



Tourism Grant Policies & Guidelines

Tourism Grant Policies & Guidelines

It is the mission of Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism 1) to enhance and promote a positive image of the communities in Cheyenne County, Nebraska 2) to assist in the development and promotion of quality events, attractions, and amenities for the enjoyment of visitors 3) to help ensure that the highest standards of customer service are practiced in our local establishments.

Cheyenne County Tourism Grants are solely funded through lodging tax revenues collected within Cheyenne County. The program provides financial support to nonprofit organizations and municipalities for events, facilities, and projects that promote tourism, attract visitors, and enhance the county's visitor experience.

The funds available through this program must be used exclusively to promote, encourage, and attract visitors to Cheyenne County, as set forth in Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §81-3724. The Cheyenne County Visitors Committee is responsible for reviewing grant applications and advising the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners in accordance with these statutes.

Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism offers four distinct grant programs:

- **Event Promotion** – Supports marketing efforts to promote, encourage, and attract visitors to come to Cheyenne County.
- **Sporting Event** – Supports multi-day sporting events in Cheyenne County that attract out-of-town visitors and generate overnight stays in local lodging facilities.
- **Facility Improvement** – Supports projects that create new attractions or improve existing facilities, with a focus on attracting visitors and providing enriching experiences.
- **Facility Promotion** – Supports Cheyenne County facilities and attractions in creating or updating marketing materials to increase visitor awareness and engagement.

Grants are reviewed quarterly at Cheyenne County Visitors Committee meetings in January, April, July, and October. Funds are reimbursed upon project completion and document submission. The reimbursement process includes document verification and approval.

The Cheyenne County Tourism Director is the Grant Administrator for all stages of the grant process. Contact the Tourism Director at Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism for all grant-related matters.

Applicant Eligibility

To qualify for a grant, an applicant must:

- Be a nonprofit organization or municipality
Note: proof of nonprofit status required
- Use the grant funds for events, facilities, or projects that promote tourism and attract visitors to Cheyenne County.

Ineligible applicants include:

- For-profit businesses, individuals, and organizations that do not serve a tourism-related purpose.
- Events, facilities, or projects that do not align with Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §81-3724.

Exclusions

Grant funds must not be used for:

- General operating costs, salaries, or expenses that violate the Nebraska Visitors Development Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §81-3724, as amended).
- Expenses incurred before the Grant Agreement is signed.

***Grants are discretionary and subject to approval by the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners based on available funds and tourism impact.**

Application Deadlines

Applications are reviewed quarterly at Cheyenne County Visitors Committee meetings held in: January, April, July, and October. **The deadline for applications will be no later than the first day of the month in the quarter prior to which the event occurs.**

Deadlines for application submission:

- **January 1** – For projects or events in April, May, June
- **April 1** – For projects or events in July, August, September
- **July 1** – For projects or events in October, November, December
- **October 1** – For projects or events in January, February, March

Grant Stages

1. **Application** – Complete online grant application - www.VisitSidneyNE.com/Grants
2. **Committee Review** – The Visitors Committee reviews applications and determines recommendations for Commissioners approval.
3. **Commissioner Approval** – The Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners reviews recommendations and approves the Grant Agreement.
4. **Grant Agreement Signature** – See Page 4 for more details.
5. **Reimbursement Report** – See Page 5 and review specific grant guidelines.

Application

Grant applications can be found online at www.VisitSidneyNE.com/Grants.

Documents needed for application:

- ☐ Completed [W-9 Form](#)
- ☐ Completed Budget Worksheet
- ☐ Quotes for each item included in Budget
- ☐ Review Application Budget Requirements for each specific grant – See Pages 6-13

If you have questions before you begin, please contact Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism office at 308-254-4030 or email Director@VisitSidneyNE.com.

Presentation

Presentations are encouraged but not required. Applicants are invited to present grant request to the Visitors Committee to provide additional context and answer potential questions.

- Applicants may request a video conferencing link to attend remotely.
Note: Requests for virtual presentations must be made at least one week in advance of the meeting.
- Digital presentation materials must be uploaded with application.
- Presentations will be limited to 10 minutes per application.
Note: Applicants are encouraged to present for 5-7 minutes to allow additional time for questions.
- Applicant will be notified of presentation time slot the Friday before the Visitors Committee meeting.

Visitors Committee Review & Recommendation

The Visitors Committee will evaluate each grant application and determine funding recommendation. Applicant will be notified in writing via email of the Visitors Committee's grant recommendation within five business days of the Visitors Committee meeting.

