



# **Grant Guidelines**

## **Mississippi Heritage, History and Culture Tourism Fund**

### **Mississippi Development Authority/Tourism Division**

#### **Overview/Description**

The Mississippi Heritage, History and Culture Tourism Fund is a grant program created within the State Treasury and is maintained by the State Treasurer as a separate or special fund (separate from the State General Fund). Monies deposited into the fund will be expended by the Division of Tourism Development of the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA). Total available funds for this program are \$700,000. Each applicant entity may apply for up to \$50,000 in matching funds.

MDA will encourage and support culture, history and heritage projects that enhance and support tourism promotion in cities and towns and counties throughout the state. Projects should leverage or attract match funds from other sources. MDA will support projects that build on Mississippi's unique assets and values, and expand the cultural, historical and heritage offerings in the state to attract visitors.

The application materials contain instructions and guidelines for preparing a complete application. Applications are received, reviewed and scored by MDA. For additional information, view the website: [http://www.visitmississippi.org/resources/tourism\\_partners.asp](http://www.visitmississippi.org/resources/tourism_partners.asp) or contact Carla Moor, Bureau Manager at (601) 359-3297 or via e-mail at [cmoor@mississippi.org](mailto:cmoor@mississippi.org)

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the fund is to support programs and projects which address Mississippi's heritage, history, culture, literature and arts, including the positive recovery of the state following damages caused by natural disasters. This program is designed to encourage the development and promotion of Mississippi's culture and heritage product.

The National Trust's definition of cultural heritage tourism is "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources."

Monies are to be used to match federal and/or other funds that may be accessed for the purpose of promoting tourism in the state.

These funds are intended to help support regional tourism offices and local tourism offices in obtaining federal/or other grants for projects. This will be an important aspect when rating applications. Regional tourism initiatives that can provide at least a 1-to-1 match will be considered. In such a case grant funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis.

## **Project Eligibility**

Applications submitted must demonstrate a clearly defined overall goal, objectives and a future tourism marketing and promotion plan.

*The two primary uses of this Fund are:*

- A) Marketing and Promotion to support Mississippi Heritage, History and Culture Tourism projects and/or
- B) Permanent product enhancement (bricks and mortar components will not be accepted)

Examples could include, but are not limited to the following items:

- Purchasing of key components for exhibit
- Redesign of exhibit space
- Theater components
- Video/CD-Rom/DVD, Film production
- Display or Product enhancement
- New exhibit or renovation of exhibit, including signage/interpretive panels and audio/visual components

## **Eligible Applicant**

Funds are available to established statewide Regional Tourism Organizations and local Tourism offices. Any of these entities may co-apply. Applicant must not be a College, University or State Agency. Non-profit tourism related entities may apply for funds through partnership with a statewide Regional Tourism Organization or local Tourism office.

***All applicants must be in good standing with the MS Development Authority (MDA). Any prior projects funded through MDA should have submitted a complete and satisfactory final report no later than 60 business days from the approved completion date. Failure to comply with this provision may result in the rejection of funding on future projects.***

## **Local Support**

Evidence of broad-based community support for a project, both philosophical and financial, is needed to fulfill this requirement. Mississippi Heritage, History and Culture Fund funding may not constitute more than 50% of total project costs. Local match must be in the form of cash financial contributions. A minimum 20% match commitment must be made by the applicant.

## **Demonstrated Need**

A need for Mississippi Heritage, History and Culture Tourism funding must exist after other financial resources have been identified for the proposed project. This program is designed to provide financial support for activities after all other sources of assistance have been exhausted.

*Eligible opportunities include:*

- Media Placement and Production (Print, Online, Outdoor, Broadcast, and Radio)
- Printed Materials
- Video/CD-Rom/DVD production
- Public Relations/Media Communications
- Strategic Planning and Research
- Product Development
- Website Development
- Display or Product enhancement (bricks and mortar components will not be accepted)
- New exhibit or renovation of exhibit, including signage/interpretive panels and audio/visual components

*Non-eligible costs include:*

- Agency commissions, consulting and other fees
- Office supplies
- Items for resale
- Lobbying
- Educational conferences, advocacy program and membership dues
- Travel expenses, including accommodations and non-public relations or marketing related transportation (Travel to and from meetings will not be reimbursed)
- Equipment purchases or rentals
- Operational costs such as employee salaries, rent, utilities or other Administrative costs
- Infrastructure
- Construction of facilities or modification/cosmetic enhancements to eligible structures
- Expenses incurred before the date of the award letter

## **Program Requirements**

*The project must have a significant impact on promoting Heritage, History and Culture tourism and tourism related activities.*

- Proof that the project has been sufficiently planned and designed to a stage where work may begin must be supplied.
- Proof that the funds from private, local government, and/or federal sources have been irrevocably dedicated to the project in an amount that is not less than twenty percent. Matching funds must be in the form of cash contribution.
- Cash expenditures may be used to match federal and/or other funds.
- Applicants must identify all collaborative partners and supply evidence of support and level of participation in the application.
- A Plan of Work must be submitted and include a budget for marketing the project.
- Records to be maintained.
- Grant funds may not be used to match other funds, federal or state, provided through the Mississippi Development Authority.
- Other state funds may not be used as local match.

