



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

September 16, 2020

### Program summary

Governor Tony Evers has authorized up to \$8 million in financial assistance to support eligible Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Evers' press release announcing the assistance is available [here](#). Funding for this assistance is provided to Wisconsin by the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The program is administered by the Department of Tourism. Additional details are available on the [program website](#).

Prior to contacting [TourismCARES@travelwisconsin.com](mailto:TourismCARES@travelwisconsin.com), please consult the Grant Announcement and Grant Application available on the [program website](#).

U.S. Department of the Treasury CARES Act guidance can be found [here](#).

### **FOR ALL QUESTIONS RELATED TO ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

The Department of Tourism (Tourism) will execute grant agreements with successful applicants only after Tourism determines that expenses and lost revenues included in an application are reasonably consistent with CARES Act requirements and Program provisions. Tourism's execution of grant agreements, however, is not dispositive as to whether any particular cost meets the criteria set forth in the CARES Act. Applicants retain responsibility for demonstrating eligibility of expenses and are required to hold Tourism harmless for any audit disallowance related to the eligibility of costs, including repayment of ineligible amounts.

### **FOR ALL QUESTIONS RELATED TO APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

Tourism will not respond to inquiries regarding an applicant's specific eligibility. Each applicant is required to determine its eligibility based on Program requirements provided in the Grant Announcement. However, Tourism will accept and answer questions seeking clarification of eligibility requirements. Tourism will determine applicant eligibility only as a routine matter during the application review process after the application deadline has passed. Applicants should carefully review eligibility requirements of the Grant Announcement prior to applying.

**1. When are applications for the TRAVEL grant due?**

Monday, September 28, 2020 at 4 PM (Central).

**2. My organization is not a registered non-profit with IRS 501(c)3, (c)4 or (c)6 tax-exempt status. Is my organization eligible?**

Only if you are a Government Entity which is defined as any organization that is established as a department or subunit of a county, municipality or tribal government AND is not for profit or otherwise registered as a nonprofit.

**3. My organization is not registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. Is my organization eligible?**

No

**4. How do I know if my organization is registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions and/or is in good standing?**

Organizations may review registration status by visiting the WDFI webpage here:  
<https://www.wdfi.org/apps/CorpSearch/Advanced.aspx>

**5. Can we apply for a DFI entity ID now if we do not have one already?**

Applicants should contact the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions for questions related to entity IDs. Per the Grant Announcement, applicants must be registered with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions and have one of the following statuses as of the grant application deadline (September 28, 2020 at 4PM CDT): “restored to good standing”, “incorporated/qualified/registered”, “organized”, or “registered”.

**6. Eligible applicants must have an “administrative presence in Wisconsin”. What does this mean?**

Applicants must have administrative operations, Wisconsin-based staff, physical presence, or other administrative presence within Wisconsin.

**7. Exclusively event-based organizations are not eligible. What does this mean?**

Applicants must be a tourism focused Wisconsin government or private organization not organized or incorporated for profit and engaged in Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development. Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development is defined as the marketing and promotion of communities, geographic regions and facilities to leisure and business travelers **through a range of activities**, such as advertising media buys, creation and distribution of printed or electronic promotional tourist materials, transient tourist informational services, or efforts to recruit conventions or sporting events. Event only based organizations do not meet this definition.

**8. Will Tourism staff be able to review our application before submission?**

No

**9. If I have already submitted my application and notice an error, can I resubmit the application?**

You must formally withdraw your first application submission via email and then you may resubmit the corrected application by the deadline of 4:00 p.m. Monday, September 28, 2020.

**10. How do I evidence Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development activities from within the past 36 months?**

Applicants can submit annual reports, annual marketing plans, annual detailed profit and loss statements, board approved budgets, website analytics, or other documentation supporting Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development activities.

**11. What sort of supplemental materials would be helpful?**

Applicants may choose to provide supporting documents that they believe will assist evaluators in assessing their application. However, do not provide audio files, video files or documents with links to online resources which the applicant intends the State or evaluators to read. Supporting documents should speak for themselves.

**12. Our organization has received other coronavirus relief funding, are we eligible to apply?**

Receiving alternative funding is not considered in eligibility determinations. However, per the Grant Announcement, eligible expenses must not be reimbursed nor under consideration for reimbursement by another program.

**13. What will happen if another grant comes through that would cover the same things, and we already received this grant? Since we are applying to several different things at the same time, we can't wait for one to be approved and then apply for the next as the funds may not be there.**

Applicants are required to repay grant funds to the state in the event grant funds are supplanted by other funding sources or are not utilized in accordance with the Grant Announcement and resulting Grant Agreements. Additionally, applicants should notify the State as soon as they receive notice that all or a portion of their request will be funded by other sources.

