APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 20, 2023

The City of Renton is soliciting project proposals that support and encourage tourism, cultural activities and tourism facilities in Renton, Washington. The funding source for projects awarded grant funds is the City's share of taxes collected on overnight stays (hotel/motel/lodging) within the City of Renton.

State law limits the use of lodging tax funds. All applications must be for one of the following uses:
- Tourism marketing
- Marketing and operations of special events and festivals
- Operations of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by non-profit organizations
- Operations and capital expenditures of tourism-related facilities owned by municipalities or public facilities districts only

For grant funding year 2023, the Renton City Council approved $444,000 in grants funded by lodging taxes. As Lodging Tax funds vary from year to year, there is no guarantee of the total amount awarded or if any grant awards will be made.

Grant Applications:
We now *only* accept an online application that is available on the Rentonwa.gov/LTAC. No paper forms will be accepted, and you must submit a separate application for each project/grant request. All Applications must include:

- Estimates of how funding the activity will result in increases to people staying overnight, traveling 50 miles or more, or coming from another state or country.
- How your project will
  o generate economic benefit through overnight lodging, sale of meals and goods, and/or construction of tourism-related facilities
  o increase recognition of Renton throughout the region as a destination for tourism
  o increase opportunities for tourism by developing new visitor activities

If you request it from them, local hoteliers will work with your organization to track information for your event or project. If you need assistance, be sure to contact them prior to submission, as priority will be given to those projects which encourage and track overnight stays.

Applications must be submitted online no later than 4:30 p.m. (Pacific time) on Friday, October 20, 2023. No applications will be accepted after this deadline. Any questions concerning the application process may be directed to Jessie Kotarski, Economic Development Manager, at 425-430-7271 or jkotarski@rentonwa.gov.

~ Application Requirements & Instructions ~

General Information:

- All applications will be reviewed by the City's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee for potential funding recommendations.

- If further information is needed, the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee will contact applicants to arrange interviews during the week of November 6, 2023.

- Recommendations from the Committee will be presented for approval at the December 4, 2023 regularly scheduled City Council meeting (pending scheduling availability); grant recipients will be notified within 30 days. A Funding Agreement will be sent to you by the end of December.

- You can upload any supporting materials online. Please limit your uploads to what is most relevant.

- Funds will be paid on a reimbursement basis only. Organizations must first incur the expenses and then request reimbursement from the City on a specific reimbursement form that will be provided to you.

If you received a grant in 2023 and your 2024 application is for the same event, you do not need to resubmit these items:

- o your IRS or State of Washington non-profit certification letters

ALL Applicants must provide:

- Proof of liability insurance including $1,000,000/occurrence and $2,000,000/general aggregate. The City reserves the right to waive this insurance requirement under certain circumstances. If your organization is awarded a grant, your insurance certificate must name the City of Renton as an "additional insured." There are NO exceptions to this requirement. We expect organizations to renew their insurance prior to their project.

- Active, non-expired City of Renton Business License. Information regarding acquiring a city business license can be found at rentonwa.gov/business. Email: licensing@rentonwa.gov or by phone 425-430-6851

SELECTION PROCESS

When the application solicitation period opens, City will employ every opportunity to inform potentially eligible applicants of the funding process and its eligibility criteria. When the solicitation period closes, the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Chair or his/her designee will review applications for completeness and eligibility. Applications will then be evaluated by the City's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, which will make funding recommendations to the City Council. The Council will make the final decision on project approval and funding levels. Staff will then consult with sponsors of approved projects to develop contracts and scopes of work. When the sponsors and Mayor sign the contracts, staff will notify sponsors to proceed. It is very important that applicants are aware of the following.

- All contracts are reimbursement-based, i.e. the sponsor must expend funds on approved items and then seek reimbursement under terms of the governing contract.
- Cost reimbursement will only be issued after the contract is signed by all parties (including the City).
- The project approval process requires two key steps:
    a) The LTAC selection and recommendation for project approval; AND
    b) The Council's approval of a spending plan.

Only eligible costs <u>incurred after both steps of the approval process</u> will be reimbursed for the project.

COMPETITIVE CRITERIA

Because of the limited amount of funding available to support assistance requests, proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis. Applications that meet the threshold criteria will be presented to the review panel for evaluation and scoring based on the following criteria. The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee may recommend full, partial or no funding for each project. The review panel will independently determine the level of funding for each project based on each project's individual merit and components. A maximum of 100 points can be awarded in this area.

1. <u>Project Impact.</u> How will the City of Renton and/or the citizens be impacted by this project? 25 points
2. <u>Clarity.</u> Does the proposal clearly and concisely present a definite, well-described product for which the City's assistance is being sought? If appropriate to do so, does the proposal describe how the City-supported product will be integrated into a larger effort (e.g., a brochure which promotes a cultural event: does the proposal describe the brochure as well as summarizing the purpose and scope of the event and the role the brochure will play in its success)? 20 points
3. <u>Cost-effectiveness.</u>   Does the project propose an efficient, economical use of the City's funds? 20 points
4. <u>Degree of match.</u> What is the proponent's percentage of matching resource? A match of at least 25% of the total project value (City funds plus sponsor's share) is required; a higher rate will improve a project's stature accordingly. 10 points
5. <u>Marketing.</u> How will the proposed project be marketed and how will that marketing recognize the City's participation? 10 points
6. <u>Innovation.</u>   Does the project represent an unusual approach, or does it move the City's Hotel/Motel program in a useful new direction? 10 points
7. <u>Cooperative nature.</u>   What kind and degree of inter-organizational or inter-jurisdictional partnership does the project exhibit? 5 points

BONUS POINTS

The City has an interest in spreading the impacts of tourism more evenly over the entire year, expanding overnight stays, and in acting as a partner with other jurisdictions that collect their own Hotel/Motel funds. Bonus points will be accorded to proposals that can convince the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee that, if funded, the projects will advance these goals. A maximum of 20 additional points can be awarded in this area.

1. <u>Off-season development</u>. Will the project promote tourism development during the off-season (September 1 through June 30)? 10 points
2. <u>Overnight visitorship.</u> Has the project convincingly established that it will attract overnight visitorship? If so, does it quantify the anticipated stays and offer a credible method for corroborating the projections? 10 points