*All applicants will be reviewed and assessed with a composite score totaling 100 percent. Scores will be based upon the following criteria:*

**Applicants must also provide the following information:**

**A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND PARTNERSHIPS (25%):**

- What do you want to accomplish?
- What are the goals for your program?
- Who are your partners and what is their role and financial commitment?

**B. HISTORY AND CULTURE (15%):**

- Does the project(s) convey the history of the community or site to the resident and the visitor?
- Will the project(s) promote and enhance the visitor experience to a community, making accessible the interpretation and documentation that your community has carefully researched?
- Will your project(s) involve partnering of communities or regional entities to cross promote and encourage regional heritage tourism?
- Describe how the proposed project will enhance long-term heritage tourism in the community and help preserve their historic resources and cultural assets?
- Describe how the project meets the goals of the local or statewide preservation plan, heritage tourism plan, or other plans that address heritage tourism and cultural resources.
- How will this project ensure continued economic viability and preservation?
- How will your project promote and preserve the community's cultural resources?
- How will this project involve public-private partnerships and serve as models to communities nationwide for heritage tourism, education, and economic development?

**C. PLAN OF WORK (25%):**

***Target Audience and Market Research***

- Who is your target market and audience?
- Why did you choose this market?
- What research supports your interest in this market?

***Marketing Message and Program***

- What is your message that will cut through the clutter and encourage action?
- What resources do you have and need to reach the target market?
- What is your marketing plan to reach the target market?
- Is the marketing plan detailed, with specific time lines?
- Does the program support statewide Heritage, Cultural and History initiatives?

**D. GOALS AND EXPECTED RESULTS (25%):**

**Effectiveness of Program**

- Have you clearly listed your objectives, desired outcomes, and demonstrated how you will effectively make a positive economic impact?
- Have you clearly stated your targets and established realistic baseline numbers for new programs?
- How will you know if you have reached your target audience?
- What reporting mechanisms are in place to provide MDA/Tourism with the effectiveness and success of the project?
- How will you report the effectiveness of your program to the MDA/Tourism Division?
- Is there a sustainability plan to continue the program after the requested funding cycle?
- Is there a plan for implementing the program if requested funding is not fully awarded?

**E. BUDGET (10%):**

**The following items must be presented for consideration:**

- Total Project Budget
- Advertising/Promotion Budget
- Local Funds Provided
- All Other Funding Sources (detailed list of Other Funding Sources is required and must be documented in application)

**Funding Availability**

There will be a maximum grant request of \$50,000 per entity. MDA reserves the right to adjust the amount of the request. This adjustment will be based on verification of reasonable cost, need, and availability of Mississippi Heritage, History and Culture Tourism Funds.

**PROGRAM GUIDELINE AMENDMENTS AND WAIVERS**

These guidelines may be amended by MDA at anytime. MDA, in its discretion, may temporarily waive any requirement of these guidelines to the extent that the result of such waiver is to promote the public purpose of the Act and is not prohibited by State laws.

**Grant Procedures**

1. Complete the Program Application. A blank form can be received by contacting:

Mississippi Development Authority/Tourism Division  
Mississippi Heritage, History and Culture Tourism Fund  
Post Office Box 849  
Jackson, MS 39205  
(601) 359-3297

Grant guidelines are also located online at: [mississippi.org](http://mississippi.org) or [VisitMississippi.org](http://VisitMississippi.org).

2. Submit the completed form to:

Mississippi Development Authority  
Attn: Mississippi Heritage, History and Culture Fund  
Tourism Division  
Post Office Box 849  
Jackson, MS 39205

The deadline for receiving applications is November 15, 2010. Applications may be received prior to the November 15 deadline. Notification will be made no later than December 15, 2010.

The Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Division will solicit proposals and application through a process that provides for goal-setting based on determination of the desired results, setting indicators of success, and prioritizing spending based on the desired results. The applications will be rated based on the best return on investment in meeting three strategies:

- 1) market the Mississippi areas and communities as tourism destinations – both nationally and internationally;
- 2) highlight Mississippi's festivals and events that promote Mississippi's heritage, history and her cultural assets unique to the applicant areas; and
- 3) market to conventions, travel trade and other related markets in the applicant areas.

MDA will rate all applications and assign points to each rating criterion based on the data provided in the application. Funding decisions are based on the scores attained; applicants with the highest score will be funded until funds are exhausted.

- 1) Applications will be scored by a four member committee of two tourism industry representatives and two MDA staff persons. Final approval of grants is made by the MDA Executive Director.
- 2) If the application is approved, a letter of award will be sent to the applicant.
- 3) Please note that all grant recipients must request funds one year from the date of award notification. Distribution of funds will occur only with official documentation of federal or other awarded matching funds. Any amendments or extension requests must be submitted in writing to the MDA/ Tourism Director prior to any fund distribution from this agency.
- 4) Within 60-days of the completion of the funded event/project, a Project Clearance Report must be received. A blank form may be obtained through the contact listed in item No. 1 above.
- 5) Each applicant will be judged objectively and solely on the merits of the project. Decisions rendered by MDA are final and not appealable to the State Tourism Director.