



Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund Grant Program

2021 Program Guide

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I. Overview

I.a. Background and Goals of the Program

The Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund Grant Program was launched in 2016 by the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) and is designed to provide financial support for events that both serve the residents of Buncombe County and the visitors that travel to the Asheville area for the sense of authenticity and welcoming spirit that the destination exudes.

The primary purposes of this fund are to:

- Support and preserve cultural identity within Buncombe County;
- Stimulate the creation of new, or expansion of existing, festivals and cultural events; and
- Contribute to the financial viability and long-term sustainability of the area's festivals and cultural events.

I.b. Source of Funding

The BCTDA's sales and marketing programs are funded by the occupancy tax, which is governed by North Carolina law. The law does not provide for funding the operations of individual festivals or cultural events.

Revenue earned through advertising sales and reservations booked on ExploreAsheville.com is dedicated to the Festivals and Cultural Events Support Fund. Occupancy tax revenue is not used in this program.

I.c. Strategic Imperatives

Through a framework established in early 2021 under the new leadership of President & CEO Victoria "Vic" Isley, the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is charting a new course for the tourism community that is aligned with broader community goals. These efforts are organized around four strategic pillars: Deliver Balanced Recovery & Sustainable Growth; Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel; Engage & Invite More Diverse Audiences; and Promote & Support Asheville's Creative Spirit.

These new strategic pillars will inform and guide the direction of Explore Asheville's program of work and community investments including grants through the Festivals and Cultural Events Support Fund.

The pillars are defined as:

1. Deliver Balanced Recovery & Sustainable Growth

Balance resident and visitor needs, recognizing the necessary role that sustainable, long-term growth of travel has in achieving a healthy, collective economy.

Focus on the quality of each visit to our community – balancing growth across the seasons, business and leisure travel, and throughout Asheville and Buncombe County.

2. Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel

Engage residents and visitors with shared values to care for and respect natural, cultural and human resources vital in delivering quality guest experiences.

Collaborate with community organizations, local businesses, and environmentally focused partners to support the sustainability and growth of our outdoor economy.

3. Engage & Invite More Diverse Audiences

Extend a genuine invitation to Black travelers and other diverse audiences including LGBTQ visitors – connecting them with local neighborhoods, businesses, and entrepreneurs – creating more opportunities for all to win.

Support product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.

4. Promote & Support Asheville’s Creative Spirit

Share stories of creators and makers who help differentiate our destination through food and drink, visual and performing arts, experiences and more.

Support product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.

II. Grant Program Specifications

II.a. Available Grants

Grants range from \$1,000 to a maximum of \$5,000. The funding level will not exceed a 50% match of the total event budget.

This is a competitive application process. The number of grant awards is limited by available funds. Available funds will vary from year-to-year and do not have to be fully appropriated.

The 2021 grant application process is valid for festivals and cultural events occurring in the calendar year 2022. While applicants will receive funding commitment notification in the 2021 grant cycle, funds will be disbursed in 2022 following the successful completion of the festival or cultural event.

II.b. Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for funding, the festival or cultural event must occur in Buncombe County. Applications will be accepted only from registered 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 non-profit organizations chartered and working in Buncombe County. The festival or cultural event for which the application is being made must be sponsored by a non-profit organization whose purpose is to conduct programs that benefit the citizens of and the visitors to Buncombe County and have the potential to enhance the culture and vitality of Buncombe County.

If the applying organization is not a designated non-profit, you must have a qualified non-profit serve as your fiscal agent.

II.c. Evaluation Criteria

In addition to meeting eligibility requirements, applications will be assessed using criteria developed to determine the extent to which the festival or cultural event is in alignment with the BCTDA’s strategic imperative pillars, as follows:

Pillar: Deliver Balanced Recovery & Sustainable Growth

Balance resident and visitor needs, recognizing the necessary role that sustainable, long-term growth of travel has in achieving a healthy, collective economy.

Focus on the quality of each visit to our community – balancing growth across the seasons, business and leisure travel, and throughout Asheville and Buncombe County.

Examples: Ability of event to attract out-of-town attendees for day trips and overnight visits, Hosting event in needs period - off peak seasonally and midweek, Ability to disburse visitors outside the core of downtown Asheville, Providing employment opportunities for Buncombe County residents, Sourcing from local Buncombe County-based vendors, etc.

Pillar: Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel

Engage residents and visitors with shared values to care for and respect natural, cultural and human resources vital in delivering quality guest experiences.

Collaborate with community organizations, local businesses and environmentally focused partners to support the sustainability and growth of our outdoor economy.

