

DOUGLAS COUNTY VISITOR IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION 2020-2021

Application Submission Instructions:

NEW

Please submit complete application, including any attachments, via the online submission form available at the following [link](#):

Applications are due no later than **Friday, April 24, 2020, 4:00 pm**

Training: Grant Writing 101

NEW

Douglas County, in partnership with the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM), will offer **Grant Writing 101** on **April 1, 2020 from 9:00 am to Noon** at the **NAM Training Room, 1111 North 13th Street, Ste 213**. This training is designed to cover grant basics and help attendees be better prepared to submit a proposal to the Visitor Improvement Fund. Topics will include grant basics on budgets and budget narratives, demystifying grant language and how to tell your story and cover basic financial internal controls. This training will also include a panel conversation with members from the Visitors Promotion Council. This training is not required of applicants. There is no cost to attend but registration is required. Space is limited, register now at the following link:

<https://www.nonprofitam.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1346959&group=>

Contact for questions:

Catherine Hall, Assistant County Administrator
(402) 444-6416
catherine.hall@douglascounty-ne.gov

Guidelines

1. Any visitor attraction in Douglas County, owned by the public or legally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, whose primary purpose is to operate the visitor attraction, is eligible for fund allocation. The entity applying for the grant must act as its own fiscal agent and must own and operate the visitor attraction for which it is requesting funds. Only one application from an entity (as defined by tax ID number) will be accepted each grant year.
2. An applicant entity must meet all eligibility criteria set forth in the guidelines at the time of award.
3. Visitor Improvement Fund grant funds shall be used for the purposes of expanding and improving facilities at any existing visitor attraction, acquiring or expanding exhibits for existing visitor attractions, constructing visitor attractions, or planning or developing such expansions, improvements, or construction.
4. Grant funds may not be used for promotion, marketing or advertising costs to promote, encourage, and attract visitors.
5. Requests for general operating expenses and any other financial assistance that does not conform to the intent of the Visitor Improvement Fund will not receive consideration. Grant funds may not be used to fund cash prizes or organizational general operating expenses, such as employee salaries or an organization's ongoing day-to-day operations. Grant funds may be used to fund organizational expenses specifically designated for an organization's qualified event, program or project.
6. Fund applicants must complete the attached **Visitor Improvement Fund Application** outlining use and benefits of requested funds. Failure to complete the entire application may result in the rejection of your funding request. If the allotted space is insufficient for your purposes, you may attach additional page(s) as necessary.
7. **All Visitor Improvement Fund applications, including required attachments, must be submitted electronically via the online form available at [\[https://www.douglascounty-ne.gov/grant-form\]](https://www.douglascounty-ne.gov/grant-form) by 4:00 PM, Friday, April 24, 2020.** Faxed, e-mailed, mailed or hand-delivered applications will NOT be accepted. Per Board of Commissioners' 2012 Resolution No. 429, it is Board policy that late filings will NOT be considered. Applications, including any required attachments, must be complete and legible at time of submission.
8. Requests for funding will be reviewed and evaluated by criteria including, but not limited to, consideration of diversity, equity and inclusion, volume of overnight visitors drawn from outside Douglas County, and potential for special impact, such as a new or expanded event.

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9. During application review, any applicant may be asked to provide additional information about its request or may be invited to make a brief presentation.
10. Applicants will receive notification of award status in approximately July 2020. Before receiving award funds, recipients shall enter into an agreement with the county outlining award expectations. The award agreement will be distributed to recipient by e-mail for electronic signature after awards are announced.
11. Grant awards will be distributed in equal quarterly installments (October, January, April, June) unless determined otherwise by the Douglas County Finance & Budget Director. Recipients may elect to authorize electronic disbursement of grant funds via ACH.
12. All grant funds allocated in 2020-2021 must be encumbered no later than July 1, 2021. Any monies that your organization has not encumbered by this deadline shall be returned to the Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund.
13. If your organization has been awarded Visitor Improvement Funds in a previous year, Douglas County requires a financial report of those expenditures.

To comply with the financial report requirement, a detailed listing of the expenditures on the attached **Exhibit #1** must be supplied.

In addition to Exhibit #1, documentation substantiating grant award expenditures must also be submitted. Documentation may include:

- a. copies of receipts,
- b. cancelled checks and corresponding invoices,
- c. fully executed contracts signed by all parties,
- d. bank account website copies,
- e. credit card transaction copies.

Past Visitor Improvement Fund recipients must also complete the attached **Exhibit #2**, explaining the impact of last year's grant on your organization. Please include information on revenue generated and attendance, if applicable.

