



FY2027 Partner Marketing Grant Program

Program Overview

The Visit Independence Partner Marketing Grant Program is a competitive 50/50 matching reimbursement grant designed to support marketing initiatives that increase visitation, overnight stays, and visitor spending in Independence, Missouri.

Through this annual program, Visit Independence will invest \$15,000 in cooperative marketing efforts that promote attractions, events, festivals, museums, exhibits, lodging partners, and tourism-related businesses that generate measurable tourism impact.

The goal of this program is to leverage local investment to create stronger marketing campaigns that position Independence as a premier visitor destination.

Total Funding Available

Total Grant Pool: \$15,000

Total Grant Maximum per applicant: \$5,000 (\$10,000 project minimum)

Funding is awarded on a competitive basis.

Visit Independence reserves the right to:

- Award full or partial funding from the grant pool
- Fund multiple projects
- Decline funding for projects that do not meet program goals
- Award less than requested amount

Grant Structure

This is a 50/50 matching reimbursement grant.

Applicants must provide a minimum dollar-for-dollar cash match equal to the amount requested.

Examples

Grant Award Required Applicant Match Total Marketing Campaign Min.

\$500	\$500	\$1,000
\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000
\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000
\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000

Applicants are encouraged to invest beyond the required 50% match.

Program Timeline

Date	Activity
August 1, 2026	Applications Open
August 30, 2026	Applications Due (5:00 PM)
September 2026	Review Committee Evaluation
September 25, 2026	Award Notifications
October 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	Eligible Campaign Period
Within 30 Days of Campaign Completion Reimbursement Request Due	

Program Goals

Funding will prioritize projects that:

- Increase overnight visitation
- Drive new visitors to Independence
- Generate hotel room nights
- Increase visitor spending
- Attract regional and national audiences
- Encourage longer visitor stays
- Promote tourism assets and experiences
- Strengthen the Visit Independence destination brand

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must:

- Be a Visit Independence partner in good standing.
 - Be located in Independence, Missouri.
 - Operate a tourism-related business, attraction, museum, event, lodging property, or tourism experience.
 - Complete the project within Visit Independence's FY2027 funding cycle (October 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027.)
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Eligible Marketing Expenses

Grant funds and matching funds may be used for tourism marketing activities including:

Advertising

- Digital advertising
- Paid social media advertising
- Search engine marketing (SEM)
- Display advertising
- Streaming/video advertising
- Television
- Radio
- Print advertising
- Billboard advertising

Promotional Materials

- Brochures
- Rack cards
- Flyers
- Posters
- Tourism collateral

Digital Marketing

- Website campaign landing pages
- Email marketing
- Video production

- Photography
- Influencer marketing
- Content creation
- Digital tourism campaigns

Destination Promotion

Marketing campaigns promoting:

- Attractions
 - Festivals
 - Exhibits
 - Museums
 - Events
 - Seasonal experiences
 - Tourism packages
 - Cooperative tourism campaigns
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Ineligible Expenses

Grant funds and matching funds may NOT be used for:

- Building maintenance
- Facility improvements
- Landscaping
- Capital improvements
- Payroll or employee wages
- Benefits
- Utilities
- Office supplies
- Equipment purchases
- Event or business insurance
- Food and beverages
- Alcohol
- Debt repayment
- Membership dues
- Operating expenses
- Entertainment
- Political activities

- Expenses incurred outside the approved campaign period
 - In-kind donations or volunteer labor
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Matching Funds Requirements

Applicants must provide a minimum 50% cash match.

Eligible matching funds include:

- Advertising purchases
- Printing costs
- Graphic design
- Video production
- Photography
- Digital advertising
- Paid social media
- Website advertising
- Tourism publication advertising
- Influencer marketing
- Marketing software directly related to the campaign

The following cannot count toward the required match:

- Volunteer time
 - Donated services
 - Existing salaries
 - Staff time
 - Existing operating expenses
 - Previously completed marketing campaigns
 - In-kind contributions
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Grant Requirements

Grant recipients agree to:

- Complete the approved marketing campaign during the funding period.
- Include the Visit Independence logo on all grant-funded marketing materials
- Recognize Visit Independence as a funding partner when appropriate.
- Submit final campaign creative, before placement/print, to be approved by Visit Independence

- Maintain contracts, receipts, and proof of payment.
 - Submit a final report detailing campaign results.
 - Submit reimbursement documentation within 30 days of campaign completion.
 - Allow Visit Independence to use campaign materials, photos, and results for reporting and promotional purposes.
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Reimbursement Process

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis only.

Recipients must submit:

- Reimbursement Request Form
- Paid invoices
- Proof of payment
- Copies or screenshots of marketing materials
- Campaign performance metrics
- Photos, advertisements, or promotional materials

Visit Independence will reimburse up to 50% of approved eligible expenses, not to exceed the approved grant award.

Late reimbursement requests may not be eligible for funding.