

Explore Schuylkill Tourism Promotion Mini Grant Program

MINI GRANT GUIDELINES

Explore Schuylkill welcomes your request for a marketing mini grant to support your marketing campaign, project, or special event in Schuylkill County.

History: Explore Schuylkill's Mini Grant Program is a new initiative developed to assist partners in tourism in their marketing efforts of increasing tourism and overnight stays within the county. Explore Schuylkill's Board of Directors approved this initiative at the end of 2021. Grants are reviewed in March 2024 and awarded in April 2024

Purpose: To support marketing, promotional, and publicity initiatives that result in increased tourism and overnight stays within Schuylkill County for qualifying tourism businesses and organizations. Awards will be granted upon the recommendation of our review committee comprised of our executive director, team members, and several board of directors members, and administered by Explore Schuylkill.

Instructions:

- Review all guidelines.
- Use enclosed application form, or follow form independently being sure to complete each item.
- INCOMPLETE applications will be rejected.
- Deadline is Friday March 1, 2024
- All proposals must meet the criteria to increase tourism and overnight stays within Schuylkill County.
- Be sure to plan how you will measure or estimate increased tourism/overnight stays.
- Grants range from \$250 to \$3500. There is no guarantee applicants will receive **any** award or the **full** amount requested.

Monies for this grant are generated by visitors staying overnight and paying the hotel room tax that is collected by lodging establishments as per Act No. 2016-18, H.B. No. 794. As you read the application guidelines, **note that grant applications must meet the criteria of increasing tourism and overnight stays within the county.** As overnight stays increase, so does the size of the funds available for grants. These revenues account for over 94% of Explore Schuylkill's **entire** operating budget of which we are dedicating a portion for this grant.

**Explore Schuylkill
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GUIDELINES FOR MINI GRANT REQUESTS

Criteria

1. Grants may be awarded to any qualifying tourism industry entity in Schuylkill County including accommodations, transportation and travel services, food and beverage services, retail, recreation, and entertainment organizations, events, and members of Explore Schuylkill in good standing.

For the purposes of this grant, a “marketing campaign/project/event “ includes any variety of media, including but not limited to: television, internet commercials, banners, digital content, print ads, social media ads, video spots, etc.

For the purposes of this grant, the overarching creative on Explore Schuylkill’s destination marketing is “Explore Schuylkill County where your woodland escape and historic town adventures come together naturally,” which allow for creativity and partnership among many themes and experiences.

A qualifying organization must:

- **be a tourism entity as described above located in Schuylkill County**
 - **have an EIN number as determined by the Internal Revenue Service**
 - **have a proven record of bringing patrons/audience members from at least 30 and preferably beyond a 50-mile radius to Schuylkill County.**
2. An organization may file more than one grant request; however, a separate application must be submitted for each request.
 3. Priority given to applications that:
 - Have the potential to generate overnight stays at Schuylkill County lodging properties
 - Best complement Explore Schuylkill marketing efforts
 - Are Explore Schuylkill members in good standing
 - Positively impact the greatest number of local businesses
 4. All marketing plans should be geared toward generating overnight stays at local lodging facilities.
 5. No grants for sectarian religious purposes.
 6. No grants for political/governmental purposes.
 7. No grants for general operating expenses.
 8. All grant dollars must be used within 12 months of award notification.
 9. Marketing campaigns, projects, and events must include Explore Schuylkill’s logo
 10. A final summary is due within 30 days of the marketing campaign/project/event completion date(s), and must include media billings/proof, media marketing report with

metrics, previous year's metrics if applicable, and an itemized list of promotional expenses.

11. Awardees must provide adequate proof that grant funds were used for their intended purpose through the submission of media billings, or other similar documentation.
12. Applications must be received at Explore Schuylkill no later than 5 p.m. on Friday March 1st, 2024 at 4 p.m.
13. **Only Fully Completed Applications Will be Considered**
14. It shall in no way be understood or implied that mini grant funds will be divided equally among proposed marketing campaigns, projects, or events
15. Questions regarding the application process shall be directed to Explore Schuylkill info@schuylkill.org or at 570.622.7700.

**Explore Schuylkill
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APPLICATION FORM**

Organizational Information

1. Name of Organization: _____
2. Mailing Address of Organization: _____
3. Phone & Email: _____
4. Point of Contact: _____

Marketing Campaign/Marketing Project/Event Information

6. Campaign/Project/Event Name: _____
7. Campaign/Project/Event Location(s): _____
8. Date(s): _____
9. Description of Campaign/Project/Event: (If necessary provide attachment)

10. Previous Campaign/Project/Event Metrics if applicable: (If necessary provide attachments)

11. What percentage of attendees are not Schuylkill County Residents? _____

12. What percentage or number of attendees stayed at a hotel, motel, or B&B's in Schuylkill County? If this is the first year, note the number of attendees you estimate will stay at a hotel, motel, B&B, or Airbnb/Vrbo.

Applicants must contact local establishments in order to complete item #12. Be sure to include any establishment feedback.

13. What additional Schuylkill County businesses and organizations will experience direct benefit from this event? Please attach list and explanation.

Marketing Campaign/Marketing Project/Event Budget Information

14. Are you a non-profit organization? _____

15. Total Budget: \$_____

16. Amount of budget that will be dedicated to marketing efforts; \$_____

17. Percentage of budget dedicated to marketing: _____%

18. Amount of Explore Schuylkill funds being requested: \$_____

19. What portion of the total marketing budget do you expect to be funded by Explore Schuylkill? _____

20. Provide details of your Marketing Plan:

(Identify the media that will be used to attract visitors from beyond Schuylkill County. Provide details of projected costs of media buys. Include a copy of your Marketing Plan when you submit this worksheet.)

Please submit this worksheet, along with your fully completed application, and all supporting attachments to Explore Schuylkill at info@schuylkill.org or 103 East Union Street, Rear, Pottsville PA 17901 by Friday March 1 at 4 p.m.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. An awards review committee will be comprised of Explore Schuylkill Board of Directors, team members, and the Executive Director.
2. The awards review committee is charged with making certain that each award meets and/or exceeds the established criteria in the Grant Guidelines, and will present each of their final recommendations for awards to the full Explore Schuylkill Board of Directors for ratification.
3. In the event that a member of the awards review committee or Board of Directors is in any way associated with the grant applicant organization, it is mandatory that said member excuse themselves from the review and decision-making process and the ratification process.
4. It shall in no way be understood or implied that there shall be an equal division of the total funds among projects or events.
5. Explore Schuylkill endeavors to annually set-aside a fund as budgets allow.
6. Explore Schuylkill will annually review the established criteria.
7. Organizations who have received previous grants are not guaranteed grants the next year. Each application is reviewed on its own merits based upon the availability of funds.

Questions regarding the application process, policies, or procedures can be directed to Explore Schuylkill at 570.622.7700, or info@schuylkill.org.