



## NATCHEZ CONVENTION PROMOTION COMMISSION Marketing Assistance Funding Program Guidelines

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Natchez Convention Promotion Commission's Marketing Assistance Funding Program is to enhance the tourism promotion efforts for the City of Natchez, Mississippi. The Natchez Convention Promotion Commission (NCPC) has budgeted funds for marketing assistance of events and programs that exhibit positive tourism potential. These funds are designated for projects, events, conferences, and conventions (hereinafter referred to as "events") which directly increase hotel/motel occupancy and increase revenue for restaurants in the City of Natchez as well as create a positive image for the City. These funds are generated by tourism taxes on Natchez hotels/motels and restaurants. Please be advised that NCPC marketing assistance funding program is managed on a first-come, first-served basis and is dependent upon its ability to fund the program. This program may be revised or discontinued during any given fiscal year.

The following guidelines are designed to disperse the amount of effective advertising and funding to events in Natchez throughout the calendar year, allowing for the opportunity of events to grow and enhance the overall economy of the area. Please review them carefully.

### TYPES OF FUNDING

#### **Marketing Assistance Grant**

If approved, funds to be provided to organization to be used by organization in their marketing efforts according to the guidelines found herein. Organization will provide a 1-1 match for this assistance. Funding will be provided to supporting marketing or sales efforts to promote the event.

#### **Sponsorship**

If approved, NCPC/Visit Natchez funds a sponsorship. In cases where sponsorship packages are available, a sponsorship equal to the dollar amount of the funds awarded should be provided to the NCPC/Visit Natchez.

#### **Marketing by NCPC/Visit Natchez**

Funds not provided to the organization, but NCPC/Visit Natchez will market and promote the event. These efforts may include traditional media, social and digital advertising, travel writers to attend event, etc. and will be at the sole discretion of the NCPC/Visit Natchez.

### **ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE**

- Sponsorship/Incentive Funding (conferences/conventions) *funds will be awarded for general sponsorships to incentivize groups to hold meetings in Natchez as opposed to other destinations.*
- Sponsorships that *generate positive awareness of Natchez as a desirable destination.*

**FUNDING ELIGIBILITY:** In awarding NCPC marketing assistance funds, events must be able to meet the following primary criteria:

- Events that make a significant impact on Natchez by generating revenue for our community and/or enhance the profile of the city
- Ability to draw and track a majority of participants from outside of Natchez
- Event dates must be secured. Tentative or TBD will not be accepted
- Event must not be political in nature whether for an individual, political party or movement
- Sponsorship recipient must be able to provide tear sheets or other proof of marketing, invoices and canceled checks specifically for marketing and promotion

Preference will be given to:

- Events that will attract and be able to track overnight rooms in Natchez
- Multiple day events
- First-time events
- Events with sponsorship from other sources in the form of financial, in-kind, or human resources
- Non-profit events
- Events that are planned with community partners to maximize the return on investment for a significant economic impact to Natchez with socio-economic diversity

Organizations receiving marketing assistance funds will not receive financial aid indefinitely from the NCPC as events should be designed to become financially self-sustaining.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant organization must complete and submit an NCPC Marketing Assistance Funding Program Application which includes a description of how funds will be utilized, an event budget, event schedule, marketing plan and sponsorship recognition plan. Events with corporate sponsors must disclose those sponsors in order to be considered. The NCPC reserves the right to exclude any sponsors from its paid advertising. *Only completed and signed applications will be considered for funding.*

Applications must be for events no less than 90 days following the application submission. Funding for events will be allocated equally across all 12 months of the calendar year. When funding for a particular month is exhausted, NCPC may deny additional funding for events for that period. In the event that funds from a particular month are not exhausted, the NCPC may allocate those funds to other time periods at its discretion.

Special consideration will be given for opportunities which arise anytime throughout the year and which present an opportunity to significantly expand or change an existing event or create a new event, and therefore enhance the overall tourism environment of Natchez. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis and assistance will be dependent on available funds and anticipated impact on the economy.

#### **USAGE OF FUNDS:**

All marketing materials that are contingent upon NCPC funding must be submitted with a final report. No funds are available for local advertising and media placement must be in markets 100 miles or more away with a broadcast radius of 100 or more miles. Media placements within 100-mile radius must demonstrate the potential for generating overnight stays. Below are examples of eligible and ineligible usage items.

#### **Eligible:**

- Advertising (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, billboards, digital marketing, direct mail)
- Collateral (brochures, rack cards, posters)
- Public Relations (press conference, press releases)
- Promotional giveaway items not for sale (T-shirts, coozies, mugs, etc.)

#### **Ineligible:**

- Construction, maintenance, repair
- Studies, surveys
- Operations
- Administrative
- Purchase of food or beverage
- Items for sale
- Out of market conferences, advocacy programs and membership dues or fees

#### **AWARD PROCESS:**

Funding decisions will be made by the NCPC with input from the Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee (TMAC). A representative of the applicant organization may be required to meet with the NCPC and TMAC.

Funding is contingent upon the event reasonably occurring as proposed and reasonably within the proposed time. The applicant must notify the NCPC if significant changes are expected that would impact the event as proposed.

The NCPC may withdraw funding or request the return of funds for events which are substantially reduced, inaccurately portrayed in the application, or which do not reasonably occur within the proposed dates.

If a grant is awarded, organization will receive 75% funding and the remaining 25% will be available after the financial report has been received and approved. If financial report is not received within 60 days, the remaining 25% is forfeited.

Applicants will be notified of the status of the request via mail or email within 35 days of application deadline or receipt of application for special consideration.

**FINAL REPORTING:**

A detailed financial report with proper documentation must be submitted to the NCPC no later than 60 days after the event unless prior arrangements are made. Reporting should include attendance, copies of advertisements, room nights booked as a result of the event, records of any food and beverage events generated, zip codes of attendees as well as invoices and canceled checks. Failure to file the proper financial report will disqualify you and your organization from future funding. A copy of the final report template will be provided with approval of the funding.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDED EVENTS:**

Visit Natchez must be reasonably recognized as a sponsor commensurate with the level of the award, in the event's advertising or promotional material and must include the Visit Natchez logo without alteration. We also request that wording be included, in particular with radio and/or TV, "this event is funded in part by Visit Natchez".

**DISCLAIMER**

Within the limits allowed by law, the Natchez Convention Promotion Commission reserves the right to amend, modify, or cancel the Marketing Assistance Funding Program, as well as any or all of the various policies, rules, and procedures outlined in it.