Failure to provide Exhibits #1 and #2 may result in the rejection of future funding requests.

Exhibits #1 and #2 should be submitted with your 2020-2021 application, when possible. If the previous year's grant award has not been spent or encumbered at the time of application, Exhibits #1 and #2 may be submitted to the Douglas County Board of Commissioners' Office separate from the grant application, but no later than September 30, 2020.

2020-2021 VIF grant monies will not be released until this financial report is completed.

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APPLICATION

APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Contact Information

Organization Name _____

Tax ID Number _____

Contact Name _____

E-mail Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Street Address _____

City _____

Zip Code _____

County _____

Website _____

Authorized Signatory Name (if different from Contact, above) _____

Authorized Signatory E-mail Address (if different from E-mail Address, above)

If your organization applied for funding in any prior year under a different organizational name, please provide the name(s) _____

2. Please state your organization's primary mission:

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3. Please select applicable description(s) of your visitor attraction and explain:

- Educational
- Cultural
- Historical
- Artistic
- Recreational
- Entertainment

4. Please select applicable descriptions of your organization:

- Publicly owned
- 501(c)(3) Nonprofit
- A visitor attraction with facility we own and operate
- A performing arts group
- A festival or event
- Other (please explain below)

5. Does your organization own the attraction for which you are requesting funds? Yes No

6. Is your attraction open to the public? Yes No

7. Please complete the following attendance table:

	2019	2018	2017
Annual attendance to your event(s)/ facility			
% of visitors from outside Douglas County			
% of visitors staying overnight in Douglas County			

8. Please describe method used to determine attendance figures provided in question 7:

9. Applicants are encouraged to cooperate with the Omaha Convention and Visitors Bureau (402-444-4660), which may provide assistance in estimating overnight visitors or economic impact, as well as promotion efforts. Does your organization use the Omaha Convention and Visitors Bureau as a resource? Yes No

10. Please attach the following required documents for your organization:

- a. Copy of determination letter from the IRS confirming tax exempt status
- b. List of Board of Directors

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- c. Schedule of Board meetings
- d. Copy of bylaws
- e. Current financial statement of all revenues and expenditures
- f. Statement outlining your organization's internal control over cash (relating to receiving and disbursing cash and bank reconciliations), including policies in place to ensure proper segregation of duties and names and positions of persons involved in the process.

Request Information

11. Total amount of Visitor Improvement Funds requested: \$_____

12. Total cost for your proposed project: \$_____

13. Please select applicable description(s) of your request:

- Expanding and improving facilities at existing visitor attraction
- Acquiring or expanding exhibits for existing visitor attraction
- Constructing visitor attraction
- Planning or developing expansions, improvements, or construction

14. Brief summary title of your request/proposed project:

15. Please describe in detail how requested funds will be spent. If requesting funding for more than one improvement, exhibit or performance, please itemize. If your request is for a multi-year project, please specify the amount and purpose of funds you are requesting in this grant cycle.

16. Does your proposal build on diversity, equity and inclusion in Douglas County? Please describe.

PAST AWARD FINANCIAL REPORT

16. Did you receive Visitor Improvement Funds in a previous year?

Yes No

If "Yes," please proceed through question 16.

If "No," this section is not applicable.

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17. Have all of the previous year's award funds been spent or encumbered?

Yes No

If "Yes," please complete Exhibits 1 and 2.

If "No," will they be spent or encumbered by July 1, 2020? Yes No

If complete Financial Report (Exhibits #1 and #2) is not included with your application, please provide brief explanation why it is not included (e.g., event has not taken place at time of application) and indicate the projected date of submission to the Commissioners' Office.

Note: Any awarded 2020/2021 VIF grant monies will not be released until the Past Award Financial Report (Exhibits #1 and #2) is complete.

EXHIBIT #1

Please supply a detailed listing of all award expenditures below.

Description of Improvement, Exhibit or Performance	Date Paid	Check Number	Vendor	Amount
Total Paid				

(Applicant may attach additional page(s), if necessary)

In addition to Exhibit #1, you must include documentation that substantiates grant award expenditures. Documentation may include:

- a. copies of receipts,
- b. cancelled checks and corresponding invoices,
- c. fully executed contracts signed by all parties,
- d. bank account website copies,
- e. credit card transaction copies.

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EXHIBIT #2

If exhibit or performance:

Revenue Generated: \$_____

Attendance:_____

Please explain the impact of last year's grant on your organization: