

**Small Grant Program**

**Purpose**The Mitchell County Chamber Tourism Committee accomplishes its mission of generating and enhancing tourism opportunities in a variety of ways. While direct marketing and promotion of Mitchell County is our primary tactic, there are other initiatives, such as the small grant program, that play an important role as well. The goal of this program is to maximize the impact of the Mitchell County Chamber Tourism funds by supporting efforts by local individuals and organizations to create events/initiatives that positively affect the local tourism economy.

**Eligibility**

* Applications will be accepted from non-profit and for-profit organizations that reside in Mitchell County.
* The primary benefit of the event/initiative must be to Mitchell County.

**Grant Criteria**

The following criteria will be used as a basis for evaluating and awarding grants:

* The extent to which the event/initiative will result in an increase in the number of visitors to Mitchell County, with overnight visitors as a first priority and day visitors as a second.
* The extent to which the event/initiative results in increased visitor impact during off-peak times with highest priority given to the time of the year with the lowest visitation rate.
	+ Slow Season: December through March
	+ Should Season: April/May (until Memorial) September (after Labor) and November
	+ Peak Season: Memorial Day Weekend thru Labor Day Weekend, plus October
* The extent to which the event/initiative enhances the experiences of visitors, resulting in return visitors and new visitors through word-of-mouth
* The extent to which the event/initiative matches the Mitchell County Tourism mission and Mitchell County’s local brand.
* The extent to which the event/initiative provides a level of sustainability.
* Preference is given to grant requests that support new or substantially changed events/initiatives.
* Preference is given to requests that include partners.
* Preference is placed on project expenditure needs that are directly attributable to marketing and promotion.
* Preference is given to requests that include marketing and promotion outside Mitchell County.

**Eligibility and Other Requirements**

* Applications will be accepted from non-profit and for-profit organizations.
* Only one request per event/initiative may be made each calendar year. Applications not selected may reapply the following years. Successful applicants must wait three years to reapply with preference given when dollars are attributed to change/improvements.
* An organization or agency may apply for more than one grant within the calendar year as long as each grant application is for different events/initiatives.
* A minimum of 20% of the event/initiative costs must be provided from other funding sources (i.e. the applicant and/or other partners). In kind donations do not apply.
* Grant funds must be used within one year of the award date.
* Appropriate recognition of Mitchell County Chamber Tourism Committee support must be included in all promotional communications.

**Funding**

Grant requests may be made for up to a maximum of $1750. The Mitchell County Chamber Tourism Committee may award an amount less than is requested. Once a grant is awarded, funds may be requested by contacting the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce office for a brief review, which will cover the following:

* Is the event/initiative planning substantially underway?
* Has the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee been included in all appropriate promotion associated with the event/initiative?
* Confirmation of contact information for check dispersal.

**Partnership Credit**

The Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee must receive appropriate partnership credit on ads, promotional material and press releases. The Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce will provide digital logo(s) and must be referred to as Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee if there are space restrictions. A proof must be provided of any and all of the above-mentioned items prior to creation or printing to ensure that placement, size, etc. is appropriate and to make sure that the background does not render the logo illegible.

**After-Action Report**

By submitting this application you are agreeing to submit an after-action report within 60 days of the conclusion of your event/initiative. Failure to provide the after-action report will disqualify the applicant from future grant considerations.

**Application Deadline**

Grants are reviewed quarterly by the Mitchell County Chamber Tourism Committee. Note the below deadline and notification schedule. **Applications must be submitted well in advance of any marketing and promotion associated with your event/initiative to ensure appropriate partnership credit is provided.** Additionally, it is recommended that you submit an application in advance of the deadline in case there are any questions or additional information is needed before it is presented to the Tourism Committee. Applicants have up to one year to complete the event/ initiative and/or request awarded funds. One grant will be awarded per grant cycle.

Application Deadline Award Notification Grant Use Period

December 31 January 31 One Year from Notification

March 31 April 30 One Year from Notification

June 30 July 31 One Year from Notification

September 30 October 31 One Year from Notification

To be considered by grant funding, a completed application must be provided to Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce c/o Tourism Committee, PO Box 858, Spruce Pine, NC 28777 or digitally to pjensen@mitchellcountychamber.org. Any questions about the Small Grant Program should be directed to Patti Jensen at 828-765-9033 or by email.