



GRAYS HARBOR
TOURISM
GRANT
WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

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ABOUT THE GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM HISTORY AND IMPACT

PURPOSE AND FUNDING OVERVIEW

PROGRAM HISTORY

- 2010 & Prior
 - \$100,000 divided equally among 5 county regions
- 2011:
 - Tourism Advisory Board restructured into Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC)
 - Introduced official application and review process with clear evaluation criteria
- Today:
 - 4 funding categories supporting tourism-related projects
 - \$600,000 in annual awards to strengthen and grow Grays Harbor's tourism industry

2024/25 IMPACT

- Over \$1 Million awarded
- 87 Applications
- 60 Projects Funded
 - 9 Destination Marketing Projects
 - 29 Festivals & Events
 - 12 Hospitality & Special Projects
 - 10 Major Tourism Projects

PURPOSE

Provide funding assistance to qualifying entities for:

- Tourism-related events and activities
- Operation of tourism-generating facilities
- Projects that enhance or support visitor experiences
- Promotion of tourism assets within Grays Harbor County's lodging tax area

FUNDING OVERVIEW

- Funded through the 3% Lodging Tax revenue, allocated annually by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
- \$600,000 awarded across four grant categories
- Applications reviewed and funding recommendations made by the Grays Harbor Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (GHLTAC)
- Funds distributed on a reimbursement basis after BOCC approval

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THE FOUR GRANT CATEGORIES

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

HOSPITALITY & SPECIAL PROJECT

MAJOR TOURISM PROJECT

DESTINATION MARKETING PROJECT

	Festival and Event Grants	Tourism Hospitality & Special Project Grants	Major Tourism Project Grants	Destination Marketing Project Grants
Eligible Applicants	Tax Exempt/Non-Profit Entities; 501(c)3 and (c)6 organizations; City, County, or other government agencies (excluding those who collect their own 3% Lodging Taxes); Tourism related facilities and operations of Grays Harbor County		Entities and businesses with a qualifying and current Tax ID Number. City, County, or other government agencies (excluding those who collect their own 3% Lodging Taxes)	
Eligible Projects	Festivals and events with less than 5 days of activity that bring in attendees from 50+ miles	Hospitality needs that attract, accommodate, or support tourist activity such as signage, maps, infrastructure or services	Events or activities that attract visitors and operate 5 or more days in a calendar year	Marketing projects that promote Grays Harbor County as a tourist destination
Eligible Expenditures	Multi Media (print, digital, TV, radio, etc.); Design & printing of posters; Flyers and brochures; Online advertising; Elements specific to the event viewed as attractants (such as educational speakers, entertainment, etc.); Permanent signage; Salaries, wages and benefits directly tied to the project or services specified within the grant request, only as allowed by applicable statutes and RCWs governing the use of Lodging Tax funds	Multi Media (print, digital, maps, TV, radio, etc.), Design and printing of posters, flyers, brochures; Online Advertising; Elements Specific to Tourism Hospitality services or projects used to attract, accommodate or support potential tourists; Qualifying projects necessary to accommodate the public health and safety needs of potential tourists; Permanent signage related to tourist attractions; Salaries, wages, and benefits directly tied to the project or services, only as allowed by statutes and RCWs governing the use of Lodging Tax Funds	Multi Media (print, digital, TV, radio, etc.); Design & print of posters, flyers, brochures, etc; Online advertising; Elements specific to events/activities aimed at attracting potential tourists (entertainers, educational speakers, etc.); Elements specific to an event that support infrastructure, or operation of the activity, and accommodate the public health & safety needs of tourists; Permanent signage directly related to the tourist attracting event/activity; Salaries, wages, and benefits directly tied to the project or services, only as allowed by statutes and RCWs governing the use of Lodging Tax Funds	Qualifying costs of any marketing project or venture that either promote the tourism assets in Grays Harbor County to potential visitors residing outside a distance of 50 miles, produce overnight stays, and/or create tourism related commerce. Salaries, wages, and benefits directly tied to the project or services, may only be funded as allowed by statutes and RCWs governing the use of Lodging Tax Funds
Ineligible Expenditures	General administrative costs such as salaries, wages & benefits (not directly related to the event/project); Capital and general organizational operating costs not directly related to the event/project; Items for resale; Advertising that cannot be proven to reach significant and relevant markets outside of 50 miles from the festival/event/project location			
Total Available Funding in Program	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Maximum Individual Project Award	\$7,500	\$20,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Evaluation Criteria	Complete application that includes current state or federal, qualifying Tax ID Number; Application received by deadline; Generates overnight stays and other commerce from visitors residing outside of Grays Harbor County; Draws a significant number of visitors from 50+ miles outside of Grays Harbor County; Provides a detailed breakdown of effective advertising/marketing campaign; Leverages other funding sources; Service or project must be covered by insurance; Project will have overall, economic and socially redeeming benefit to the community; Project provides measurable outcome performance indicators			
Application Submission Timeline	October 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025 - Applications must be received or post-marked by 5:00pm, October 31st and may <u>not</u> be faxed or sent by email.			
LTAC Review & Funding Approval Timeline	The Grays Harbor County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee application review and applicant presentation meeting will take place November 19, 2025 . Recommendations for funding approval will go before the County Commissioners in mid-December. Funding award notifications will take place prior to the end of December 2025 .			

