sustainability, uniqueness, and economic impact.

Grant Types

- **Cultural Enrichment:** Resources to support events or festivals that support the cultural enrichment of Vancouver.
- **Large Event/Festival Grant:** Resources to support events or festivals designed to contribute to the local tourism economy, attract a significant number of visitors and enhance Vancouver as a tourism destination.
- **Tourism Program or Facilities Grant:** Resources to support one-time tourism marketing or promotion programs or investments in tourism facilities designed to enhance the tourism experience or grow Vancouver's tourism industry.
- **Tourism Organization Operating Grant:** Resources to support destination marketing or visitor attraction efforts of organizations focused on marketing and

To request other formats, please contact:

Andrew Westlund | 360-487-7957 | andrew.westlund@cityofvancouver.us
P.O. Box 1995 | Vancouver, WA 98668-1995 | cityofvancouver.us

promoting Vancouver as a visitor destination or enhancing the local tourism experience.

Program Requirements and Scoring Considerations: All Grants

Program requirements are governed by Regulatory Code of Washington (RCW) requirements and the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee input and recommendation. The following grant guidelines apply to all grants.

Grant Requirements

- Grant activities and expenses must occur between January 1, 2027, and March 31, 2028.
- Grant activities must take place within the City of Vancouver city limits or clearly demonstrate positive economic impacts to lodging tax generators within city limits. Grants will not be awarded to activities that take place within jurisdictions that collect their own lodging tax.
- There are no grant minimums or maximums, unless outlined below.
- Grant applications must be submitted by an eligible organization as the service provider or fiscal sponsor. Eligible organizations include, but are not limited to municipalities, destination marketing organizations, non-profits or not for profits, and tourism-related facilities.
- Organizations may submit more than one application each year, completing a separate application form for each project/activity.

Scoring Considerations

- Matching funds are not required but may impact committee scoring. Demonstrating additional funding commitments beyond just the Lodging Tax Grant typically results in increased committee confidence in an event.
- Activities that demonstrate potential overnight stays by tourists in lodging facilities within the City of Vancouver or attract day visitors from outside Clark County are prioritized. The committee evaluates the reasonableness of estimated outcomes.
- LTAC seeks to fund events that support and align with the City of Vancouver's Strategic Plan, including equity and inclusion, environmental stewardship, and economic opportunities. Applications that highlight these values and show innovative implementation will score more highly.
- LTAC is looking to increase and bolster events that occur during off peak seasons and outside of the downtown core.
- Activities should be able to outline a marketing plan that clearly ties to program goals of bringing in overnight visitors, visitors from out of state or country, and/or from over 50 miles away.
- Unique events and organizations may be scored more highly.
- Activities should be able to demonstrate economic impact within the City of Vancouver. Events should be mindful of supporting local vendors and may want to detail how their attendees may benefit the area around the event.

Contracting Terms

The following terms will be contractually enforced for all grant recipients:

- Payment to recipients of lodging tax funds will be made on a reimbursable basis
- Recipients agree to submit a final project report to the City describing the results of the project, program or event in compliance with the reporting requirements of RCW 67.28.1816
- Any publications or advertising produced for grant activity will prominently feature the following credit: Made possible in part by assistance from the City of Vancouver, Washington Lodging Tax Grant Program
- Grant recipients must obtain and keep in force during the entire term of this agreement, liability insurance against any and all claims for damages to person or property which may arise in delivering the grant activity
- For events happening within the downtown area, recipients must complete a parking management plan, in collaboration with City staff – see *Appendix*

Cultural Enrichment Grants

Unique Grant Requirements

- Event may be limited to receiving a cultural enrichment grant no more than 3 times, based on committee discretion
- Target funding level is no more than \$5,000. The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee may consider requests above this amount should there be unique circumstances or clearly demonstrated need
- Applicants may request funding for multiple years, if they can clearly demonstrate how it would grow the activity and support sustainability
- Only direct operational expenses associated with putting on the event are eligible for reimbursement.