Based on the Visitors Committee's recommendations, the Grant Administrator will develop a proposed Grant Agreement to present to the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners.

Grant Agreement

Approved grant recipients will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement with Cheyenne County.

- A link to the Grant Agreement will be sent via email.
- Applicant is required to electronically sign the agreement within thirty days of receipt.
Note: The Grant Agreement requires the signature of an authorized representative with legal authority to bind the applicant (organization or municipality). Verification of this authority may be requested. Acceptable signatories include Executive Director, Board Chair, CFO (nonprofits), or Mayor, City Manager, Designated Official (municipalities).
- No expenditures against grant funds can be made until the agreement is fully executed.

The Grant Agreement will specify:

- Approved use of funds and restrictions.
- Marketing and crediting requirements (sponsorship acknowledgment).
- Final reporting and reimbursement requirements, including proof of expenditures and event impact.
- The timeline for submitting final reports and reimbursement requests.
Note: Failure to comply with the terms may result in delayed or denied reimbursement and may impact future grant eligibility.

Crediting Requirements

Grantees must acknowledge the support of Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism in materials, promotions, and physical improvements funded.

Specific crediting requirements vary based on grant type and must be followed as listed in the Grant Agreement.

General Credit Guidelines:

- **Text acknowledgment:** The following statement must be included in promotional materials, if applicable: “Funded (or partially funded) by Cheyenne County Tourism”.
- **Logo usage:** The official Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism logo must be included in digital and print materials where practical.
- **Physical recognition:** Event Promotion and Sporting Event grant recipients must display a Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism banner in a visible location during event. Facility Improvement grant recipients may be required to install permanent acknowledgment signage.

Direct Payment Requirement

All reimbursable expenses must be directly incurred and paid by the grantee. Third-party or pass-through expenses (paid by another organization or individual and later transferred to the Grantee) are not eligible for reimbursement.

Exception: For platforms that require payment via a personal credit card (e.g., Facebook or Google Ads), the expense may be paid by an individual only if the individual is directly affiliated with the grantee organization and the organization reimburses them via check. In such cases, the following documentation is required:

- Receipt from the advertising platform showing the paid amount
- Proof of reimbursement from the Grantee to the individual (e.g., a copy of the reimbursement check or accounting record)
- A statement identifying the individual’s role within the Grantee’s organization

Reimbursement Report

Grant recipients must submit a Reimbursement Report in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

The following documentation is required:

- **Proof of Expenses** – Copies of paid invoices or receipts and proof of payment.
Note: Proof of payment may be copies of canceled checks, credit card receipts, or copies of bank statements with confidential information redacted.
Cash or cash payment apps will not be accepted.
- **Proof of Match** (if applicable) - Copies of paid invoices or receipts and proof of payment.
- **Project Summary** – A brief summary of how the funds were used and how the project impacted tourism in Cheyenne County.
- **Proof of Crediting Requirements** – Documentation verifying compliance (copies of advertisements, photos of banners or signage, press releases, website updates).
- **Attendance & Visitor Data** (if applicable) – Provide verifiable attendance data to measure tourism impact. Applicant must describe attendance tracking method:
 - Ticket sales or registration numbers (for paid or pre-registered events).
 - Gate or entry counts (using wristbands, clicker counters, or check-in lists).
 - Zip code collection reports (via surveys, raffle entries, or mobile tracking tools).
 - Lodging impact data, including hotel room blocks, partnerships with local accommodations, or visitor surveys.

The due date for the reimbursement report will be included in the Grant Agreement. The report must be complete and include all required documents. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism office at 308-254-4030 or email Director@VisitSidneyNE.com.

Reimbursement Process

Funds are reimbursed upon project completion and document submission. The reimbursement process includes document verification and approval.

- Final reimbursement reports will be reviewed and approved by the Grant Administrator.
Note: All expenses submitted for reimbursement must align with the approved budget as outlined in the Grant Agreement. Any deviations or new expenses must be pre-approved in writing by the Grant Administrator before they are incurred. Expenses submitted without prior approval may be denied.
- Once approved, the Grant Administrator will submit a claim to the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners for payment.

Only one reimbursement will be issued per grant. Multiple partial reimbursements are not permitted.

Note: Expenses, including both grant-funded and matching funds, must be paid in full before submitting the Reimbursement Report.