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Eligible expenses vary slightly within each grant category. See Information Matrix or Individual Applications for more information.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Certain costs cannot be funded under this program (per RCWs and LTAC criteria):

- General administrative expenses (salaries, wages, benefits not tied to the project)
- Capital or organizational operating costs unrelated to the event/project
- Items purchased for resale
- Advertising that cannot be proven to reach audiences at least 50+ miles outside the event location

APPLICATION PROCESS

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

TIMELINE & DEADLINES

REVIEW CRITERIA

TIPS & TRICKS

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

Applicant qualifying criteria differ between the four grant categories. Qualifying applicants for each are as follows:

Festival and Event/Hospitality and Special Project:

- Tax Exempt/Non-Profit Entities
- 501(c)3 and (c)6 organizations
- City, County, or other government agencies (excluding those who collect their own 3% Lodging Taxes)
- Tourism related facilities and operations of Grays Harbor County

Destination Marketing Project/Major Tourism Project:

- Entities and businesses with a qualifying and current Tax ID Number
- City, County, or other government agencies (excluding those who collect their own 3% Lodging Taxes).

TIMELINE & DEADLINE

Grant Application Process Opens: October 1, 2025

Grant Application Process Closes: October 31, 2025 at 5:00PM

Application Submittal Options:

- Mail Applications to:

PO BOX 1229

Elma, WA 98541

- Deliver In-Person to:

32 Elma-McCleary Rd

Elma, WA 98541

(Upstairs in the Fairgrounds Pavilion Building)

- **Applications must be received or post-marked by Friday, October 31st, at 5:00PM**

- **Faxed or emailed applications will not be accepted.**

REVIEW CRITERIA

May include but is not limited to:

- Complete application with a current Tax ID number
- Submitted by the stated deadline
- Demonstrates ability to attract visitors from outside Grays Harbor County
- Targets audiences 50+ miles from the event or project location
- Provides a detailed advertising and marketing plan
- Leverages additional funding sources
- Partnering entity covered by insurance
- Offers economic and community benefits
- Includes measurable performance outcomes

TIPS & TRICKS

- Use resources on our website
 - FAQ, Fillable PDF, Information Matrix
- Include supplemental materials if they strengthen your application
 - Attachments, Additional Pages, etc.
- Review the Application Checklist
- Read all instructions carefully
- Answer every question
 - Write “N/A” instead of leaving blanks
- Double-check your contact information
- Optional: 5-minute presentation for GHLTAC questions
 - November 19, 2025

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Q&A AND DISCUSSION

ANY QUESTIONS?

NEXT STEPS & CONTACT INFO

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