

Northampton County



2023 Hotel Tax Grant Guidelines

Application Process Opens: 8:30 A.M. Monday, APRIL 11, 2022
Deadline: 4:00 P.M., Friday, JUNE 10, 2022

Funding Requests are currently being accepted for projects that will take place in Calendar Year 2023. All projects funded under this announcement must be completed within Calendar Year 2023. Grant awards are expected to be announced October of 2022.

Please review these guidelines carefully for eligibility requirements and application submission procedures. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Northampton County Hotel Tax Grant Guidelines

2023 Grant Process

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The County of Northampton will competitively award grants to be funded from revenues collected through the Northampton County Hotel Tax. The Hotel Tax funds are provided for under Northampton County Resolution No. 440 of 2005, as authorized by P.L. 307 of 2000 and amended by Act 12 of 2005, by imposing a Hotel Room Rental Tax of 4% on hotel guests, to be used for tourism and community development initiatives.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Projects will promote community development related to tourism and/or enhance tourism within Northampton County, such as activities/events/venues which measurably increase the number of visitors to the County and/or promote Northampton County's unique cultural and/or historic value. Applicants must fall within one of the categories identified below:

- Federally registered non-profit entity (501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4))
- Municipal entity located within Northampton County

In addition, events and activities must occur in Northampton County. These funds are intended to support events or project expenses such as promotional costs and capital improvements. Applicants relying on these funds as a general source of annual operating funds, such as requests to support core staffing costs and other administrative operational expenses typically covered by the organization, will be considered less competitive in the application review and selection process.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

All grants will be awarded based on a review process. Projects that can most effectively address some or all of the following will receive preference:

- The project promotes/supports visitation to sites within the County that promote our unique cultural and/or historic value. Organizations must attempt to measure the number of participants (out-of-town tourists vs. local resident participation).
- The project will measurably increase the number of visitors to Northampton County;
- The project measurably improves public health and/or wellness;
- The project supports historic preservation. Projects that support the Historic and Cultural Assets Plan will be considered more favorable. A copy of the Historic and Cultural Assets Plan can be found at <https://www.northamptoncounty.org/CMTYECDV/Pages/Northampton-County-Historic-and-Cultural-Assets-Plan.aspx>
- The project is a collaborative partnership with other Northampton County entities.

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

The County reserves the right to fund proposals at a higher or lower amount at its sole discretion. A minimum match of \$1 cash for every \$3 granted is required. The required match may include in-kind services. 50% of the required match may be documented in-kind services or goods. Applications with a match source exceeding the minimum requirement will be considered more competitive.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

All applicants are required to register with the Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development's (NCD CED) County Relationship Manager (CRM) and submit electronic applications through the web. CRM may be accessed at the following web link: <https://web.northamptoncounty.org/DCEDForms/views/Login.html>. Following NCD CED confirmation of registry (within 1-2 business days) applicants may upload and submit their electronic application forms and supplemental documentation through the CRM application program.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Visit the NCD CED Grant and Loan Programs web page at <https://www.northamptoncounty.org/CMTYECDV/Pages/Apply-for-Funding.aspx>
2. Scroll down and find the grant program you would like to apply for (Under Funding) and click on the program name.
3. Download all applicable documents associated with the funding announcement (application, program guidelines, Historic and Cultural Assets Plan, contracting requirements).
4. When you are ready to submit your application and supporting documentation, return to the DCED Grants & Loans Programs web page. Scroll down to the grant program you would like to apply.
5. Click on "Apply" for the grant program you are applying. This will take you to the CRM program.
6. CRM Program: Returning users may log-in to CRM, select "Apply or Funding," complete the fields and upload application and supporting documentation. First-time users will need to register before applying. Applicants are encouraged to register early as there is a processing period of 1-2 business days before documentation can be uploaded.

Register at <https://web.northamptoncounty.org/DCEDForms/views/Login.html>. You only need to register once. You do not need to register for each grant program. If you do not remember your password, please enter your email address on the CRM main page and it will be emailed to you. Each applicant should have their own registration. Do not share registrations. New registrants will receive an email approval within 1-2 business days.

