



TRAVEL
PORTLAND
2026 Visitor Experience
Grant Guidelines

MISSION AND VISION	2
PROGRAM OUTLINE	2
ELIGIBILITY	3
Applicant Eligibility	3
Project Eligibility	3
Ineligible Projects and Activities	3
AVAILABLE FUNDING	4
GRANT PROGRAM TIMELINE	4
HOW TO APPLY	5
Eligibility Quiz.....	5
Application Information / Required Documentation	5
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	5
GRANT AWARD PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS	5
Grant Agreement	5
Disbursement of Grant Funds.....	5
Project Check-In	6
Summary Report	6
QUESTIONS / ASSISTANCE	6
GRANT EVALUATION CRITERIA	6

MISSION AND VISION

Travel Portland generates travel demand that drives economic impact for Portland. We do that by promoting the destination in bold, innovative and collaborative ways that harness Portland’s personality and values and connect visitors* to authentic experiences. We do it because we believe in the good of Portland and the transformative effects of travel.

*A “visitor” is defined as a person who travels at least 50 miles beyond their residence and includes overnight and day visitors.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Travel Portland established the Visitor Experience Grant program, which is funded through lodging taxes and fees collected from hotels and short-term rentals in Portland, in 2023. These grants are intended to help fund initiatives that support the physical development of the destination in alignment with Travel Portland’s mission.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include the types of organizations listed below who are doing business in Portland and can demonstrate direct work in support of improving the economic impact of Portland's travel and tourism industry:

- Non-profit organizations registered with the Oregon Secretary of State's Office
- For-profit businesses involved in tourism or hospitality registered with the Oregon Secretary of State's Office
- Federally recognized tribes

For organizations that have received funding for a project in a prior grant cycle, eligibility for additional funding is contingent upon successful completion of all prior grant agreements. Organizations with open grant projects that are past due on reporting requirements will be considered ineligible to apply for subsequent grants.

To ensure broad distribution of grant funds, organizations are eligible to receive funding for a maximum of **three consecutive years** for the same or a substantially similar project. After three years, the organization must wait for at least one grant cycle before reapplying.

Project Eligibility

Eligible projects must be located within the [Portland Region](#) (as defined by Travel Oregon) and must directly support and enhance Portland's attractiveness as a destination for visitors. The proposed project must have a clear connection to attracting visitors, improving their stay, or supporting the tourism industry. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Tourism infrastructure development or enhancement
- Physical enhancements to tourism attractions
- Outdoor recreation infrastructure
- Accessibility improvements
- Wayfinding and signage

Proposals must include a detailed project budget, marketing plan and timeline for completion within one year of receiving the grant.

For more examples of eligible projects, please reference the [list of past grant recipients](#).

Ineligible Projects and Activities

The following activities are not eligible for this grant:

- Events
- Temporary activations or exhibits lasting less than 8 weeks
- Film and video projects
- Marketing campaigns
- Mobile app development
- Staff salaries and other ongoing operational costs
- Deferred, regular or ongoing maintenance and upkeep

AVAILABLE FUNDING

The total funding available for the 2026 grant cycle is up to \$200,000. Funding requests between \$25,000 to \$50,000 will be accepted. No match is required for any funding request. However, applications that show additional funds provided through cash or in-kind contributions may be given preference.

A maximum of one grant per organization per grant cycle will be awarded.

To ensure broad distribution of grant funds, organizations are eligible to receive funding for a maximum of **three consecutive years** for the same or a substantially similar project. After three years, the organization must wait at least one grant cycle before reapplying.

Travel Portland reserves the right to award grants in amounts totaling less than all funds available under the Visitor Experience Grant Program, to award a different amount than is requested in a grant application, to make changes to the Grant Guidelines or to cancel the Grants Program in its entirety.

GRANT PROGRAM TIMELINE

Nov. 6, 2025 – Grant guidelines published

Jan. 5, 2026 (9 a.m. PST) – Eligibility quiz and application form available online

Jan. 7, 2026 (12 p.m. PST) – Virtual information session

Feb. 9, 2026 (5 p.m. PST) – Deadline to submit application

March 31, 2026 – Applicants notified of decision status

May 1, 2027 – Project completion deadline (grant funds spent)

June 1, 2027 – Final project report due (includes final budget and proof of spending)

HOW TO APPLY

Eligibility Quiz

In order to access the online application form, all applicants must submit an eligibility quiz to ensure that the applying organization and project are eligible for consideration. Upon completion of the eligibility quiz, the applicant will receive access to the application.

Application Information / Required Documentation

Before beginning the online application, we encourage applicants to [review the application questions in advance](#) and gather the following information to submit with the application:

- Project budget (must use the required budget template, available in [Excel](#) or [Google Sheets](#))
- Project timeline with milestones
- Marketing plan
- Project support letters (recommended; not required)

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Funding decisions will be made by Travel Portland leadership, based on the recommendations of a cross-departmental committee of Travel Portland staff members. Awards will be based on a project's alignment with Travel Portland's mission of strengthening Portland's economy through tourism, being intentional about how the quality of life for residents can be balanced with the quality of the visitor experience and responsibly growing Portland's tourism industry for the benefit of all.