**14. Will we receive notice that our application has been received in full?**

Automatic email responses are sent from [TourismCares@travelwisconsin.com](mailto:TourismCares@travelwisconsin.com) when submitted. This email is not a determination of application completeness nor applicant eligibility.

**15. Should we make a list of itemized expenses and lost revenue for reference, but the grant amount requested comes from 25% of the Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget?**

Yes. An applicant's grant amount requested must be at least the total of eligible itemized expenses and/or lost revenue as listed in Appendix A – Budget. The grant amount requested is also not to exceed \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

The detail in the Appendix A-Budget should also support financial need as detailed in the narrative.

**16. If our lost revenue exceeds the maximum amount we are able to apply for, should we still include the total? (For example, we have over \$500,000 in lost revenue in 2020 as compared to last year.)**

Yes, for nonprofit applicants. An applicant's grant amount requested must be at least the total of eligible itemized expenses and/or lost revenue as listed in Appendix A – Budget. The grant amount requested is also not to exceed \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

The detail in the Appendix A-Budget should also support financial need as detailed in the narrative.

**17. What is our Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget?**

Operating and/or marketing revenues and expenditures associated with Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development.

Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development is the marketing and promotion of communities, geographic regions and facilities to leisure and business travelers through a range of activities, such as advertising media buys, creation and distribution of printed or electronic promotional tourist materials, transient tourist informational services, or efforts to recruit conventions or sporting events

**18. Will partial awards be made?**

Possibly. Award amounts depend on the number of applicants, total amount requested, availability of funding, and other factors in the application including, but not limited to, financial need and eligible use.

**19. Is there a minimum grant award request amount?**

No

**20. Revenues expected from a ticketed event were not realized in 2020 since it had to be cancelled. Some of that revenue MAY be available in 2021 if the event is rescheduled. Is the 2020 loss eligible?**

Yes, assuming the cancelled event was scheduled between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. Applicants may apply for grant funds for eligible expenses and lost revenues that were incurred during the eligible period.

**21. Regarding eligible lost revenues, does this include event revenues? Contributed revenue (corporate giving) in addition to earned revenue (tickets/memberships)?**

Yes, so long as all other eligibility criteria are met, such as the revenues were lost between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020, yes. Applicants may apply for grant funds for eligible expenses and lost revenues that were incurred during the eligible period.

Lost revenues that are attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic are evidenced by financial commitments made to the organization that were rescinded or reduced due to COVID-19, or the difference between Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development organization revenues during the 2020 period for which payment is requested and revenues during the same period in 2019.

An applicant's grant amount requested must be at least the total of eligible itemized expenses and/or lost revenue as listed in Appendix A – Budget. The grant amount requested is also not to exceed \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

The detail in the Appendix A-Budget should also support financial need as detailed in the narrative.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be realized.

**22. When we canceled our event, we did not pay musicians who were going to perform but did not. They are independent contractors, not employees. Can we declare these services as expenses, that if covered by grant would be then paid to the musicians?**

No, by not paying the performers the applicant did not incur an expense.

**23. Can we seek reimbursement of expenses for mailings made informing them of cancellations?**

Yes, so long as all other eligibility criteria are met. All expenses must be between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020.

An applicant's grant amount requested must be at least the total of eligible itemized expenses and/or lost revenue as listed in Appendix A – Budget. The grant amount requested is also not to exceed \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

The detail in the Appendix A-Budget should also support financial need as detailed in the narrative.

**24. We lost \$10,000 in room tax revenue we received in 2019. If this grant covers this lost revenue, do we need to explain what we will do with the \$10,000 grant awarded to us after we receive the dollars from Tourism?**

Lost room tax may be an eligible use of funds so long as the loss was attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and occurs between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. This should be discussed in the narrative regarding financial need and supported in the budget detail.

Lost revenues that are attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic are evidenced by financial commitments made to the organization that were rescinded or reduced due to COVID-19, or

the difference between Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development organization revenues during the 2020 period for which payment is requested and revenues during the same period in 2019.

An applicant's grant amount requested must be at least the total of eligible itemized expenses and/or lost revenue as listed in Appendix A – Budget. The grant amount requested is also not to exceed \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

The detail in the Appendix A-Budget should also support financial need as detailed in the narrative.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be realized.

Additional details on use of funds may be requested when awardees submit final reports.

