

***The following are the RULES and APPLICATION for the  
2025 Ocean County Tourism Promotional Matching Grant.***

***Application deadline is January 31, 2025 before 5pm.***

The Tourism Promotional Matching Grant has strict requirements and guidelines. We strive to distribute higher dollar amounts to fewer awardees in order to elevate the impact and effectiveness of these grant funds. The eligibility for the grant and the amount of the grant award will depend on the quality of the applicant's marketing strategy and their potential to draw visitors from out of the area. It is critical that the awardees contribute to our primary goal, which is to elevate the visibility of Ocean County as a tourism destination and increase travel and commerce for the region.

Applicants who do not fit that agenda will not be approved.

### **Do You Qualify for the Grant?**

**Check these guidelines to determine your eligibility:**

- 1.** You must be a nonprofit organization or a government agency to apply for this grant. Municipalities must provide a certified resolution by their governing body approving the grant application
- 2.** The 2025 grant award maximum potential will be \$10,000. If awarded, you must match the grant funding by 100%. (If you receive an award of \$1500, you must spend at least \$3000 on eligible marketing expenditures in order to qualify for the reimbursement). Do not ask for more money than you can match and use. The funds are appropriated when the grant is awarded. By asking for more than you can use, you deprive other organizations of the opportunity to obtain funding. \*Failure to use the full award will negatively impact and possibly disqualify the current grantee from consideration the following year.
- 3.** The funds are to be used for marketing campaigns that are indicated within your application proposal only. If you do choose to include an event in your marketing proposal, you **MUST** provide an alternate plan for the event if health concerns forbid gatherings, or require limited attendees.
- 4.** Should you choose to use marketing grant funds for an event, Non-promotional items or items distributed at an event site itself are **NOT ELIGIBLE**. For example: Costs associated with holding the event, postage costs, event journals, materials such as carpeting or tents or giveaways at the event are NOT eligible. (Remember, these grants are for the purpose of generating tourism, the goal is to draw more visitors / attendees from outside of Ocean County)
- 5.** Applicants who demonstrate marketing plans which utilize advanced technology such as digital advertising strategies, social media and / or smart media placement, outside of our region will be considered for higher dollar awards.

6. Programs that include plans for tracking methods which then indicate large attendance from outside of Ocean County will be considered for higher dollar awards.
7. For previous grant recipients: Non-compliance with the rules of the **2024** Grant will result in penalties and /or disqualification for this Grant.
8. Recipients must use the Ocean County Board of Commissioners' Tourism Grant logo in print and internet advertising according to the requirements indicated. Video and radio requirements are also indicated. Failure to comply with the proper use of the logo and / or verbiage provided will result in penalties of non-compliance and will impact future grant consideration and the issue of current grant reimbursement.
9. The person who completes this grant should ensure that the grant rules are fully understood by the person who will be managing the expenditures so that both are aware of the correct and necessary procedures.
10. **Proof of qualified expenditures will be due by December 1, 2025.** Documentation requirements are specified in Part G of the Grant overview section. Reimbursement checks will be issued to the grantee after approval at a meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Payment will take three to six weeks from the time the proper documentation is submitted, depending on the Commissioner Board Meeting Schedule. Failure to submit grant fulfillment documentation by the deadline will result in penalties for noncompliance, which may result in reduction of grant reimbursement and /or ineligibility for the following year's grant consideration.
11. The grant application must be submitted through our ONLINE SUBMISSION process. Hand-written and mailed or faxed applications will not be accepted.
12. 2025 Grant awards will not be announced until early April. Funding is not provided until AFTER the grant money has been spent and all fulfillment and proof of expenditures are provided. If awarded, the deadline to provide proof of grant fulfillment is December 1, 2025.

## **2025 OCEAN COUNTY TOURISM *PROMOTIONAL MATCHING GRANT RULES***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Ocean County Board of Commissioners and the Ocean County Tourism & Business Advisory Council offer this Promotional Matching Grant to provide funding assistance with the marketing of tourism-based events and programs. The goal of these grants is to help tourism partners implement smart and effective marketing campaigns to promote their tourism events or programs which will ultimately drive more travelers to Ocean County, increase commerce and expand our visibility as a premier travel destination. We encourage applicants to include backup documents that demonstrate proof of previous tracking methods, digital analytics, attendance history, publicity, etc. With the online submission method, our Committee is able to review the grants as they are received, and to evaluate websites and social media pages of the applicants, allowing a thorough review process.