IT IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT TO ASSURE THAT THE APPLICATION IS RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE. Staff reserve the right to request additional information from the applicant after the deadline to clarify a submission.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. A Funding Request Single Application Form.
2. IRS letter indicating 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) status.
3. A project and budget narrative is required. The narrative must be typed on a separate page (limit three pages) and should include at the minimum:
 - What do you plan to accomplish with this project?
 - How do you plan to accomplish it?
 - Include an explanation of how the project/activity will support historic preservation, increase tourism and/or quality of life in/within the County of Northampton.
 - How will grant funds be used? (address each cost item identified in the project budget)
 - Project schedule with key milestones and dates.
 - A brief description of your organization including mission statement, population served, accomplishments and any other relevant information.
 - Highlight any partnerships and/or innovative elements of the project.
 - Construction/Renovation projects require a current status list of permits and zoning variances, as well as, a copy of contract(s) for any vendor service already bid and/or executed (general contracts, architects, engineers, etc.). The Hotel Tax award may not be used for expenses/activities encumbered prior to the award date.
 - Methodology to be used to track participants and quantifiable accomplishments.
4. Using the budget sheet provided within the application form, provide a detailed budget, including all sources and uses of funds, for the project from start to finish, including multiple project phases, if applicable. Application also requires cost estimates, as a source of determining amount of funds requested. Budgets submitted without documentation will not be eligible for consideration. Enter whole numbers, rounded to the nearest one hundred dollars.

Evidence of Matching Funds

A minimum 25% of match in funds is required. No more than 50% of matching funds may be in-kind services. If matching funds are from another award source other than the organization, proof of award must be included with application submission. Letters or emails of award notices are acceptable. Applications with a match source exceeding the minimum requirement will be considered more competitive. As a general rule, County funding sources cannot be matched with County funds except Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Waivers may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

5. Any agency applying for funds must submit:
 - W-9
 - Most recent audited financial statements or most recent year-end financial statement

6. **The deadline for submitting Funding Request Single Application Form(s) is Friday, June 10, 2022, 4:00 p.m.**

PROGRAM CONDITIONS

Grants are awarded based on merit and are subject to the availability of funds. Funds are released on a reimbursement/cost incurrence basis only. Eligible applicants may submit multiple requests. The organization’s application will become a part of the grant agreement between the organization and the County of Northampton. **Please note, applications may not be funded to the fullest amount requested.** Therefore, if an application receives partial funding, a determination will need to occur as to whether the project can continue. All applicants are urged to have contingency plans should they not receive their entire grant. Past/Current Northampton County Grant Recipients with overdue reports and outstanding grant requirements may not be eligible to apply for or receive funding.

PROGRAM REPORTING CONDITIONS

Reporting/Audit - Grantees are required to submit Semi-Annual Performance and Project Close-out Reports to NCDCED. Disbursement of funds and future grant awards are contingent upon the timely submission of these reports. Reports must be submitted on NCDCED provided reporting forms.

NCDCED may conduct onsite monitoring at any point during the grant agreement term and/or at the completion of the project. Grant recipients may be subject to one or more audits. Grantees will be required to cooperate fully with those audits and provide all requested documentation in connection with those audits.

PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE SCORING CRITERIA

Hotel Tax Scoring Criteria			Scoring Weight
1	Project Narrative		1/3
2	Budget/Matching Funds Leveraged		1/3
3	Additional Submission Requirements		1/3
	Effectively Address Priority Preferences	30%	
	Project Timeline and Capacity	30%	
	Partnerships	40%	

PROCEDURES FOR ACCESSING FUNDS

A grant agreement between the grantee and the County of Northampton will be required prior to release of award dollars. Awards will be released only if the applicant is in compliance with all previously awarded County grants. Award recipients will be required to provide a Certificate of Insurance for the project, listing the County of Northampton as additional insured. All grant agreements include provisions and conditions appropriate to the project to be funded, including provisions addressing the following conditions:

Nondiscrimination - No assistance will be awarded unless grantee certifies to the grantor that it shall not discriminate against any employee or against any person seeking employment because of race, religion, color, handicap, national origin, age, or sex. All contracts for work to be paid with Hotel Tax funds must contain the Commonwealth's official nondiscrimination clause.

Project Records - The grantee must maintain full and accurate records with respect to the project. The County of Northampton and its designees shall have access to such records, as well as the ability to inspect all project work, invoices, materials, and other relevant records at reasonable times and places.

Contracting Requirements – Contracting shall be done in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local requirements and guidelines. It shall be the responsibility of the Grantee/Sub grantee to ensure that such requirements and guidelines are followed. **Construction projects may be subject to Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage requirements. Please click [here](#) for applicability.** Northampton County's Competitive Bid Requirements can be found in Exhibit 1 of the guidelines.

Disbursement of Award Funds – Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement or cost incurrence basis upon request by the recipient. Recipients will be provided a NCDCED funding reimbursement form. Supporting documentation including invoices, receipts, contracts, cancelled check(s), etc. will be required for all eligible expenses including match requirements.

PROGRAM INQUIRIES

Program inquiries should be directed to:

Northampton County Department of Community & Economic Development
Karen Collis, Community & Economic Development Specialist
610-829-6314, kcollis@northamptoncounty.org.

