

STATE OF WASHINGTON TOURISM

Tourism Sustainability Grant Program

State of Washington Tourism (SWT) is committed to the full recovery of the tourism sector in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, and it has prioritized industry segments within the sector to hasten and maximize recovery efforts. As tourism continues to rebound toward pre-pandemic levels, the Tourism Sustainability Grant Program will foster safer, more inclusive, and sustainable visitor experiences in the State of Washington.

Washington-based tourism stakeholders may request up to \$30,000 in grant funding based on project eligibility. They must submit a complete and thorough application with details on project objectives, longevity, and budget. If awarded grant funding, the grantee must submit all contracts/contractors involved with each project to SWT for review and approval. The total funding available for the Tourism Sustainability Grant Program is \$125,000.

Though not required for this grant, applicants are strongly encouraged to match a portion of their grant request with cash or in-kind contributions. Grant funds from SWT should not pay for staff salaries, debt, or interest payments associated with eligible projects. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to collaborate with local destination marketing organizations and industry partners on eligible projects.

SWT will accept applications for the Tourism Sustainability Grant between August 18 – September 18, 2023. Once submitted, SWT staff will review grant applications for minimum qualifications. Next, a review committee of industry experts will evaluate the leading applications. Finally, SWT will notify award recipients by October 6 via email. SWT can provide feedback for applicants that were denied grant funding per their requests. Grant funds should be expended by August 1, 2024.

SWT may release grant funds as a lump sum to awardees upon approval of their grant application and contract. If awarded grant funding, the grantee must submit all contracts/contractors involved with each project to SWT for review and approval. Awardees are also instructed to submit an interim report by April 1, 2024 and a final project evaluation approximately by October 1, 2024. If awardees fail to submit an evaluation, their consideration for future grants may be adversely affected. Each project evaluation should include a final budget, proof of spending, tax forms (W-9 and Form 1099), photos, and a written account of how grant funds were used and their impact on travel and tourism.

The grantee must acknowledge the Tourism Sustainability Grant Program and include the SWT logo in material associated with the grant project. SWT must also review and approve this material.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for the Tourism Sustainability Grant include entities that operate in the State of Washington and directly support travel and tourism:

- Local government
- Tribal Nations
- Non-profit organizations registered with the Washington Secretary of State's Office
- 501(c)(3) organizations and other 501(c) organizations that support travel and tourism

STATE OF WASHINGTON TOURISM

Project Eligibility

The Tourism Sustainability Grant Program will foster safer, more inclusive, and sustainable visitor experiences throughout the State of Washington. Project eligibility for these grants ranges significantly from pedestrian and bicyclist safety along roadways to disaster and climate adaptation planning. They may also include but are not limited to new festivals and events, tourism infrastructure, outdoor recreation, business and creative districts, and main street associations.

Festivals and Events

This grant program will aid the planning and management of NEW festivals and events that drive overnight stays and visitor spending for destination communities.

Tourism Infrastructure

This grant program will help support the construction or rehabilitation of public infrastructure and facilities linked to the tourism sector.

Outdoor Recreation

Eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Improving access to outdoor recreation opportunities for the BIPOC community
- Providing greater accessibility to outdoor experiences for people living with disabilities
- Trail development and improvements (includes wayfinding/signage/kiosks)
- Recreation site improvements and stewardship (includes wayfinding/signage/kiosks)
- Water recreation (includes access points/wayfinding/mile markers/signage)
- Cycling infrastructure (includes repair stations/restrooms/seating)
- Garbage/waste management solutions
- Parking/transportation strategies and solutions that encourage less usage of single-occupancy vehicles
- Projects that create easier access for drive market visitors

Business and Creative Districts and Main Street Associations

Eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Wayfinding enhancements
- Clean-up/beautification
- Environmental sustainability efforts
- Historical interpretation, preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction
- Projects that increase accessibility
- Projects that enhance art and culture
- “Buy local” campaigns and incentive programs
- Projects that create easier access for drive market visitors
- Projects that drive international tourism

STATE OF WASHINGTON TOURISM

Award Decision

Industry partners may apply for the Tourism Sustainability Grant between August 18 – September 18, 2023. No applications or materials will be accepted after the deadline. Award decisions will be announced by October 6 via email. A committee of industry experts will review applications and award grant funds on the following criteria:

- Demonstrates an immediate need for the project
- Demonstrates the ability to complete the project in a timely manner (expend grant funds by August 1, 2024)
- Preference is given to projects that ensure accessibility and inclusion of all visitors, including under-represented communities
- Preference is given to applications that match a portion of their grant request with cash or in-kind contributions
- Preference is given to projects with construction permits already secured (if needed)

State of Washington Tourism reserves the right to award grants in amounts totaling less than all funds that are available under the Tourism Sustainability Grant Program, to award a different amount than is requested in a grant application, to make changes to the grant criteria or to cancel the Tourism Sustainability Grant Program in its entirety. Contact Matthew Ozuna (509-945-3026, matthew@stateofwatourism.com), SWT destination development manager, for inquiries regarding the Tourism Sustainability Grant Program, including project eligibility, contractors, and budget.

Grant Timeline

- August 18, 2023 – Grant application opens
- September 18, 2023 – Grant application closes
- October 6, 2023 – Notification of grant funds
- April 1, 2024 – Interim report is due; provide an update on project spending, planning, challenges, etc.
- August 1, 2024 – Grant funds expended
- October 1, 2024 – Project evaluation is due; provide a written report on the project, including the final budget, proof of spending, photos, an account of how grant funds were used and their impact on travel and tourism

State of Washington Tourism supports social justice, human rights, cultural preservation, and public safety for all. As such, all travelers should feel welcome and safe, and host communities and travel and tourism suppliers should be respected by their guests. At its best, travel offers inherent social and cultural exchange that fosters understanding and acceptance. SWT seeks to advance these values throughout its marketing, communications, and travel advisory programs.