



# VICKSBURG

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

*The Key to the South*

## VISIT VICKSBURG TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM

**FISCAL YEAR 2024**

### **Introduction**

Visit Vicksburg's mission is to encourage and promote tourism for the Vicksburg/Warren County area as well as to sell and market the attractions and experiences of Vicksburg as a premier destination for overnight visitation, generating sales and lodging taxes to the City and enhancing the vitality of the City by helping to sustain business and employment.

Visit Vicksburg's Tourism Grant Program (TGP) is an annual allocation designed to enhance visitor and tourism promotion efforts in Vicksburg. TGP provides funds for marketing and other qualified expenses for projects/events that fulfill Visit Vicksburg's mission and ultimately, increase overnight travel to Vicksburg.

### **Qualifying Programs and Events**

Eligible applicants for funding include an organization/event/project whose objectives is to promote Vicksburg's tourism industry to out-of-town visitors by generating overnight travel and economic stimulus to the city. The target audience should be outside the immediate Vicksburg area (over 50-mile radius or out-of-state).

Qualifying entities may be attractions, associations, organizations, or governmental agencies which promote their event, products and/or services to visitors from outside the area. Qualified grant projects should be classified in one of the following categories:

1. Festival / Event (conventions, reunions, and meetings are not eligible)
2. Attraction / Public Use Facility
  - a. Museums, historical buildings, meeting space, sporting facilities, etc.
3. Other organizations / associations with a primary objective of promoting tourism in Vicksburg

TGP funds may be used for a variety of expenses, including traditional and digital advertising, brochures and signage, and marketing and promotional activities. Disallowable expenses include facility utilities, general operating expenses, administrative expenses (including salaries, travel, meal and lodging), loan payments, personal benefits, cash awards or expenses not directly related to the approved project, and any illegal activities.

## Eligibility Requirements

Applicants should fulfill the following requirements:

- The project for which grant funds are requested must be primarily located in Vicksburg (includes Warren County).
- Projects should promote Vicksburg as a destination by highlighting local lodging, dining, shopping and attractions.
- The proposed project must comply with all applicable laws, permits, licenses and regulations.
- Marketing plan for the project that describes the “who, what, where, when and why” of your proposed project. The marketing plan should address objectives, strategies, tactics and action plans. Specific highlights can be found under **Selection Process** below. The marketing plan should also include the media schedule for promotion.
- Business plan (budget) for the project that describes the financial aspects and budgetary conditions of your project. Each project must maintain financial records to document the use of TGP funds. These records should be filed and made available for inspection by Visit Vicksburg for a period of not less than three (3) years.
- Methods of research/tracking/measurement of the project’s results. The procedure used to research the effectiveness of your advertising and promotional efforts must be included. Examples include surveys, unique URL’s, landing page for the event, etc.
- If funding is granted, the current Visit Vicksburg logo must be included on all collateral, advertisement, digital media, and signage in relation to the funded project. In addition, a hyperlinked Visit Vicksburg logo must be placed on the project website upon grant selection and must remain for a period of no less than 12 consecutive months.
- In cases where sponsorship packages are available, a sponsorship equivalent to the dollar amount of TGP funds awarded should be provided to Visit Vicksburg.
- Grants must not exceed \$5,000 in a Fiscal Year (January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024).
- An organization receiving TGP funding is responsible for paying any applicable taxes.
- Additional guidelines may be required on an individual project basis and will be outlined in the TGP award letter and agreement.
- Documentation of non-profit status: charter, articles of incorporation, bylaws or other proof of status (i.e. annual report on file with secretary of state).

## Selection Process

The selection process for the TGP is overseen by the Visit Vicksburg Marketing Committee set by the Vicksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau (VCVB) Board of Directors. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- Potential for economic impact
- Increased hotel occupancy
- Merit of the project’s marketing and advertising plan
- Project’s ability to attract visitors
- Fiscal stability of project / organization
- Ability to benefit Vicksburg as a visitor destination
- Proven, historical success of the project or organization

## Grant Application & Timeline

The following steps are a requirement of the TGP funding:

1. A completed application is submitted for the project.
2. Grant decision is determined by Visit Vicksburg Marketing Committee.
3. If selected for the TGP Program, a notification letter will be sent out from Visit Vicksburg.
4. Grant participant will send acceptance letter by December 31, 2023.
5. 75% of the funds will be distributed within 60 days of the event.
6. A final report and supporting documentation are due within 30 days of a project's completion and no later than December 31, 2024.
7. After the final report is approved, the remaining 25% of the funds will be distributed from Visit Vicksburg.

## 2022 TGP Deadline Calendar

October 13, 2023	Application process begins for the FY 2024 TGP Year
November 30, 2023	Application Deadline*
December 15, 2023	Target date for notifying FY 2024 TGP applicants
December 31, 2023	Acceptance Letter Deadline**
December 31, 2024	Deadline for final reporting***

## Stipulations

Limited funds are available each Fiscal year and are awarded on a competitive basis. All decisions regarding grants are at the sole discretion of the Vicksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the following stipulations are effective for any project receiving funding:

- Failure to use funds as specified in an application will result a full refund of TGP funds distributed.
- Failure to submit a final report and other required documentation may result in penalties including but not limited to a full refund of TGP funds distributed.
- TGP funds cannot be transferred from one project to another or to another organization other than that listed on the application.
- Applicants not in compliance with reporting deadlines and procedures will be disqualified from receiving any future TGP funding for three (3) years.
- If a project change during developmental stages, the applicant should submit a written request to Visit Vicksburg, which may choose to accept or decline the changes. If changes are declined, no further TGP funds will be awarded, and any distributed funds must be refunded immediately. If changes are approved, an addendum to the original agreement will be provided by Visit Vicksburg and the project may move forward with pledged funding.

- Selected projects must be completed within the Fiscal Year in which the grant is awarded. If a project is delayed, the grantee must inform Visit Vicksburg in writing, requesting an extension. Visit Vicksburg reserves the right to reject a request for extension which may result in penalties including but not limited to a full refund of TGP funds distributed.

### **Notification**

- All projects must receive written approval, as notification, from Visit Vicksburg of the projects funding amount.
- Upon notification of grant approval, applicant must respond with a written letter of acceptance by the required deadline.

### **Final Report Process**

- A complete final report consists of an official final report form with the following items submitted as attachments:
  - Copy of award letter received from Visit Vicksburg
  - Written summary of results of the project and the impact it had on tourism in the Vicksburg area
  - Copies of all attendance reports
  - Samples of the complete project (tear sheets, mp3's, audio/visual files, etc.)
  - Explanation of methods used for research/tracking/measurement of the project's results
  - A comparison of the original grant application budget to actual final receipts and expenditures

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### **Resources:**

All grant information can also be downloaded at [www.visitvicksburg.com/locals](http://www.visitvicksburg.com/locals).

For in-person assistance, please contact Ashley Gatian to set up a training time to go over the program.

For questions related to Visit Vicksburg's Tourism Grant Program, please contact:

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