## **Grant Committee**

The Tourism Promotional Matching Grant Committee consists of volunteers from the OC Tourism & Business Advisory Council. This committee is engaged in the requirements, rules and approval of the grant application as well as the evaluation and scoring of grant submissions and final award decisions. The Committee is made up of the following:

1. A minimum of two and maximum of four members of the Tourism Advisory Council
2. The current Chairman of the Board of the Tourism Advisory Council
3. The Executive Director of the Tourism Business Advisory Council / Director of OC Business Development and Tourism
4. Also invited: Commissioner/Tourism Liaison (advised, attendance not required)

## **Applicants' Qualifiers & Restrictions**

1. Only Ocean County based, not-for-profit entities may apply.
2. Governmental Entities, Nonprofit Organizations as defined in N.J.S.A. 15A:1-1 et seq. and including, but not limited to Chambers of Commerce, merchant business associations, heritage, cultural and historic museums or commissions may apply.
3. Applicants must submit their taxpayer I.D. number AND IRS Tax Exemption letter with their application.
4. No applicant may act as a "feeder" for a third party or organization.
5. The applicant must be the sponsor of the activity.
6. Bills must be made out to and paid by the applicant.
7. No more than one grant will be awarded to any applicant.
8. If multiple applications are submitted by separate, but closely related organizations with different federal identification numbers, each may apply for a grant.
9. No more than one application per Federal ID number may be submitted, but including the promotion of multiple programs/activities in one application is permitted.

## **FUNDING**

Due to budget constraints, any grant award is subject to the adoption of the county budget and funding by the Board of Commissioners. The County Commissioners and the Tourism and Business Advisory Council are not responsible for actions taken regarding applicants in anticipation of receiving funding. A grant award in prior years is not a guarantee that a grant will be received this year. Official notice is receiving the award letter along with the Ocean County Purchase Order, not through any newspaper coverage or other methods.

## **MATCHING FUND FORMULA:**

The amount requested must be matched dollar-for-dollar in the promotional budget of the application. In the application, you will be able to indicate the maximum dollar amount that your organization is requesting. For example, a \$10,000.00 award will require expenditures of \$20,000 on qualified promotional costs. Do not request more than you can spend. These funds are appropriated in the amount requested and will not then be available for other deserving applicants. If all the funds are not fulfilled by the awardee, there will be a penalty of noncompliance which will disqualify your organization from consideration for next year's grant.

## **Projected Award Levels**

This will be a competitive grant. The 2025 Grants are intended to result in awards ranging up to a maximum potential of \$10,000, based on the quality of the applicants' proposed marketing plans and their financial ability to fulfill the required match.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Submission**

The grant fillable application is available online at [www.oceancountytourism.com](http://www.oceancountytourism.com). Applications must be completed and submitted through the required online submission process by the deadline below. Handwritten applications will not be considered. The applicant will receive a confirmation and time/date stamp of submission. We suggest that you print your confirmation for your records.

**DEADLINE for Receipt of Application: JANUARY 31st, 2025 before 5:00pm**

### **Notification**

Successful applicants will be notified by mail. Upon notification, the awardee will receive:

- A Grant Agreement, consisting of (2) two originals which must be signed, witnessed and returned within 30 days.
- A link to the mandatory LOGO and verbiage. The LOGO used must be the correct 2025 version. The logo must meet the minimum size as well as the resolution requirements to qualify. Upon approval of a grant award, please reach out with any requests by calling the office at 732 929 2000 or by email: OCTourism@co.ocean.nj.us

## Reimbursement

Upon completion of the program/event or promotional publication, the grant recipient must return the following documents to the Ocean County Business Development and Tourism Department by the deadline indicated in order to receive reimbursement funds:

1. The signed purchase order (received after contract is returned)
2. Invoices in the name of the grant recipient for at least twice the amount of the grant
3. Proof of payment on these invoices
4. Proof of the proper use of the required Ocean County LOGO and/or the verbiage required for use in radio or TV ads.
5. Completed Checklist.

\*\*\*Documents listed for reimbursement on previous page are **due by December 1, 2025**. Failure to provide proper proof of grant fulfillment by the deadline will result in penalties of noncompliance which may result in loss of reimbursement funds and disqualification of eligibility for a grant award in the following year. \*\*\*

All approved reimbursements will be made after official approval at a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners. Payment will be received three to six weeks from the time the proper documentation is submitted, depending on the County Commissioner Board Meeting Schedule.

## Notification of inability to use Grant Funds

If something unanticipated happens and a grant recipient is unable to use a portion of the funds or all of the funds due to an event cancellation or other unexpected interference, the awardee must notify the Department of Ocean County Business Development and Tourism as soon as possible. Notice must be made directly **by phone and by email**. Failure to provide such notice will result in penalty for noncompliance and ineligibility for the next year's grant

## EVALUATION

### Grant Scoring System

All applications will be reviewed by the Grant Committee. The following is the points structure which will determine the awardees upon Committee Review. Please Note: Approvals are based on the applicant's ability to achieve the highest points possible. The scoring criteria is assessed under two separate categories: the Event / Program assessment and the Marketing Plan assessment. After scoring is completed, the Committee will review past performance with regard to the eligible applicants. If noncompliance issues are found, the applicant's penalties will be applied and total scoring for this grant will reflect the necessary reductions. See next page....

