



## Tennessee Department of Tourist Development 2026 Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism Scholarship Overview

The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development is pleased to announce that we will provide two types of scholarships for the 2026 Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism hosted by Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association September 16-18, 2026, in Gatlinburg.

Realizing that budgets are limited, the opportunity to attend the Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism provides those working in the **Tennessee tourism industry** a chance to meet annually, attend educational seminars and network with industry partners. For more on the conference visit: <https://www.tnhta.org/events/governors-conference-on-hospitality-and-tourism-2026>.

- Scholarships are for the 2026 TN Governor's Conference on Hospitality & Tourism only
- **Please do not register for Governor's Conference prior to applying for this scholarship. TDTD will register scholarship recipients.**
- Scholarship cannot be used toward a match for any grant program

### THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING:

- Can you or your organization pay for the expenses that would accompany attending the Governor's Conference? (i.e. travel, meals, and/or lodging expenses, etc.)
  - If a scholarship recipient needs to cancel attendance/lodging, TDTD must be notified no later than Friday, September 11. Failure to notify TDTD by this deadline will result in the recipient's organization being responsible for any registration/lodging/cancellation fees.
- How can attending Governor's Conference improve your contribution to Tennessee tourism? How can it benefit you and/or your organization?

### ABOUT THE GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP:

- Up to two scholarships will be awarded to applicants in each of the grand divisions of the state in counties that are not considered at-risk or distressed
- Scholarship award will cover **registration fees** to conference only

### ABOUT THE RURAL SCHOLARSHIP:

- Up to 2 scholarships will be awarded to each county designated as distressed or at-risk per the current or previous two FYs Appalachian Regional Commission guidelines
- Scholarship award will cover **registration fees and lodging** to conference only
- **Required attendance** at the Rural Tourism pre-conference training day, **September 16, 2026** (Tentative start 9:00am ET)

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

1. You must be employed by a tourism organization / business/ Government  
Examples of tourism businesses are:
  - Convention & Visitors Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, DMO
  - Community development related organizations
  - Attractions
  - Restaurants

- Museums
- Lodging

2. You must be able to cover the cost of travel, meals etc. and lodging if not included in the scholarship.
3. To be eligible for the Rural Scholarship, your organization must be located in a county designated as distressed or at-risk per the current or previous two FYs Appalachian Regional Commission guidelines.

***\*DTTD maintains the discretionary right to create exceptions or additional eligibility regulations on a case-by-case basis.***

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS:**

Please return typed application via email by **Friday, July 17, 2026**, to [Andi.Grindley@tn.gov](mailto:Andi.Grindley@tn.gov)

#### **SCHOLARSHIP NOTIFICATION:**

Governor's Conference scholarships will be awarded by **Friday, July 24, 2026**. You will receive notification of the status of your application via email.

Scholarships awarded are limited to available funds, as well as the number of requests received.

#### **FOLLOW UP REQUIREMENTS:**

By **October 16, 2026**, scholarship awardees will be **required** to send in a follow up letter detailing the Governor's Conference experience, key learnings, and takeaways. Please send the letter to [andi.grindley@tn.gov](mailto:andi.grindley@tn.gov).