Failure to Submit Required Documentation: If Grantee fails to submit proper documentation, the reimbursement may be denied or delayed.



Event Promotion Grant Guidelines - Page 1

The Event Promotion Grant supports marketing efforts to promote, encourage, and attract visitors to come to Cheyenne County. Applicants should prioritize marketing efforts outside a 50-mile radius to attract overnight visitors. Local advertising is eligible, but applicants are strongly encouraged to allocate at least half of the advertising budget to marketing initiatives targeting individuals residing outside a 50-mile radius. This approach increases the event's potential to attract overnight visitors and boost tourism impact.

The Event Promotion Grant requires a 25% cash match of eligible promotion expenses. If the total approved promotion budget is \$4,000, Applicant must provide \$1,000 from organization's funds. The matching funds must be used for eligible promotion expenses. Documentation of 25% cash match will be required as part of the reimbursement process.

Applicant must play a direct and measurable role in the planning, organization, and execution of the event. Expenses must be directly incurred by the Applicant to be eligible for reimbursement. Sponsorship payments to another entity are not eligible. If Applicant is working with a partner, the application must detail the responsibilities of each partner.

The Event Promotion Grant is intended to build the capacity of events, with a focus on achieving sustainable growth beyond the grant period.

Examples of expenses that are eligible for Event Promotion Grant include:

- Radio, TV, Newspaper advertising
- Brochure, flyer, poster printing
- Website updates or new website creation
- Social media marketing campaigns
- Branded promotional items used for event promotion (giveaways for attendees)
Note: Items must display the Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism logo. Items must be distributed free of charge and cannot be resold. This type of expense must not exceed more than 10% of the total grant request.
- Professional photography/videography
Note: Applicant must permit Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism full access and authorization to use all images and videos produced through these services for promotional purposes. This includes the right to reproduce, distribute, and display the content in any media.

Examples of expenses that are NOT eligible for Event Promotion Grant include:

- Operating costs such as entertainment, social media influencer services, utilities, mileage, rent, prizes, wages
- Gift cards, t-shirts, merchandise, or other items for sale.
- Sponsorship payments, charitable contributions, or donations to other entities
- Expenses that would violate Nebraska Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through 81-3724



Event Promotion Grant Guidelines - Page 2

Application Budget Requirements

- Complete [budget template](#) provided.
- Include quote(s) for each item listed on the budget sheet.
- Provide media coverage maps for radio, television, and print advertising.
- Provide detailed information on targeting methods, including geographic targeting for social media and internet advertising.

Reimbursement Requirements

- **General Requirements:** Refer to pages 1-5 for standard reimbursement guidelines.
- **Expense Documentation:** Provide proof of approved expenses as outlined in Grant Agreement.
- **Matching Funds:** Submit documentation of matching fund expenditures.
- **Crediting Requirements:** Show proof of required sponsor recognition as specified in the Grant Agreement.
- **Digital Advertising** (if applicable): Provide evidence of social media and internet ad campaigns, including:
 - Screenshots of ads
 - Analytics reports detailing impressions, reach, engagements, cost metrics, demographics, and audience insights
- **Attendance & Visitor Data:** Provide the following evidence of event execution:
 - Attendance figures, ticket sales, or participation numbers

Reporting Deadlines

- Final reports and required reimbursement documents must be submitted within sixty days from event conclusion. The exact due date will be specified in the Grant Agreement.
 - If Grantee is unable to submit the required documentation by the due date, the Grantee must submit a written request for an extension to the Grant Administrator before the sixty-day deadline.

Note: Extensions may be granted for up to thirty additional days at the discretion of the Grant Administrator.
 - If Grantee does not submit a final report with required documentation by the due date or request an extension in writing prior to the deadline, the grant will be forfeited, with no reimbursement. Failure to comply may impact future grant eligibility.
- In the event of cancellation, Grantee must notify Grant Administrator immediately.



Sporting Event Grant Guidelines - Page 1

The Sporting Event Grant supports multi-day sporting events in Cheyenne County that attract out-of-town visitors and generate overnight stays in local lodging facilities. Examples include regional tournaments, multi-day competitions, and multi-day rodeos. Preference will be given to Applicants that actively promote an event to visitors and demonstrate growth potential.

The Sporting Event Grant is intended to build the capacity of sporting events, with a focus on achieving sustainable growth and increased visitor impact beyond the grant period.