## SCORING GUIDELINES AND POINT ALLOCATION

How will the event/program support Ocean County's Tourism goals?	Point Value
Potential to draw visitors from OUTSIDE of Ocean County	20
Potential to draw visitors to stay overnight in Ocean County and/or visit out of season OR in-season on weekdays	10
Scope / size of program / event: Anticipated attendance for attraction, venue and/or extent of distribution and reach for program	10
Creativity and Flexibility of event or program. Proactive concept that entices commerce in Ocean County	10
How will your Marketing plan support Ocean County's Tourism goals?	Point Value
Ad placement on media platforms... and/or distribution of marketing materials... that will reach OUTSIDE of Ocean County	20
Use of advanced social media marketing strategies that reach markets outside of Ocean County	10
Use of digital advertising, video, banner links, mobile app, radio and other flexible messaging platforms to allow adaptable information	10
Use of tracking methods to identify the zip codes and other profile information of attendees, and/or online ticket purchasing, online engagement tools that store and track information and enable outreach to the visitors.	10

### MANDATORY LOGO

The Ocean County Tourism Promotional Matching Grant has an official LOGO with verbiage that must be included in all ads, promotional materials, digital advertising, websites, etc that are going to be submitted for funding. The LOGO and verbiage must be easy to read and no smaller than the minimum size requirement indicated (see last page of application to view samples). Failure to properly use this logo will result in noncompliance penalty and reimbursement on that expenditure will not be approved. Print, video and digital banner Advertising must feature the complete logo and verbiage. If banner ad space is too small, the Tourism Seal will be required and the seal with full verbiage and OceanCountyTourism.com website must be included **ON the web page that the banner links to**. For RADIO ad approval, the voiceover must include the verbiage: *"Funded in Part by a Grant from the Ocean County Board of Commissioners. Explore More at Oceancountytourism.com!"* Proof must be submitted digitally through email, link, DVD or CD. You are welcome to send us your ads in advance to receive approval confirmation on the use of logo and verbiage.

**The following expenses **ARE ELIGIBLE** for grant funding consideration:**

\*\*\*Please NOTE: These grant funds are intended to support marketing efforts that draw visitors to Ocean County from **OUTSIDE** the area. Therefore, the media platforms and marketing materials used must reach potential travelers who are not local residents in Ocean County. Proof of that strategy will be required in order to receive reimbursement.

- **Media Advertising** (newspapers, radio, television, Internet, mobile apps) with placement in publications or platforms **outside** of Ocean County.
- **Printed, promotional publications** that are distributed in locations **outside** of Ocean County, including trade show displays and informational guides and brochures. Proof that these materials feature the OC Tourism logo and required verbiage will be needed for eligibility.
- **Distribution of printed materials** through a credible distribution vendor and proof that these materials are delivered **OUTSIDE** of Ocean County. Payment of this service **WILL** be eligible for reimbursement
- **Website, Mobile Website, Mobile apps only qualify if used for ticketing or registration or as a tracking method for the program.** We do not cover the cost of general website development or hosting services. Any website pages related to the event or program must feature our required logo with link to the OC Tourism website to qualify for reimbursement.
- **Social Media strategies** including ads and boosting, as long as the required verbiage and OC Tourism website address is included in the ad. The grantee's website must also include the required logo and a link to the OC Tourism website.
- **Durable equipment** including rental of tables or tents if the event is being marketed **OUTSIDE** of the County. Our required logo must be present at your table on either a program, flyer, or hosting services. Required documentation will be needed for eligibility.

**The following expenses are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for grant funding consideration:**

- Registration fees, clean-up costs, capital investments, restoration or rehabilitation of buildings
- Wages, benefits or other employee compensation
- Hospitality expenses, including food or alcoholic beverages
- Entertainment and fireworks
- Transportation, dining and lodging
- Postage
- Membership Fees

- Programs, journals, T-shirts and giveaways distributed at the event or venue that are used for marketing efforts outside of Ocean County is required. **We hold the right to withdraw eligibility if the correct proof of that strategy is not met.**
- Ads placed in community / local media. Locally placed billboards, lawn signs, posters, etc.
- Trophies
- Newsletters that do not relate to tourism topics
- Signage and banners used locally or onsite at the venue, attraction or event.
- Services-in-kind are not eligible for match.

### **SCHEDULE:**

**Deadline for submitting applications:** January 31, 2025 before 5pm

**Announcements of Awards:** Approximately April 1, 2025

**Deadline for submitting expenditures and proof of Match:**

For all events & programs up to Dec 1, 2025



Funded in part by a grant from the  
Ocean County Board of Commissioners

Explore more at  
[OceanCountyTourism.com](http://OceanCountyTourism.com)