- 25. Our funding is mostly hotel room tax. That tax is collected quarterly, and we don't receive it until 45 days after the end of the quarter. We know the differences for 1st and 2nd quarter 2020, but will not know 3rd quarter until November, nor 4th quarter until February 2021. We expect 3rd quarter to be down significantly. Are we able to use estimated figures for these quarters to demonstrate loss or can we only apply for the 1st and 2nd quarter amounts?**

Lost room tax may be an eligible use of funds so long as the loss was attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and occurs between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. This should be discussed in the narrative regarding financial need and supported in the budget detail.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be realized.

- 26. Can we apply for a combination of both expenses incurred and lost revenue, or does it have to be only expenses incurred, or only lost revenue?**

If you are a nonprofit, both expenses and lost revenue is an eligible use of funds. If you are a governmental entity, you can only apply for marketing local/regional business use of funds.

Award amounts will not exceed \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

- 27. Can we apply for a both types of funding, continuing operations and marketing local/regional business activities?**

If you are a nonprofit, you can apply for both uses of funds. If you are a governmental entity,

you can only apply for marketing local/regional business use of funds.

Award amounts will not exceed \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

**28. We are a governmental entity that has lost tax revenue, can we apply for the lost revenue related to this?**

No, eligible Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development governmental entities can only apply for marketing local/regional business use of funds.

**29. The application states our request must be based upon our Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget. We view everything we do as Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development activities, as we are a Convention & Visitors Bureau. Does this mean we can't include operational costs other than marketing/sales costs? Or is this aimed at organizations, similar to Chambers of Commerce, where only a portion of their funding goes toward Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development?**

Operational expenses as relates to the Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development of the organization are eligible expenses. As your organization's primary function is tourism promotions and tourism development, it is likely that the majority of your expenses relate to this function.

**30. We have lost grant funding during the eligible period. Does there have to be documentation from the grant maker stating that we didn't get the grant due to COVID?**

The loss of grant funding is considered lost revenue. Lost revenues that are attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic are evidenced by financial commitments made to the organization that were rescinded or reduced due to COVID-19. Documentation is not required but is recommended. Please explain financial need and you may supply a letter from the granting organization explaining the circumstances as supporting documentation.

Lost revenue must occur between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020.

**31. Since the eligible date goes to end of December, can we list losses not yet occurred and items not purchased yet?**

You may estimate revenue loss or expenses within the eligible expense period of March 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020 (not December 31, 2020). The loss must be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be realized.

**32. Would expenses incurred by needing to upgrade our disinfecting equipment and supplies be included in eligible expenses?**

Yes, so long as all other eligibility criteria are met and the expense is between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. Applicants may apply for grant funds for eligible expenses and lost revenues

that were incurred during the eligible period.

All use of funds shall be compliant with applicable provisions of the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Program provisions, and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Necessary expenditures incurred or revenues lost due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID–19),
- expenditures must be made or incurred, or revenues lost by the applicant between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020,
- expenditures made or incurred supporting the resumption of local and/or regional business activities and ensure a safe and healthy experience for travelers and resident consumers,
- expenditures not reimbursed or under consideration for reimbursement by another program.

**33. If awarded a TRAVEL grant, can we use funds awarded for "lost revenue" for day-to-day operations?**

Yes, if you are a nonprofit.

Additional details on use of funds may be requested when awardees submit final reports.

**34. Are revenue funds lost from invested funds eligible for repayment?**

No, investment losses are an ineligible use of funds.

**35. Regarding the demonstration of financial need: does a necessary reduction in services demonstrate a financial need, independent of the financial health of our non-profit?**

Applicants should provide narrative which they believe will allow evaluators to determine the extent and impact of financial need and which clearly explains how the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency have impacted the applicant's operations and services, and how these impacts are directly tied to financial need.

**36. If the applicant's Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development budget tends to vary from year to year, what would be the best way to estimate lost revenues for this year for the purposes of this application?**

You should use actual financial information and commitments available to the extent possible to estimate lost revenues and demonstrate financial need due to COVID-19.

Applicants are eligible for \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

Applicants should provide narrative which they believe will allow evaluators to determine the extent and impact of financial need and which clearly explains how the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency have impacted the applicant's operations and services, and how these impacts are directly tied to financial need.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the



award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be realized.

**37. Do the Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development Budget of the last 3 years, include 2020 year to date? Or is it 2017, 2018, 2019?**

Average should include 2017, 2018 and 2019 calendar years or the applicant's equivalent fiscal years prior to March 1, 2020.

