



To: Potential Grant Applicants - 2026 Visitor Improvement Fund

The following pages outline the grant purposes and focus, as well as administrative requirements of those awarded funding. **Please note that failure to comply with requirements can impact an awardee's ability to receive funds.**

Grant forms are sent as Google Forms to the applicant entity's designated administrator. So, if you apply, please make sure whoever is writing and administering your grant can access and report through Google Forms, as well as receive emails. Some organizations have multiple firewalls making it difficult for outside communication.

Please thoughtfully consider whether one or more of the non-profits or public entities with which you are associated, has a project that would meet the 2026 funding criteria. Projects cannot have started before the award timeline and expenses must be within the 2026 calendar year.

Only non-profits and public entities are eligible to apply.

You will need to attest to thoroughly reading the following information and attesting to meeting all the requirements as part of the application process.

**Fund Origin:**

The Visitor Improvement Fund is administered through the Grand Island/Hall County Convention and Visitors Bureau (GICVB) established by the Hall County Board of Supervisors under the authority of NEB. REV. STAT. § 81-3716. The GICVB is governed by a Visitor Promotion Committee (VPC). The purpose of the GICVB is to grow the tourism economy in Hall County and identify the Grand Island area as a destination.

Source of the Grant Funds:

Grants are funded through Visitor Improvement Funds derived from a 2% occupancy tax on Hall County hotel properties. This is authorized under NEB. REV. STAT. § 81-3716, meaning that people who stay in Hall County hotel properties for work and pleasure are helping keep Hall County a vibrant and attractive visitor destination.

Purpose of the Grant Funds:

The purpose of the Hall County Visitor Improvement Fund grant is to provide funding that creates new or improves existing visitor attractions and/or facilities within Hall County. The recipients of this grant should be owned by the public or any nonprofit organization as outlined in the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, NEB. REV. STAT. §81-3701 through § 81-3724, et seq. (amended from time to time).

Use of the Grant Funds:

Grant Funds shall be used to improve the visitor attractions and facilities owned by the public or any non-profit organization in Hall County, except that no proceeds shall be used to improve a facility in which pari-mutuel wagering is conducted. Grant funding can be used for multiple-year improvement projects.

Grant Priorities:

The fund shall be used to make grants for expanding and improving facilities at any existing or new visitor attraction, acquiring or expanding exhibits for existing or new visitor attractions, constructing visitor attractions, or planning or developing such expansions, improvements, or construction. Projects with potential to increase visibility of and draw overnight guests to Hall County will be given priority consideration. Absent any viable improvement grant proposal, the Improvement Fund may be used for Visitor Promotion grants.

Other things the reviewers will be looking at:

- Does it create an economic impact and advance tourism?
- Is there sound planning and design, including cost effectiveness?
- What is the duration of benefits (# or years)?
- Are there matching monetary or in-kind gifts? This is not required, but makes a stronger application.
- What is the number of people or communities served?
- What is the general public or community benefit?
- What is the evaluation plan?
- Does this fill a unique need?

Grant Exclusions:

- General operating expenses.

- Additional or current personnel or salaries.
- General operating supplies or equipment.
- General maintenance or replacement of an existing component in a facility or on a property.
- Items not mentioned or included in the approved grant application.
- Items purchased or work conducted prior to the grant approval.
- Any manner that would violate the Nebraska Visitor Development Act, NEB. REV. STAT. § 81-3702. All grants are discretionary, based upon available funds, other anticipated uses and appropriateness and anticipated effectiveness of proposed use.

Additional information:

- Visitor attractions in Hall County owned by the public or a non-profit, whose primary purpose is to operate a visitor attraction, are eligible to apply. One application per entity will be accepted each grant cycle.
- Additional information may be requested, including the most recent 990 Tax Return.

Review Process:

Grants are discretionary and are based on available funds, other anticipated uses, appropriateness, anticipated effectiveness of the accepted grant project, and past grant requirements follow through. Furthermore, said project must continue to comply with the Nebraska Visitor Development Act.

Notification:

Grant applicants will be notified of the status of their request in December unless determined otherwise by the Visitors Promotion Committee and/or the Hall County Board of Supervisors. Grant recipients will be required to fill out additional paperwork that will be provided by the VPC.

Grant Year Cycle (January 1 – December 31)

Application:

- Grants due to review committee - September 1
- Grants reviewed - September - October
- Grant recommendations to the VPC - November
- Grant recommendations to the Hall Co. Board - December

If awarded:

- Signed Award Agreement submission and current W9, no later than January 31
- Project progress reporting April and August (reporting document will include deadline date)
- Final report and request for grant reimbursements - December 15 (unless otherwise determined by VPC)

Payment, if Awarded:

Grant awardees will be provided with a Request for Payment form which must be submitted along with a detailed listing of approved grant expenditures and copies of all original receipts, contracts and/or other documents that substantiate those expenditures. Payment of funds will not take place until this is supplied. All grant monies awarded must be spent or contractually committed by the close of the grant year. Due to processing, requests should be in by December 15. Any monies that the grant recipient has not spent or contractually committed by this deadline shall be returned to the Hall County Visitor Improvement Fund.

GICVB Recognition Requirement:

At the conclusion of approved projects, support given through the grant must be acknowledged through appropriate visual notification using approved Grand Island Convention and Visitor Bureau branding. Notification shall be placed on grantee’s websites, in materials or within the facility at the cost of the grantee. Contact dana@visitgrandisland.com for appropriate brand standards.