

Washington County, Maryland Hotel Rental Tax Funding



Program Guidelines and Instructions

Purpose:

Hotel Rental Tax Funding exists to stimulate and assist Washington County, Maryland organizations, agencies and businesses in developing tourism attractions, enhancing economic development and supporting cultural and recreational projects in Washington County. The objective is to help organizations and agencies undertake activities that would not be considered without special funding. Hotel Rental Tax Funding is designed to assist in establishing activities and events which because of their own merit, can eventually grow and succeed without financial assistance from this funding.

Washington County Hotel Rental Tax Funding was established to provide funding opportunities for the County's local municipalities, business, organizations, residents and visitors. The County generates funds from a County Hotel Rental Tax of 6%. These funds are invested back into the community through the Convention and Visitors Bureau, local municipalities and designated local projects.

Funding Goals:

The County is interested in funding organizations that demonstrate they have planned their projects with respect to the community's overall needs. Grant applications should keep in mind that priority is given to projects that qualify under Maryland Code, Article 24, 9-318 and that:

1. Generate overnight stays in the County
2. Encourage support of County business, restaurants and attractions
3. Reach a broad segment of the community
4. Seek multiple sources of support rather than rely on County Hotel Rental Tax Funding as the single funding source
5. Yields benefits to the community for the resources invested
6. Promotes cooperation among event organizers to reduce costs
7. Enhances or improves the community

Ineligible Requests:

Hotel Rental Tax Funding cannot fund every request which is made; its resources are directed to those areas where public support will have the greatest impact. In general, the following requests will not be considered for funding:

1. Individuals
2. Normal and routine operating and administrative expenses of an organization
3. Organizations that support political candidates or organizations whose primary purpose is to influence or attempt to initiate legislation
4. For-profit ventures
5. Endowments
6. Organizations with budget deficits prior to the application

Application Process:

Requests can be made throughout the fiscal year and are contingent on available funding. The application can be accessed from the County's internet site (department list) under the Office of Grant Management, submitted by email or printed and mailed in. All applications will be received by the Office of Grant Management (OGM). Upon receipt the OGM will:

1. Determine if the applicant is qualified to receive funding
2. Determine if the event or project is qualified to receive funding
3. Determine if the request meets the funding goals of the County Commissioners and the purpose of the Hotel Rental Tax Funding
4. For requests of \$25,000 and below, approve or deny the request with the concurrence of the County Administrator
5. For requests of more than \$25,000, process the application and forward the application to the County Administrator for review; upon a favorable review the County Commissioners will hear the request and may take action upon the request at his/her discretion
6. Notify the applicant in writing as to the approval or denial of their request

Grant Classification:

Develop Tourism Attraction:	Advertising, publicizing or distribution information for the purpose of developing tourism attractions, which may include attracting and welcoming tourists; conducting strategic planning and research necessary to stimulate future tourism development; marketing special events and festivals designed to attract tourists; support of tourism related facilities; conference center, convention or visitor information center.
Economic Development:	Projects that enhance the vitality of the economy of Washington County by retaining and creating job Opportunities, retaining business, or assisting in the expansion in local companies.
Cultural:	Projects of a nature which relate to the culture or history of the County and provide benefit to the local residents and/or draws visitors to the County.
Recreational:	Projects that promote recreational activities or events within the County and promote tourism and lodging within the County or otherwise confer a benefit on the residents of the County.

Grant Approval Limits:

Grant applications requesting \$25,000 or less will be reviewed and approved by the OGM with the concurrence of the County Administrator. Grant applications requesting more than \$25,000 will be reviewed by the OGM and County Administrator, with final approval being made by the Board of County Commissioners.

Distribution of Funds:

Grants are paid to the applicant, not to vendors for products or services. Any changes exceeding 10% of approved line items must have approval by the OGM. Unused funds shall be returned to the County within 30 days of the project's completion.

Required Grant Reporting:

All organizations receiving grant funding will be required to complete a Hotel Rental Tax Grant Report and submit it with supporting documentation (budget itemizations and/or receipts). The purpose of this form is to collect data for necessary reporting requirements, evaluate the event or project and ensure accountability of the use of public funds. This report shall be submitted by the recipient to the OGM within 60 days of the completion of the event or project. Should an organization be unable to provide this report within the allotted time period, the organization shall notify the OGM of the deficiency along with a report submittal date.

For more information, please contact:

Washington County Office of Grant Management
100 West Washington Street
Suite 1601
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740
240-313-2040