

# COVER PAGE

## 2017 Budget request Form

### Tompkins County Tourism Program

#### I. BASIC INFORMATION

Program: Tourism Project Grants

Applicant Organization: Tourism Project Grant Review Committee

Contact Person: Tom Knipe

2017 Request: \$84,000 for Product development Programs

Year	Tourism Program Allocation	\$ Change	% Change	% of Program Budget
2012	\$69,103			100%
2013	\$76,013	\$6,910	10.0%	100%
2014	\$78,300	\$2,287	3.3%	100%
2015	\$78,300	\$0	0%	100%
2016	\$84,000	\$2,400	3.0%	100%
2017	\$84,000	\$0	0%	100%

#### II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Tourism Project Grants support tourism-generating single events or projects that have been in existence for more than three years in a row and as a result no longer qualify for New Tourism Initiative Grants.

#### III. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2016 applications requested \$144,775 from a budget availability of \$84,000. Furthermore we decided to hold back \$10,000 for a small fall round, leaving \$74,000 for this round of applications. These grants are intended for established organizations and projects that have a track record of significant contributions to tourism in Tompkins

County. The challenge is to balance that history with encouragement to be more self sustaining. We understand that both goals cannot be met in many cases but still feel the contributions to tourism support ongoing funding.

#### **IV. BUDGET NARRATIVE**

\$84,000 in funding is requested, no increase from 2016, but still maintaining a 3.5% annual average increase from 2013. Funds will be used to support Tourism Project Grant proposals which meet all the grant guidelines. Grant Guidelines and details are available on the Tourism Program's website: [www.tompkinscounty.gov/tourism](http://www.tompkinscounty.gov/tourism). Although we do anticipate funding requests from this program will continue to increase as organizations phase out of the New Tourism Initiative program, we are encouraging these organizations to become more self sustaining. The overall budget request for all three grant programs will reflect a 1.5% increase over 2016. This program as well as the New Tourism Initiative grant program will remain flat in order to increase the TMA budget request back to historic levels.

#### **V. PROGRAM GOALS**

Increase visitation which includes overnight stays. CVB statistics, room taxes collected and STAR reports will help measure this goal.

Increase spending by visitors, both in total and on a per diem basis. Room tax and sales tax receipts will help measure.

Encourage organizations to become more financial stable and self sustaining. This goal has two objectives: To reduce the funding to established organizations; and in turn have the availability of funds to assist newer organizations. To measure the results of this goal will be to see funding reduced at some organizations which still remain viable.

Invest more heavily in events which support shoulder season activities. Hopefully we can measure this goal by seeing higher occupancies at hotels during the shoulder seasons.

Although we cannot dictate the projects applying for funds through Tourism Project Grant programs we can and do support those applications that are aligned with the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.

#### **VI. ACHIEVEMENTS**

Tourism Project Grants support a number of events critical to the nature and uniqueness of Tompkins County. These range from the Ithaca Festival, more local than not, to the Science Center and Ithaca Fantastic which draw significantly from outside the immediate area; from the more active, Can You canoe Cayuga, to the more

thoughtful, Spring Writes Literary Festival; and from the summer season, Summer Shakespeare Festival to winter, Ithaca Ice Festival.

## **VII. IMPACT OF FUNDING**

Less funding for the Tourism project Grant program would adversely impact many of the projects and events which stimulate tourism and improve the quality of life in TompkinsCounty. To reduce funding also would hinder the growth of many projects which we have invested in and hope to nurture to the point where they are self funding so we can turn those dollars to other new and deserving projects.

## **VIII. COLLABORATION**

We have combined the committees for all three Tourism Grant Programs. The result is that each applicant, some of whom apply for more than one grant program, are all reviewed by the same group. We think this has benefited the thought process and allowed us to more accurately distribute funds where they seem to most benefit the respective programs as well as support the overall 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.

We are also considering pooling all the funds into one large grant pool that can then be distributed in the specific areas where demand is higher in one year and/or where it seems most beneficial to plan goals.