EXHIBIT 1

COMPETITIVE BID REQUIREMENTS

Any good or service purchased under this grant must be done in accordance with your entity's purchasing requirements or the County's, *whichever is most restrictive*. Northampton County's thresholds are as follows:

\$1 to \$5,000	One quote, verbal or written
\$5,001 to \$24,999	Minimum three (3) written quotes. Written documentation must be attached to the transaction and shall indicate which qualified vendor(s) were contacted, their responses, the date, and other pertinent information besides price, such as delivery, etc.
\$25,000 and above	Need to be procured utilizing a formally advertised public bid

Documented costs may include quotes or advertisements (i.e. online cost comparisons). Remember to keep copies of all quotes/costs in your project record as this verifies you followed the appropriate procurement method. Selecting a good or service through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's cooperative purchasing program administered by the Department of General Services (DGS) Bureau of Procurement, the COSTARS Program, is an acceptable alternative to the methods listed above.

PREPARING FOR COMPETITIVE BIDS

The first step in most projects is to document the specific work to be done in order to competitively solicit bids from contractors. On a small project where total construction costs are not expected to exceed \$25,000, you may only wish to use an existing estimate or specifications to solicit written estimates from contractors. Most sub grantees work with an architectural, engineering or other project management firm to develop a bid package that ensures you select the most qualified contractor while complying with local, state and federal laws and regulations.

Construction projects require specific technical expertise and knowledge of how to comply with state and federal labor requirements. Those not accustomed to overseeing construction projects are highly encouraged to hire a project manager.

ACQUISITION OF ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING SERVICES

When acquiring A/E services to design your site/project, a Request for Proposals (RFP) or a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) may be used. Under an RFQ, you may use competitive proposal procedures whereby the competitors' qualifications are evaluated and the most qualified competitor is selected, subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation. In these instances, price is not used as a selection factor. Once the most-qualified firm is identified, only that firm is asked for a price proposal that is subject to negotiation of a fair and reasonable price. If negotiations with the selected firm are unsuccessful, this process is repeated with the next highest-ranked firm until a fair and reasonably priced contract can be awarded. You must document the basis for your determination of the most qualified competitor and the reasonableness of the contract price.

Note the following requirements if your project is federally funded:

- An RFQ may not be used to purchase other services performed by architects and engineers (24 CFR 85.36(d)(3)(v)). Additional services offered by A/E firms, such as preparation of bid packets, project management or grant writing, must be selected based on lowest cost (using an RFP or other appropriate small purchasing method).
- You cannot award a contract to any person or firm that develops or drafts specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids, and/or requests for proposals (24 CFR 84.43).
- Architects or engineers selected by municipalities may be reimbursed through your grant if documentation can be supplied that the firm had been selected using an appropriate procurement methodology within the previous three (3) years of the Start Date of the sub-grant agreement and the contract specifically includes project management activities in the scope of services. Otherwise, these costs cannot be paid under the grant.

VENDOR PREFERENCE

When contracts or subcontracts are expected to exceed \$25,000 and are funded in whole or in part by state or federal funds, opportunities must be afforded to businesses and organizations which are eligible for preferential treatment under a variety of laws, Executive Orders, etc. (e.g., the Small Business Act). Eligible organizations include: small, small disadvantaged, women-owned, historically underutilized business zone (HUBZone), veteran-owned and service disabled veteran-owned small businesses. These requirements historically included only Minority Owned or Women Owned Businesses (MBE/WBE). While certain funding sources (i.e. HUD) may only ask for reporting on certain classifications of businesses, including all preferred classes in your preferred bidding process will ensure that all newly emerging requirements are met.

You and any prime contractors are required to advise and provide the maximum practicable opportunity for participation to small and diverse businesses. For federally funded projects, the target participation levels are 5% for minority owned business enterprises and 3% for women owned business enterprises.

Requirements under both state and federally funded projects can be met by accessing the current listing of state-certified Small and Diverse Firms at the following website:

<http://www.dgs.internet.state.pa.us/suppliersearch>

Click on the Advanced Search. Choose “Northampton County” from the PA Counties section. Choose the Supplier Classification or check “Select All Classifications.” Find the appropriate UNSPSC Codes in the available list. Hit Search. You will receive names of local MBE & WBE vendors and Small Diverse (SD) vendors for the type(s) of businesses you are soliciting.

Repeat for the following counties:

- Bucks
- Carbon
- Lehigh
- Monroe

You must send the bid announcement to any certified business that provides the service or good you need and is located in the five counties listed above. You can choose to solicit other classifications (i.e. Veteran-Owned Businesses) or non-certified businesses; however, non-certified vendors must agree to register with the Commonwealth in order to receive preference in bidding.

- Keep evidence, such as a fax cover sheet or a copy of the stamped, addressed envelope, showing you successfully sent the bid announcement to each registered business.
- If there are no relevant vendors, print the page showing there were no matches and keep this in your records.