The decision to fund a grant proposal will be determined using the rubric beginning on the next page.

GRANT AWARD PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Grant Agreement

Upon selection, grant recipients shall sign an agreement that includes the scope of work, terms of the project, payment timeline and reporting requirements.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

Awarded grant funds will be disbursed upon receipt of a signed grant agreement, invoice and W-9. These funds may only be used for costs related to the project and clearly identified in the grant budget. Any grant funds not used as approved shall be returned to Travel Portland in accordance with the grant agreement.

Project Check-In

All grant recipients will be required to complete a check-in with Travel Portland staff via phone or Zoom midway through the project to discuss progress and address any potential challenges.

Summary Report

A final summary report must be submitted through Travel Portland's online grant management system, with copies of detailed project expenses (receipts). The report is due by June 1, 2027. Eligibility for future funding is contingent upon successful completion of all prior grant reporting requirements.

QUESTIONS / ASSISTANCE

View the [2026 Visitor Experience Grant web page](#) for commonly asked questions. Submit additional questions via email to grants@travelportland.com.

GRANT EVALUATION CRITERIA

The decision to fund a grant proposal will be determined using the following criteria and scoring rubric:

Tourism Impact

Questions Considered	Project Description Project Goals Economic Benefit
1 – Needs Improvement	Lacks a clear connection to tourism Fails to demonstrate potential for increasing visitor numbers
2 – Satisfactory	Has a clear, but limited, impact May attract a small number of visitors or have a modest effect on the local economy
3 – Strong	Demonstrates a significant, measurable impact Likely to attract a notable increase in visitors or generate substantial economic benefits
4 – Excellent	Has the potential for a transformative impact Introduces an innovative concept, expands the tourism season, or creates a new major attraction

Marketing Strategy

Questions Considered	Marketing Plan Project Budget
1 – Needs Improvement	Lacks a clear marketing plan Does not identify a target audience or detail how the project will be promoted No evidence of marketing costs included or considered in the project budget
2 – Satisfactory	Marketing plan is general, mentioning a few channels (e.g., social media, local ads) without a clear strategy or measurable goals Mentions marketing expenses briefly, but they are not clearly itemized or justified in the overall budget
3 – Strong	Presents a detailed marketing strategy that identifies a specific target audience Outlines the channels, messaging, and timeline for promotion Includes marketing as a defined line item in the project budget, with costs that align with the proposed strategy May include a plan to measure marketing effectiveness (not required, but ideal)
4 – Excellent	Marketing strategy is innovative and data-driven Includes a multi-channel approach that effectively reaches audiences 50+ miles from Portland Clearly integrates marketing into the overall budget, showing appropriate allocation of funds to maximize impact and track return on investment May include defined metrics and methods to assess marketing performance (not required, but ideal)

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Questions Considered	Advancing Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
1 – Needs Improvement	Proposal does not consider or actively excludes diverse backgrounds
2 – Satisfactory	Proposal makes a general statement about inclusion, but lacks specific details or concrete actions
3 – Strong	Proposal demonstrates a commitment to inclusion by outlining how the project will be welcoming to a diverse range of visitors and community members
4 – Excellent	Proposal actively seeks to serve historically marginalized groups and creates a truly welcoming experience for everyone, going beyond general statements to provide specific, actionable plans

Accessibility

Questions Considered	Accessibility Considerations
1 – Needs Improvement	Proposal does not consider or actively excludes people with disabilities
2 – Satisfactory	Proposal makes a general statement about accessibility, but lacks specific details or concrete actions
3 – Strong	Proposal includes specific and thoughtful plans to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, such as providing ramps or accessible restrooms
4 – Excellent	Proposal goes far beyond standard requirements, making accessibility a core principle of the project's design and creating a truly barrier-free experience

Budget and Financial Leverage

Questions Considered	Use of Funds Financial Sustainability Project Budget
1 – Needs Improvement	Budget is poorly detailed or contains errors, making the proposed usage of funds unclear May rely on a one-time grant with no long-term plan
2 – Satisfactory	Budget is generally clear and aligns with the proposed use of funds Mentions a plan for sustainability, but lacks detail or relies on uncertain future funding sources
3 – Strong	Budget is detailed and aligns with project goals May include matching funds (cash and in-kind), effectively leveraging the grant amount Outlines a clear plan for long-term sustainability, such as generating revenue, securing future partnerships, or integrating the project into the organization's core operations
4 – Excellent	Budget is exceptionally detailed, transparent, and represents an outstanding value for the investment Significant matching funds maximize the grant's long-term economic impact Sustainability plan is well-researched, financially sound, and demonstrates a clear understanding of the project's lasting benefit

Community Support and Partnerships

Questions Considered	Partner Organizations Letters of Support
1 – Needs Improvement	Proposal provides no evidence of community support or partnerships Project appears to be an isolated effort with no local support
2 – Satisfactory	Proposal mentions some community support or a single partnership Details are vague or the partnership is not central to the project's success
3 – Strong	Documented support from key community stakeholders and established partnerships with other local organizations, businesses, or government entities that will contribute to the project's success
4 – Excellent	Project is a model of collaboration, with robust, multi-faceted partnerships that demonstrate strong community support and active participation May also show how the project directly benefits multiple local businesses or organizations