



Governor Evers removes barriers to tourism industry economic support

Administrative Rules Suspended for Joint Effort Marketing Grants

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Tourism announced today that Governor Tony Evers suspended several provisions of the Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grant program, providing greater flexibility for how JEM grants can be administered to help restart Wisconsin’s tourism economy. JEM grants provide partnership funding to help nonprofit Wisconsin organizations promote tourism in their area, including 501(c)(6) organizations like Convention and Visitor Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce that were not earmarked for relief and may not qualify for certain loan programs included in the federal CARES Act.

“Wisconsin’s tourism economy was one of the earliest and hardest hit by COVID-19,” said Tourism Secretary-designee Sara Meaney. “With the changes announced today, we will have the ability to better stretch every available dollar to promote Wisconsin destinations as soon as health professionals give us the green light. This is an opportunity to think bigger and more collaboratively, so every action taken by individual tourism entities does more to lift the whole of our industry as quickly as possible.”

Given the uncertainties caused by the public health emergency, the administrative rules guiding the JEM grant program could have prevented the timely promotion of Wisconsin tourism destinations once public health professionals determine travel is once again advisable. They also could have prevented promotional work during the summer season, which could be the best first option for tourism entities to jumpstart visitation. A temporary change to these provisions will allow the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to strategically direct funds to best support the statewide tourism industry.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism requested the following temporary provisions to ease requirements, remove burdens, and reduce limitations to support tourism entities:

- Suspended Wis. Admin. Code § Tour 1.02(6)(f)1 requiring that a project involving the placement of advertising in a geographic area not occur during a time that the applicant traditionally receives substantial numbers of tourists in the area.
- Creates a companion rule to Wis. Admin. Code § Tour 1.03(3r) regarding timelines for grant funding as follows, “During each fiscal year, the department may grant up to 35% of joint effort marketing funds available for projects described in s. Tour 1.02 (6) (a) to (e) by September 30, up to 70% by December 31 and up to 90% by March 31 except that the secretary may waive the limits contained in this subsection for a project likely to have a substantial impact upon the state's tourism economy. The department may grant up to 60% of the joint effort marketing funds available for projects described under s. Tour 1.02 (6)(f) in September and the remainder in April or May of each fiscal year.”
- Creates a companion rule to Wis. Admin. Code § Tour 1.04(1) regarding time restrictions on the utilization of funds as follows, “An eligible applicant may submit an application no less than 90 days prior to the first date advertising supported by funds under this chapter is scheduled to begin except that the secretary may waive the limits contained in this subsection for a project likely to have a substantial impact upon the recovery of the state’s tourism economy.”

Wisconsin’s 112 million visitors spurred \$21.6 billion in total business sales and supported more than 199,000 full and part-time workers in 2018, making tourism Wisconsin’s third largest industry.

To apply for Joint Effort Marketing Grants, visit <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/grants/joint-effort-marketing-jem-grant-program>.

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About the Wisconsin Department of Tourism

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism (Travel Wisconsin) is to inspire travelers to experience a fresh take on vacation through exploring Wisconsin’s many natural landscapes, vibrant urban communities, scenic byways and hidden gems. Through strategic partnerships with destination marketing organizations, industry associations and attractions, the department supports Wisconsin as a premier travel destination through industry-leading marketing programs. Wisconsin tourism generates a \$21.6 billion economic impact and supports more than 199,000 full and part-time jobs.

Learn more about Wisconsin at www.TravelWisconsin.com.