Examples of expenses that are eligible for Sporting Event Grant include:

- Officiation costs (referees, umpires, judges).
Note: Officiation costs are only eligible if officials are hired as independent contractors and not employees of the Applicant.
- Trophies and participation medals
- Promotion expenses
- Branded promotional items distributed to participants
Note: Items must display the Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism logo. Items must be distributed free of charge and cannot be resold.

Examples of expenses that are NOT eligible for Sporting Event Grant include:

- Cash payouts (prize money, appearance fees)
- Operating costs (utilities, rent, food, wages, insurance, fuel, mileage)
- Facility improvements (these may qualify for a Tourism Improvement Grant)
- Merchandise intended for resale or general fundraising
- Expenses that would violate Nebraska Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through 81-3724

Application Budget Requirements

- Complete [budget template](#) provided.
- Include quote(s) for each item listed on the budget sheet.
- Provide media coverage maps for radio, television, and print advertising.
- Provide detailed information on targeting methods, including geographic targeting for social media and internet advertising.

Reimbursement Requirements

- **General Requirements:** Refer to pages 1-5 for standard reimbursement guidelines.
- **Expense Documentation:** Provide proof of approved expenses as outlined in Grant Agreement.
- **Crediting Requirements:** Show proof of required sponsor recognition as specified in the Grant Agreement.

- **Digital Advertising** (if applicable): Provide evidence of social media and internet ad campaigns, including:
 - Screenshots of ads
 - Analytics reports detailing impressions, reach, engagements, cost metrics, demographics, and audience insights
- **Attendance & Visitor Data:** Provide the following evidence of event execution:
 - Attendance figures, ticket sales, or participation numbers

Reporting Deadlines

- Final reports and required reimbursement documents must be submitted within sixty days from event conclusion. The exact due date will be specified in the Grant Agreement.
 - If Grantee is unable to submit the required documentation by the due date, the Grantee must submit a written request for an extension to the Grant Administrator before the sixty-day deadline.

Note: Extensions may be granted for up to thirty additional days at the discretion of the Grant Administrator.
 - If Grantee does not submit a final report with required documentation by the due date or request an extension in writing prior to the deadline, the grant will be forfeited, with no reimbursement. Failure to comply may impact future grant eligibility.
- In the event of cancellation, Grantee must notify Grant Administrator immediately.



Facility Improvement Grant Guidelines - Page 1

The Facility Improvement Grant seeks to drive economic growth and enhance community vibrancy in Cheyenne County by investing in the development of high-quality visitor attractions. The program supports projects that create new attractions or improve existing facilities, with a focus on attracting visitors and providing enriching experiences. Eligible projects include facility expansions or improvements, new construction projects, and initiatives that directly enhance the visitor experience, improve accessibility, or incorporate visual enhancements such as signage and public art to make attractions more inviting within Cheyenne County.

The Facility Improvement Grant supports projects that enhance, expand, or improve visitor attractions in Cheyenne County with the goal of increasing visitation.

If the project is located on city, village, or county property, Applicant must submit the [Property Owner Acknowledgement Form](#) with signatures from the appropriate governing authority.

Examples of projects that are eligible for Facility Improvement Grant include:

- Expansion of existing visitor attractions
- New construction of visitor attractions
- Improvement of existing attractions (facility upgrades, accessibility improvements)
- On-premise signage to enhance visitor experience
- Directional signage to help travelers locate attractions

Examples of expenses that are NOT eligible for Facility Improvement Grant include:

- General repairs, maintenance, or upkeep of existing facilities (roof repairs, HVAC servicing, painting, or plumbing fixes)
- Operating costs (utilities, mileage, rent, wages, insurance, maintenance)
- Expenses incurred before the Grant Agreement is signed
- Projects that have not obtained required permits before starting work
- Projects not directly related to visitor attraction improvement
- Expenses that would violate Nebraska Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through 81-3724

Application Budget Requirements

- Complete [budget template](#) provided.
- Include quote(s) for each item listed on the budget sheet
- For construction or renovation projects, provide detailed project plans and specifications

Note: Grant Administrator may request additional information or documentation prior to the Visitors Committee's review.

- Include the projected lifespan of the proposed improvements, and an outline of the maintenance plan.