Past Award Profile

Since this grant type began in 2025 the awards have ranged from \$2,350 to \$24,000. The typical award has been for under \$10,000 and considerations for higher awards, included scope larger than just a single event, size of event, and strongly demonstrating a focus on celebrating cultural diversity and promoting equity and inclusion in new or unique ways. The three-award limit is intended to encourage events to find ways to grow into the next grant category, Large Event/Festival Grants, or become independently sustainable.

Large Event/Festival Grants

Unique Grant Requirements

- Event anticipates attendance of 2,500+ people

- Activity may be limited to receiving funding no more than 2 times, unless a significant change in approach or scope to attract significantly more (20%) attendees and/or reach new communities is demonstrated
- Only direct operational expenses associated with putting on the event or festival are eligible for reimbursement.

Past Award Profile

Awards for the Large Event/Festival grant have ranged between \$2,500 and \$95,000. The typical award falls between \$10,000-\$25,000. Most awards below \$10,000 were awarded due to activity need, while larger requests were more likely to receive partial funding. The committee prioritized unique and innovative events for larger awards when they had the opportunity to become signature events for the community. Events seeking funding beyond the two-year limit have added additional festival days, added elements like a concert or additional programming, or demonstrated significant increase in marketing reach. LTAC has full discretion on whether to award activities that may exceed the two-year limit. The limit is designed to encourage innovative growth of events and prioritize new events that will grow what Vancouver has to offer tourists and residents.

Tourism Program or Facilities Grants

Unique Grant Requirements

- Capital expenses are allowable, but only for facilities owned by a municipality or public facilities district
- For capital projects, LTAC will require funds to be used within 3 years of award. Activity can request additional time after providing a project update, but continued funding is not guaranteed.

Past Award Profile

Since 2025 one capital award has been approved, totaling \$577,700. Two tourism programs have also been awarded, with awards between \$15,000 and \$40,000. These programs provided support to help market areas of Vancouver and provide services to enhance tourist experience.

Tourism Organization Operating Grants

Unique Grant Requirements

- Organizations receiving this award will support the LTAC Grant program by meeting with and providing technical assistance to grant applicants. The meetings are to help applicants create reasonable estimates of overnight stays and economic impact of activity.

Past Award Profile

Since 2025 Vancouver's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) has received awards between \$1 million and \$1.3 million. Awards prior to that were lower due to fewer total funds being available and committee prioritization of funds.

Downtown Vancouver Event Parking & C-TRAN Plan

Dear Event Organizer,

This document is for event organizers proposing events on Main Street, in Esther Short Park and in Waterfront Park. Use this information to inform and direct everyone involved in your event to plenty of downtown parking and easy C-TRAN Park N Ride. This helps your event patrons, vendors, performers and volunteers arrive hassle-free at your venue.

Make this Parking & C-TRAN Plan specific to your event. Then use it to direct all parties to:

- The large supply of over 3,300 garage parking spaces downtown,
- Plan and reserve parking in advance,
- C-TRAN routes and Park N Ride locations across Vancouver and in Portland.

The City provides a website, [Getting to Downtown Vancouver -The City of Vancouver, WA](#) for you to publicize to patrons, vendors, performers and volunteers.

Thank you for planning your event in downtown Vancouver in ways that make it delightful for everyone involved – including getting here! We look forward to your success and many happy patrons!

Chris Harder,
Deputy Director
Economic Prosperity and Housing

How to use this document: Sections 1–4 is your plan. Section 5 is optional.

1. Event Details and Event Organizer

Date Submitted: _____ Date Revised: _____

Event Name: _____ Organization Name: _____

Event Date: _____ If date is uncertain, add explanation _____

Event Primary Contact: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Groups with special parking needs: _____ Languages Served: _____

Does this event expect City funding or support? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ LTAC (Lodging Tax Advisory Committee) Funds ☐ Inspire Vancouver
☐ City Sponsor ☐ City Co-Sponsor
☐ Other _____ ☐ None of the above

Does your organization currently require ADA Title II compliance? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Note: if your event receives City funds event communication needs to be easy to read: clear language, high-contrast graphics, and screen-reader-friendly.

