

Tourism Enhancement Grant FY27

Definitions and Frequently Asked Questions

As defined in Public Chapter 707 (2026):

1. **“Destination marketing organization”** means a nonprofit entity or governmental unit that:
 - (A) Is responsible for attracting tourists through tourism promotion or tourism development efforts on behalf of one (1) or more municipalities;
 - (B) Operates on a year-round basis; and
 - (C) Utilizes a dedicated tourism marketing budget supported by a consistent funding source;
2. **“Tourism”** means attracting tourists to visit a particular area for day and overnight travel and encouraging those tourists to spend money in the area, which includes travel related to both leisure and business activities;
3. **“Tourism development”** means the creation or expansion of physical attractions, facilities, or events that are available and open to the public, that improve the appeal of destinations to tourists, and that enhance tourist experiences that are primarily promoted to or used by tourists;
4. **“Tourism event”** means a planned occurrence, festival, exhibition, performance, sporting event, or similar organized activity which is designed and intended to attract tourists and visitors from at least fifty (50) miles away with the intent of generating overnight stay or increased visitation and expenditures that contribute to the local or regional economy through lodging, dining, retail, transportation, and other visitor-related services;
5. **“Tourism promotion”** means planning, conducting, or participating in programs of information, publicity, and advertising that are designed to attract tourists and foster economic activity through tourism; and
6. **“Tourist” or “visitor”** means an individual who travels more than fifty (50) miles from their primary residence or travels from an out-of-state primary residence to a destination for the infrequent purpose of leisure, entertainment, business, or recreation, and whose spending contributes to this state’s tourism economy.

Program Definitions

1. **“Regional Tourism Organization”** means either an entity confirmed in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-3-2207 or a nonprofit organization whose primary purpose includes the promotion, branding, or marketing of a statewide, regional, or industry-based tourism sector, network of destinations, attractions, experiences, or tourism-related businesses, with the objective of increasing visitor spending and travel within Tennessee.”

Q: How many grants will be awarded?

A: The total number is contingent upon the number of qualifying applications received and how many apply for the full amount of funding.

Q: What is the source of the funding?

A: These are state funds.

Q: Will you accept more than one application from a county?

A: Yes, more than one municipality within a county can apply as long as prior grants are closed.

Q: Can you apply for more than one project?

A: Yes. As long as you do not request more than \$100,000, you can propose multiple projects in multiple parts of the county. To get the best score, they should be related and “tell a good story.”

Q: Can you give us examples of what you have funded in the past?

A: A few examples of projects funded previously include: stage and boat ramp improvements, seating, electrical, lighting and sound system upgrades for tourism venues and attractions, wayfinding signage to direct visitors to tourism attractions, enhancements to sports facilities that host large travel tournaments.

Q: What types of organizations are eligible to apply?

A: Eligible grantees include a non-profit historic village, or a Tennessee state, local or a quasi-governmental entity.

Q: Can I use a consultant to develop a plan for my community?

A: No, community plans do not qualify.

Q: Can I mail my application?

A: No. It must be submitted via the form link provided.