

City of Viroqua Tourism Event Grant

Purpose: The purpose of this grant program is to assist with funding marketing activities for events that improve the experience of visiting the City of Viroqua. Long term goals of this grant program include generating overnight visits at Viroqua Hotels and vacation rentals, extending visitor stays, promoting a positive image to visitors, and creating a desire for visitors to return.

This is a competitive application, based on limited resource dollars. Grant funds are an allocation from City of Viroqua room tax dollars.

Grant Objectives:

1. Support local organizations in hosting impactful events.
2. Maximize return on investment by attracting repeat visitors and extended stays.
3. Encourage tourism during off-season months (fall, winter).
4. Provide equitable funding opportunities for all eligible applicants.
5. Support the launch of new events and the expansion of proven successful events.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicants must be a nonprofit organization or volunteer managed organization with a valid tax id number and/or valid nonprofit status. For-profit organizations are not eligible.
- The event must demonstrate the ability to attract overnight visitors to Viroqua, focusing on:
 - Quantity of visitors
 - Length of stay
 - Location of stays (hotel, and/or vacation rentals) within the Viroqua city limits.
- Grant funds must be used for marketing and advertising directed outside a 50-mile radius of Viroqua.
- Applicants must provide a detailed budget with supporting documentation (cost estimates, bids, or invoices).
- Grant awards cannot exceed a maximum of \$5,000 and/or 50% of total event expense, whichever is less.
- Applicants must have a valid organization bank account (non-personal).
- All events must create a positive image of Viroqua and enhance tourism efforts.
- Must have a valid City of Viroqua Special Event Permit and/or City of Viroqua Temporary Class B License, when required

Ineligible Organizations & Programs:

- Organizations that discriminate because of race, color, creed, gender, national origin or limited participation
- Political organizations, candidates for political office, and organizations whose primary purpose is to influence legislation
- Building (brick and mortar) or capital campaigns
- Staffing/administrative costs
- Individuals and organizations which have not fulfilled all previous grant administrative guidelines
- Fraternal organizations, churches or church-related groups with proposals which promote religion or an individual doctrine

Grant Usage:

- Marketing and promotional activities, including but not limited to:
 - Digital and print advertising
 - Social media promotions
 - Event website development
 - Public relations efforts
- Funds cannot be used for operational expenses, staffing, administrative costs, capital improvements, or local advertising (within 50 mile radius of Viroqua)
- Event advertising should include the use of the Viroqua city logo wherever possible. (Logo will be provided when funds are distributed)

Event Cancellation

- If the event does not take place, the Viroqua Tourism Commission must be notified immediately by contacting infodesk@viroquachamber.com. Appropriate actions will be determined during that time.

Application Process:

- Two application windows:
 - Window 1
 - Application Window Open: January - February
 - Tourism Commission Review: March
 - Funds Awarded: April - December
 - Window 2
 - Application Window Open: July - August
 - Tourism Commission Review: September
 - Funds Awarded: October - March (next year)
- Late applications will **not** be accepted.
- Applications must be complete, legible, and signed by the applicant.
- The Tourism Commission will review and evaluate applications using a standardized rating system.
- Grant awards will be communicated after the commission review. Applicants will be notified via email at the address provided.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Completeness and clarity of the application.

- Demonstrated ability to meet all eligibility criteria.
- Growth potential and long-term impact on overnight visits in the City of Viroqua.
- Uniqueness and attractiveness of the event to visitors.
- Completeness of event budget and financial viability
- Utilization of local partners, vendors, and community.
- Applicant level of experience with proposed event.

- Amount funding for the event outside the grant request.

Post-Event Reporting:

- Grant recipients must submit an event impact report within three months of event completion.
- Reports must include:
 - Estimated number of attendees and overnight stays.
 - Estimated economic impact assessment.
 - Final budget with proof of fund usage.
 - Lessons learned and future event plans.
- Failure to submit a report may impact eligibility for future grants.

Best Practices for Applicants:

- Secure additional funding sources to maximize the grant's impact.
- Develop partnerships with local businesses to extend visitor spending.
- Plan events that highlight the unique attributes of Viroqua.
- Consider multi-day event formats to increase overnight stays.