2. Parking & C-TRAN Plan Overview

Attendance History & Projections (All Sites, All Day)

Show for entire event. Add additional charts for each site & each day for multi-site/multi-day events.

Patron	2025	2026	2027
Estimated Past Attendance			////////////////////
Registration for Past Attendance			////////////////////
Projected Attendance for future event			
Event Vendors, Volunteers and Performers			
Vendors – Food			
Vendors – Non-food			
Volunteers			
Performers			

Attach (1.) prior year patron registration form & (2.) your patron analysis with number of registrants by zip code.

Parking Reservation and C-TRAN Incentives

Rank how patrons come to your event using numbers 1 – 5 with 1 as most frequently used method.

Car _____ C-TRAN _____ AMTRAK _____ Plane & Airport transport _____ Bike _____

The City and C-TRAN work together to encourage people to ride C-TRAN to Downtown events. What incentives could your event offer event Patrons who ride the bus or reserve parking?

Recurring Parking Needs

List the parking garage(s) or location(s) where you previously referred patrons, volunteers, vendors, and/or performer.

Vendors: _____ Volunteers: _____

Performers: _____ Patrons: _____

3. Communication Content & Schedule

Communication with Patrons, Vendors, Volunteers & Performers

Use the Communication Matrix in Appendix A to show your planned communications by audience, communication channel, and timing. *City Parking Services staff are available to assist.*

Event Website Go Live /Ticket Go-Live Date*: Month _____ Date _____

Event Ticket Sales Go-Live Date*: Month _____ Date _____

** This determines the city staff deadline to get materials to event organizers.*

City Provided Website & Content:

1. Parking & C-TRAN info: Select the format(s) you will include:
☐ Digital materials (landing page link for virtual distribution)
☐ Printable materials (PDF/downloadable files for physical distribution)
2. Event Parking Survey seeking feedback from vendors, volunteers, and patrons for distribution by the organizer. (*Paper surveys may be conducted by designated event staff or volunteers, or city staff, if available.*) Please select the format (s) you will include:
☐ Electronic survey (Microsoft Forms or similar) ☐ Paper survey

4. Parking & C-TRAN Plan Contact with City Staff: Pre- and Post-Event

1. City staff will reach you with questions or confirmations shortly after you submit the Plan.
2. City staff will hold a virtual meeting 90 days prior to event to review your Parking & C-TRAN Plan, focus on the Matrix, and set a post-event meeting within 1 – 14 days of event.
3. Discuss successes and challenges, evaluate attendee feedback and identify opportunities to improve planning for next year.

5. Planning Worksheet – *Optional, for planning*

Patron Travel Mode	# People	# People/Car	Day	Mth	Dt	Arr. Time	Dpt. Time

Appendix A

Purpose: Show how you will provide information, encouragement and incentives for parking reservations and C-TRAN Park N Ride.
Instructions: Review channels for audiences, check only channels you will use, and list general timing of each. Use or edit the example message, or create your own message.

Parking & C-TRAN Communication Matrix								
	Website	General Timing	Email	General Timing	Text	General Timing	Social Media	General Timing
Example	Message: Getting There : "Easy parking & access." Showcase incentive. Location: Getting There tab; Ticket Purchase pg.	At least 4 weeks ahead of event and through event day.	Your tickets have been delivered! Plan & reserve parking downtown or use C-TRAN Park N Ride . Showcase incentive.	With Ticket Delivery. 2 weeks before event. 1 week before event. 3 days before event.	"Your tickets have been e-mailed – check for your tickets, and click here to plan & reserve parking or use C-TRAN Park N Ride ."	With ticket delivery. 1week before event. 3 days before event.	"Heading to the event? Plan & reserve parking at downtown garages or use C-TRAN Park N Ride Lots " Showcase incentive.	4 - 6 weeks before event and through event day
Vendor	☐		☐		☐		☐	
Volunteer	☐		☐		☐		☐	
Patrons	☐		☐		☐		☐	
Performer	☐		☐		☐		☐	