



VISIT BELOIT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GRANT

(Adopted September 26, 2023)

A. INTRODUCTION

Visit Beloit, Inc. was created pursuant to the State of Wisconsin Statute 66.0615 and City of Beloit Ordinance Chapter 3, Article 15. Section 3. Visit Beloit utilizes the funds collected from a local room tax on occupied transient lodging sales, i.e., hotels/motels, bed and breakfasts, and vacation rental properties, to promote Beloit as a preferred visitor destination for leisure, business, and group travel. Visit Beloit allocates funds from its annual budget to a grant program that is administered by the Beloit Convention and Visitors Bureau Charitable Foundation, Inc., a Wisconsin non-profit 501(C)(3) organization. This grant, originally named the Joint Effort in Tourism grant, was renamed in 2024.

B. FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

The organization will accept grant applications for costs related to the development of attractions, amenities, and interactive experiences, as well as high impact traveling exhibitions and certain types of signage in the greater Beloit region. All projects must be likely to generate overnight hotel stays or enhance the visitor experience.

C. CONSIDERED PROJECTS

Projects that are applicable to be funded by this grant include:

1. Capital Projects
 - a. New capital construction projects
 - b. Upgrades, enhancements, and/or expansions to existing facilities
 - c. Permanent exhibit installations
 - d. Interactive, hands-on experiences that allow visitors to get involved (eligible components include creating the space, purchasing equipment, and supplies)
2. Special Programs
 - a. Temporary exhibits or events
 - b. Wayfinding and/or trail signage

D. PROCESS

1. Grant applications will be reviewed and approved on a biannual basis (March and September).

E. TOURISM IMPACT CRITERIA

- Is this project consistent with Visit Beloit's priorities and objectives or does it support and enhance the brand or visitor experience?
- Is the project interactive? What type of experience does it provide for the visitor?
- Is this a new visitor attraction or is it a substantial expansion of an existing attraction?
- Is it open to the public?
- Is it open year-round?
- Will it be available on the weekends and in the evening?
- Will it serve a substantial number of overnight visitors? Will it generate hotel room nights? How many?
- Will it contribute to our ability to attract leisure travelers, conventions, or sporting events?

F. OPERATIONAL CRITERIA

- Is it located within the greater Beloit region?
- Does the applicant organization have not-for-profit status or is it a unit of government?
- Is this a "bricks and mortar" project?
- Is the project a result of a planning process that has had public involvement? Do others in the community understand and support the project?
- Have the other funds necessary to the project already been raised, or are there well-developed plans for raising them?
- Is there a solid plan to fund the project, ongoing operating costs, and maintenance?
- Are there established marketing plans?
- Is there an established management/staffing structure for the project?

G. PROJECTS NOT ELIGIBLE

Visit Beloit does not give grants for any of the following purposes:

- Non-high-profile festivals and events
- Feasibility studies
- Operating expenses
- Annual fund drives
- Endowment funds
- Reimbursement for previously incurred expenses
- Marketing or research
- Travel
- Expenses typically considered to be overhead

H. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be eligible for a grant, an applicant must be a not-for-profit or unit of government. Applicants must also be in a municipality affiliated with Visit Beloit. Applicants that are privately owned, for-profit businesses are not eligible.

I. FUNDS AVAILABLE AND USE OF FUNDS

Tourism Development grants will not be more than 50% of the total project cost.

- Applicants may request grants of up to \$10,000.

- Project cash match can come from the operating budget, or may be secured from other grants, donors, sponsors, or other sources.
- Grant funds may not be spent on local marketing or for operational costs that would be incurred even without the project.

J. PAYMENT OF GRANTS

New and upgraded capital projects and permanent exhibit grants will be paid upon documented completion of the project or per a specific payment schedule outlined in the grant contract.

Exhibit and event grant recipients will receive 70% of the funds needed to pay for exhibit costs. The remaining 30% will be paid after the exhibit or event is over and a post exhibit/event report has been submitted to Visit Beloit.

K. PROJECT DEFINITIONS

1. New Capital Projects ("Bricks and mortar") where funds can be used for:
 - a. Real estate acquisition
 - b. Construction
 - c. Architectural and engineering costs
2. Upgrades, Enhancements and/or Expansions to existing facilities ("Bricks and mortar") where funds can be used for:
 - a. Real estate acquisition
 - b. Construction
 - c. Architectural and engineering costs
 - d. Space and materials to support an interactive visitor experience
3. Permanent Exhibit Installations
 - a. Funds can be used to establish exhibits that may stay for a period of months or years but will continue to be large tourism magnets or have the potential to generate long-term publicity, bringing new visitors into the area. These exhibits will be unique to the area or highlight something unique about the area.
4. High-Profile Exhibitions or Events
 - a. Funds can be used for high-profile temporary exhibits or events that can draw visitors from outside a 100-mile radius. Exhibits or events considered for funding under this program will meet the following criteria:
 - i. Exhibits will be installed at an attraction for a period of no less than eight weeks and preferably 12 weeks or more.
 - ii. They will be exhibits that are not available elsewhere in Wisconsin.
 - iii. Events must be multi-day and have programming throughout the event dates.
 - iv. Exhibits and events should be large and exciting enough to attract visitors from at least one hundred miles away and have the potential to generate overnight stays in the greater Beloit region.
 - v. Exhibits and events will generate media attention for the greater Beloit region.
 - vi. Exhibits and events will be hosted by one or more not-for-profit organizations with adequate personnel and resources to:
 1. market the exhibit or event outside the region
 2. present the exhibit or event attractively
 3. ensure a positive visitor experience

- vii. Exhibit or event organizer has formed partnerships with one or more other tourism businesses to provide a larger visitor experience.

L. CONCLUSION

Please submit the attached application form to: Visit Beloit, Attn: Tourism Development Grant, 656 Pleasant St., Beloit, WI 53511.

Grant applications are considered on their own merits, and it is within Visit Beloit's authority to approve or deny any grant application for any reason.