**38. Can you show membership financial loss by showing membership dollars last year versus this year?**

Yes, as long as you are an eligible nonprofit Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development organization and the expense is between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. Applicants may apply for grant funds for eligible expenses and lost revenues that were incurred during the eligible period.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be realized.

Additional details on use of funds may be requested when awardees submit final reports.

**39. Our revenue is significantly reduced, but expenses are also. Are we to look at bottom line? or just lost revenue?**

Applicants may request funds for estimated lost revenues as well as expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 public health pandemic during the period between March 1 through December 30, 2020. Applicants may not request funds for any expenses which were not incurred during the eligible period.

Applicants should provide narrative which they believe will allow evaluators to determine the extent and impact of financial need and clearly explains how the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency have impacted the applicant's operations and services, and how these impacts are directly tied to financial need.

**40. Does lost revenue replacement need to be spent by December 30, 2020?**

Lost revenue may be an eligible use of funds so long as the loss was attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and occurs between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. This should be discussed in the narrative regarding financial need and supported in the budget detail.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be

realized.

Additional details on use of funds may be requested when awardees submit final reports.

**41. Are revenues considered for the purposes of this program based on accrual or cash basis?**

Lost revenue claims must have been incurred by the applicant during the covered period (March 1 through December 30, 2020).

**42. If we document \$XXX in lost revenues, do we ALSO have to document the same amount in expenses?**

No, do not document or double count lost revenues and expenses.

**43. Re: providing audited documentation by February 1. Our fiscal year ends mid-year and we would not have audited results in regards to lost revenues (September-December) at that time. What would be permissible to submit as documentation?**

The grantee need not provide audited results in the final report, but must certify to the accuracy of information provided in the final report.

**44. We run our fiscal membership year September 1 thru August 31 so our invoices just went out. I will not know the impact of membership not renewing until at least November 1. Can I anticipate a loss and what happens if it is not correct?**

You may estimate revenue loss within the eligible expense period of March 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020. The loss must be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be realized.

**45. Is event revenue loss eligible?**

Event revenue loss is eligible for Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development organizations, not organizations that are exclusively event based. The loss must be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. The lost revenues were incurred between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. Applicants may apply for grant funds for eligible expenses and lost revenues that were incurred during the eligible period.

Lost revenues that are attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic are evidenced by financial commitments made to the organization that were rescinded or reduced due to COVID-19, or the difference between Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development organization revenues during the 2020 period for which payment is requested and revenues during the same period in 2019.

An applicant's grant amount requested must be at least the total of eligible itemized expenses and/or lost revenue as listed in Appendix A – Budget. The grant amount requested is also not to exceed \$500,000 or 25% of the applicant's average three previous fiscal years of Tourism

Promotion and Tourism Development Budget, whichever is less.

The detail in the Appendix A-Budget should also support financial need as detailed in the narrative.

Estimates of amount of loss should be as accurate as possible and must be able to be verified by December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you are estimating amounts between application submission and December 30, 2020, we will look at these during contract negotiations and may scale back the award to reflect an amount that more reasonably conforms with most recent data or historic trends or withhold portions of payments until we are satisfied the expense or loss will be realized.

Additional details on use of funds may be requested when awardees submit final reports.

**46. Once an award is made, what are the next steps?**

Tourism will develop a contract for each funded project which will be signed by Tourism and the recipient. No funding commitment is final until a contract is executed. Once a contract is executed, no contract modifications will be allowed. Due to the nature of the Federal CARES Act funding, eligible project costs will be allowed beginning March 1, 2020 and ending December 30, 2020. To be included with the contract, the grantee may be asked to provide additional information beyond the grant application information.

Grant contracts must be signed and returned to Tourism no later than 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the contract within 30 days of receipt may result in the loss of awarded grant funds unless the delay is approved by Tourism.

Grantees receiving \$50,000 or more, will be required to have a DUNS number per the Federal CARES Act funding. For more information on DUNS numbers, refer to the Dun & Bradstreet website: <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>

Payments will be made following an executed contract and supporting documents such as W-9 and account set up forms. Specific payment processing will be detailed in the contract.

Written monthly reports of the project will be required and invoices must include receipts or other proof of payment, which will be accepted with monthly reporting during the period of the grant. A final report will be due by February 1, 2021.

**47. What is a DUNS number and why is it required for contracting?**

Grantees receiving \$50,000 or more, will be required to have DUNS number per the Federal CARES Act funding. For more information on DUNS numbers, refer to the Dun & Bradstreet website: <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>

Applicants may apply for a DUNS number prior to notification of awards.