**Clarion County Tourism Grant**

**FUNDING CYCLE:** FY 18/19,February 2018 to February 2019

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the Clarion County Tourism Grant is to generate overnight stays within the Act 18 Hotel Tax law taxable lodging facilities, such as, Hotels, B &B’s, Motels, AirB&B’s, and Cabins that are permanent structures on public or private campgrounds, and increasing visitation and enhancing the tourism experience within Clarion County. Applicants awarded will need to provide an economic benefit to the area by attracting business and leisure travelers to encourage overnight stays. Grant requests may be awarded from $500 to $50,000. Grants will be awarded on the basis of merit as determined by the Clarion County Tourism Review Committee, Clarion County Board of Commissioners, and administered through Clarion County’s designated Tourism Promotion Agency.

Please note: Grants will not be awarded for standard event or organization operational expenses.

**POTENTIAL APPLICANTS:**

The Clarion County Tourism Grant is open to any non- profit entity, for-profit entity, or private public partnership.

**FUNDING LIMITATIONS:**

All grant requests must meet the **minimum allowable amount of $500 and may not exceed the maximum amount of $50,000** per project each funding cycle. All Grant requests must demonstrate a minimum of a 25% in-kind and or cash match. Exceeding the match requirements is encouraged.

It should not be assumed that any applicant will be awarded funding on an annual basis regardless of previous awards. Applicants may not include this grant funding as a part of their annual budget each year.

**DEADLINE:** Grant applications must be submitted at least 180 days prior to the start date of the event.

**CATEGORIES FOR FUNDING:**

Grants may be requested in each of the following categories:

1. Capital Projects:

Capital Projects must enhance the visitor’s experience by developing new or enhancing existing Clarion County tourist attractions or amenities. A variety of eligible tourism-related projects includes but is not limited to: acquisition of historic or cultural exhibits, signage\*, physical improvement of a tourism facility, structural needs of new creative projects/exhibits that will strengthen Clarion County’s appeal to visitors, and expenses in development of a convention center, exhibit hall, or major new tourism attraction specific to Clarion County.

*\*Grants cannot be used for signage that promotes a specific private entity, except where the signage also carries the logo of recognized tourism promotion agency which is Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau (PAGO).*

1. Marketing Projects:

Marketing Projects must primarily target non-Clarion County residents. A variety of eligible tourism related programs include but are not limited to: development of printed promotional material, image marketing, signage\*, Internet website development/enhancement, tourism awareness programs, and specialized advertising. Applications for activities or events that are, in the opinion of the Clarion County Tourism Review Committee, primarily related to fundraising for the sponsor are discouraged and/or limited to $5,000.

*\*Grants cannot be used for signage that promotes a specific private entity, except where the signage also carries the logo of recognized tourism promotion agency which is Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau (PAGO).*

1. Creative Projects:

Creative Projects are collaborative activities among various Clarion County nonprofit, for-profit, and private public partnerships that promote overnight stays in Clarion County. Funds may be used to assist with a special event if the applicant can demonstrate to the Clarion County Tourism Review Committee that the event is a tourism generator bringing in overnight stays to Clarion County.

**FUNDING GUIDELINES:**

Special Priority of awards will be given to applicants whose grant requests meet any or all of the following:

 • Collaborate among lodging and activities

 • Target new markets

• Exceed the minimum requirement of a 25% match

 An organization may only submit one grant request per project per year.

**FUNDING CRITERIA:**

1. Documentation indicating whether the applicant is a non- profit entity, for-profit entity, or private public partnership. Examples of documentation could include: Federal tax forms, State tax forms, meeting minutes, list of organization/ business board members, etc.
2. Narrative must include projections for how event will increase the overnight stays for Act 18 Hotel Tax law taxable lodging facilities.
3. Narrative must indicate how the project also increases visitation and enhances the tourism experience within Clarion County.
4. Those receiving awards must publicly acknowledge that support has been provided by the Clarion County Tourism Review Committee with funds generated by the Act 18 Hotel Tax law, the Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau and the Clarion County Commissioners within the context of their print brochures, advertising, and other promotional material.
5. A detailed budget indicating as required by state law the applicant has a cash and/or in-kind match of at least 25%. The budget must also indicate how the requested grant funds will be utilized.

Please note: Grants will not be awarded for standard event or organization operational expenses.

1. As a provision of accepting funding from FY18/19 grant cycle, a final project final report is required within 60 days of the completion of the project. If the final report is not received within 60 days the applicant will not be eligible for future funding cycles.
2. Final reports must indicate how the project funded resulted in an increase of lodging as well as, visitation and enhanced the tourism experience within Clarion County. Final report must have a signed document (attached) from a Clarion County establishment - i.e. Hotel, Motel, B & B, Cabin, AirB&B, etc.

**GRANT PROCEDURES:**

1. Grant requests will be reviewed and a final recommendation will be made by the Clarion County Tourism Review Committee within 30 days of your application. Funding for approved applications will be released upon final determination by Clarion County Commissioners.
2. In the event a member of the committee serves on the board or is otherwise affiliated with the grant applicant, that committee member must abstain from the voting process on that grant application.
3. Once approved, funding will be released no later than 120 days prior to the project start date.
4. Clarion County Tourism Review Committee may withhold partial or the entire total funding available for the FY 18/19 funding cycle due to insufficient grant requests that do not meet the criteria.
5. The Clarion County Tourism Review Committee will review the criteria and guidelines annually to enhance, amend, or dissolve said guidelines.

 Validation Form:

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has (have) received Clarion County

 (Organization(s)

Tourism Grant funds to conduct a tourism related program. As a result, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ had an increase in overnight stays with approximately

 (Clarion County Lodging Establishment)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people staying in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rooms.

 (number) (number)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lodging Signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Grant Recipient Signature