Examples: Incorporation of sustainability principles in production of event, incentives provided to vendors and/or attendees to embrace environmental measures, strategic partnerships with local nonprofits whose mission is to serve the natural, cultural, or human resources in the region, etc.

Pillar: Engage & Invite More Diverse Audiences

Extend a genuine invitation to Black travelers and other diverse audiences including LGBTQ visitors – connecting them with local neighborhoods, businesses and entrepreneurs – creating more opportunities for all to win.

Support product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.

Examples: Ability of event to appeal to diverse audiences, percentage of opportunities afforded to minority-owned businesses, strategic partnerships with local nonprofits whose mission is to support underserved and underrepresented segments of the community, etc.

Pillar: Promote & Support Asheville's Creative Spirit

Share stories of creators and makers who help differentiate our destination through food and drink, visual and performing arts, experiences and more.

Support product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.

Examples: Demonstration of what makes the event stand out from other events in Buncombe County or in the region, ways in which the event will contribute to the cultural identity and vibrancy of Buncombe County, the extent to which the festival or cultural event is anticipated to enhance the local community and/or economy, percentage of opportunities afforded to local creative individuals or businesses, etc.

III. Submission Process

III.a. Application Timeline

Applications Deadline: Wednesday, September 29, 2021, 5 p.m. EST
Grant Awards Announced: Wednesday, October 27, 2021

III.b. Application Materials

The application is available for download on the AshevilleCVB.com website as an editable PDF form. It is recommended to save the PDF form to your computer before beginning your work. Enter your information in the form fields and be sure to save often.

Handwritten applications will not be considered. All applications and associated materials must be submitted electronically in PDF format.

Submit the completed application in PDF format via email to Pat Kappes, Vice President of Community Engagement, at pkappes@ExploreAsheville.com. You will receive an email confirming receipt of your submission. It is your responsibility to ensure receipt of application.

III.c. Supporting Documentation

Submit any additional documentation supporting your application in PDF format including but not limited to the following:

- Sponsorship Deck (document outlining the sponsorship levels your event offers)
- Board of Directors
 - Event Committee (if applicable)
- Event Budget (include all known and/or anticipated expenses and revenues)
- Liability Insurance

Optional Supporting Materials

- Marketing Materials
- Media Coverage
- Photographs and/or links to videos

IV. Grantee Information

IV.a. Grant Agreement

Applicants will be asked to acknowledge and certify the following statements as part of the application process:

SPONSOR RECOGNITION

All festivals and cultural events receiving grant support must display the designated Asheville destination logo provided by Explore Asheville on materials and signage as appropriate and wherever sponsors are recognized. The use of the logo must be approved by Explore Asheville prior to public dissemination.

DISCLOSURE FOR PUBLIC RECORD

As a governmental agency, Explore Asheville is subject to Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Assembly Statutes. Therefore, any and all aspects of this application, except qualified trade secrets as described above, must be made available by Explore Asheville to any party, public or private, upon request without exception. If you are concerned that the distribution of any of your application materials may do irreparable damage to you, your organization, or associated parties, Explore Asheville highly recommends that you seek alternative funding.

PROJECT MONITORING

I hereby acknowledge that if I am awarded Events Support Funds, I will be required to submit a final report within two months of the event's last scheduled date. This report will include attendance numbers, final actual-to-budget figures and a narrative of the event's success. The report is provided with grant award notification.

BCTDA MARKETING

I hereby acknowledge that certain information from my application, such as the Event's Description and Partners & Leadership, may be used by Explore Asheville at its sole discretion for the promotion and marketing of the Major Events Funding program and the region as a tourism destination.

INDEMNITY

Grantee agrees, to the fullest extent permitted by law, to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless BCTDA and Explore Asheville, its officers, directors, affiliates, employees, and agents, from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses and expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees) directly, indirectly, wholly or partially arising from or in connection with any act or omission of Grantee, its employees or agents, in applying for or accepting the grant, in expending or applying Grant funds or in carrying out the Major Event as set forth in the proposal.

IV.b. Disbursement of Funds

The grant funds will be disbursed to the grantee following the successful completion of the festival or cultural event and submission of a final report.

An updated W-9, New Vendor form and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) form should be submitted with an invoice to expedite the process. The New Vendor and EFT forms are available for download on AshevilleCVB.com.

IV.c. Reporting Requirements

Submission of a final report is necessary to receive disbursement of funds. The report includes information about attendance, budget, and execution of the event.

V. Contact Information

For assistance, please contact:
Pat Kappes, Vice President of Community Engagement
Explore Asheville
(828) 210-2724
pkappes@ExploreAsheville.com