Reimbursement Requirements

- **General Requirements:** Refer to pages 1-5 for standard reimbursement guidelines.
- **Expense Documentation:** Provide proof of approved expenses as outlined in Grant Agreement.
- **Crediting Requirements:** Show proof of required sponsor recognition as specified in the Grant Agreement.
- **Project Documentation:** Provide the following evidence of project completion:
 - Before-and-after photos showcasing the improvements
 - Copies of permits and inspections, if applicable
- **Site Review** (if applicable): Grant Administrator may request a site tour of both the in-progress and completed improvements.
- Before any reimbursement will be issued, the improved facility or attraction must be fully operational and open to the public for its intended tourism-related use (e.g., events, tours, lodging, exhibits, etc.). Projects that are completed but not open and accessible to visitors will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Reporting Deadlines

- Final reports and required reimbursement documents must be submitted within one year from the date the Grant Agreement is approved by the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners. The exact due date will be specified in the Grant Agreement.
 - If Grantee is unable to complete the project and submit the required documentation by the due date, the Grantee must:
 - Submit a written request for an extension to the Grant Administrator.
 - Present a project update to the Visitors Committee at a quarterly meeting before the grant expires.

Note: Extensions may be granted for up to one additional year at the discretion of the Visitors Committee and with approval by the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners.
 - If Grantee does not submit a final report by the due date or request an extension in writing prior to the deadline, the grant award will be forfeited, with no reimbursement. Failure to comply may impact future grant eligibility for the organization.
- In the event of project cancellation, Grantee must notify Grant Administrator immediately.



Facility Promotion Grant Guidelines - Page 1

The Facility Promotion Grant supports Cheyenne County facilities and attractions in creating or updating marketing materials to increase visitor awareness and engagement. Eligible projects include brochures, digital and print advertising, website development or updates, and other promotional efforts that encourage tourism and attract visitors from outside the county.

The Facility Promotion Grant requires a 25% cash match of eligible promotion expenses. If the total approved promotion budget is \$4,000, Applicant must provide \$1,000 from organization's funds. The matching funds must be used for eligible promotion expenses. Documentation of 25% cash match will be required as part of the reimbursement process.

The Facility Promotion Grant supports projects that create, update, or distribute promotional materials to market the facility to potential visitors.

Examples of expenses that are eligible for Facility Promotion Grant include:

- Brochure design, printing, and distribution
- Digital and print advertising (newspaper, magazine, online)
- Website updates or new website creation
- Billboards or directional signage
- Professional photography/videography

Note: Applicant must permit Visit Sidney/Cheyenne County Tourism full access and authorization to use all images and videos produced through these services for promotional purposes. This includes the right to reproduce, distribute, and display the content in any media.

Examples of expenses that are NOT eligible for Facility Promotion Grant include:

- Operating costs (wages, rent, utilities, mileage, insurance)
- General maintenance, facility repairs, or physical improvements
- Internal business advertising (employment ads, sales promotions)
- Expenses that would violate Nebraska Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through 81-3724

Application Budget Requirements

- Complete [budget template](#) provided.
- Include quote(s) for each item listed on the budget sheet.
- Provide media coverage maps for radio, television, and print advertising.
- Provide detailed information on targeting methods, including geographic targeting for social media and internet advertising.

Reimbursement Requirements

- **General Requirements:** Refer to pages 1-5 for standard reimbursement guidelines.
- **Expense Documentation:** Provide proof of approved expenses as outlined in Grant Agreement.



Facility Promotion Grant Guidelines - Page 2

- **Matching Funds:** Submit documentation of matching fund expenditures.
- **Crediting Requirements:** Show proof of required sponsor recognition as specified in the Grant Agreement.
- **Digital Advertising** (if applicable): Provide evidence of social media and internet ad campaigns, including:
 - Screenshots of ads
 - Analytics reports detailing impressions, reach, engagements, cost metrics, demographics, and audience insights
- **Attendance & Visitor Data:**
 - Attendance figures, ticket sales, or participation numbers

Reporting Deadlines

- Final reports and required reimbursement documents must be submitted within one year from the date the Grant Agreement is approved by the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners. The exact due date will be specified in the Grant Agreement.
 - If Grantee is unable to complete the project and submit the required documentation by the due date, the Grantee must:
 - Submit a written request for an extension to the Grant Administrator.
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Note: Extensions may be granted for up to one additional year at the discretion of the Visitors Committee and with approval by the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners.
 - If Grantee does not submit a final report by the due date or request an extension in writing prior to the deadline, the grant award will be forfeited, with no reimbursement. Failure to comply may impact future grant eligibility for the organization.
- In the event of project cancellation, Grantee must notify Grant Administrator immediately.