

Community Celebrations Grant

Spring 2022 Guidelines



Funding Purpose + Overview

Community Celebrations grants support local events that convey the unique culture and history of Tompkins County. Their mission is to enhance quality of life for residents, improve understanding of local culture, and expand contemporary culture in ways that are informative, educational, and just plain fun.

- Award Range: \$500 to \$2,000
- Deadline: February 23, 2022
- Contact: Kristin McCarthy - tourism@tompkins-co.org - 607-274-5560

A “celebration” is an event, program, or series of events endorsed by a municipality or community group. A celebration is also defined as an observance, commemoration, jubilation, inauguration, presentation, salute, or any other “red letter day” that has meaning for the community.

Examples of previously funded Community Celebrations include International Mud Day at the Ithaca Children’s Garden, Watermusic/Dancing on the Trail, Streets Alive!, Groton Cabin Fever Festival, the Festival of Nations hosted by the Greater Ithaca Activities Center, and countless other favorite local events.

This grant is funded by Hotel Room Occupancy Tax collected in Tompkins County, NY. Up to \$20,000 is available for spring 2022 grants. This grant cycle can support events taking place from May through December 2022. A grant workshop will be held on February 10, 2022.

All applications must be submitted online through [Common Grant Application](#).

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

- Non-profit organizations designated as 501(c)3
- Municipalities within Tompkins County
- Applicant must have an adopted organizational policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion

Eligible Activities

- Local artists, performers, or providers of cultural programming
- Promotion and marketing
- Professional services needed to produce a successful celebration
- Educational materials
- Reusable banners

Other Limitations

- All events must be **free and open to the public** without discrimination.
- Events that exclusively promote religious traditions are ineligible.
- Events must take place within Tompkins County, NY.
- The following expenses are **ineligible**:
 - Carnival-type rides, bounce houses, and fireworks
 - Building repairs or alterations
 - Gifts and prizes
 - T-shirts and apparel intended for event volunteers
 - Food that is not thematically linked to the celebration
 - Paid staff time
- Applicants must demonstrate a financial **match** of at least 50% of the total project cost. This match can be provided from the following sources:
 - Cash (including income from on-site sales)
 - In-kind donations of goods and professional services
 - Volunteer time only if it would otherwise need to be replaced by paid staff time or paid professional services. Where the specific value of the service is not estimated by the provider, use an estimate of \$28.54 per hour.*

Creating a Strong Application

Evaluation Criteria

The grant review committee will score applications based on how well they meet the following criteria and answer the related questions:

1) Cultural and Historic Value

- Is the event a real celebration that builds community?
- Are significant historical educational elements incorporated?

* This is an independent estimate of the value of volunteer time in the United States in 2021. Source: Independent Sector. <https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2021/>

- Are components of local heritage or culture highlighted?
- 2) Community Value
- Does the celebration demonstrate broad and deep community support through partnerships, financial and in-kind contributions, and volunteers?
 - Does the celebration feature artists, performers, products, and services from Tompkins County?
 - If new, does the celebration demonstrate a compelling vision and innovative addition to local event/festival offerings?
- 3) Ability to Deliver
- Does the project team have the right skills and experience to administer the award and carry out the event?
 - Is there an event plan with adequate personnel, budget, volunteers, and other resources?
 - Does the applicant demonstrate evidence of healthy reflection, learning, and adjustment from past events?
 - Has the applicant taken advantage of opportunities for technical assistance provided by the Tompkins Festivals Program and other support offered through the County Tourism Program?
- 4) Diversity
- Does the celebration promote social diversity and inclusion?
 - Is the event accessible to all people?
 - Does the application demonstrate efforts to attract a diverse audience?
- 5) Sustainability
- Are sustainable event management practices used?
 - Does the celebration promote sustainability?
- 6) Clarity of Application
- Is the application complete and coherent?
 - Is a detailed and interesting description of the celebration provided?
 - Is there a clear and complete budget that identifies all event projected costs, revenues, in-kind support, and uses of grant funds?

Additional Considerations

Applicants should be aware of the Diversity Statement approved by the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB). The STPB encourages applicants to consider how their events can appeal to diverse audiences and reflect the diversity of our community. You can [review the Diversity Statement online](#).

To the extent practical the grant evaluation committee will support applications that represent the full range of the county's geography.

A previous award for the same event does not guarantee or prevent future funding.

Applicants should consider if their event will require specific permits, licenses, or other permissions. If so, these should be described in the application.

Applicants should consider what methods they can use to invite people to their event and track attendance or participation.

Required Attachments

Failure to provide the following required attachments will cause your application to be ineligible for funding.

- 1) Detailed project budget. (Applicants are *strongly encouraged* to use the template budget spreadsheet available on the application webpage. All major categories of expenses should be listed along with all types of revenue and donations.)
- 2) Proof of non-profit status in the form of a 501(c)3 determination letter. (Municipal applicants are exempt from this requirement.)
- 3) Returning applicants must submit the final report from their most recent Community Celebrations grant-funded project.

Optional Attachments

Applicants may submit letters of support from key partners, graphics, or ancillary documentation (including video and audio files). However, the grant review committee will focus primarily on evaluating the information in the online application and the project budget.

Award Decision Process

- Tompkins County staff review applications for completeness and eligibility. Complete and eligible applications are shared with the appropriate grant review committee.
- The review committee makes funding recommendations for each application to the STPB.
- The STPB makes a funding recommendation to the Tompkins County Legislature.
- The Legislature votes on the grant awards.
- Staff send emails to all applicants with funding decision and a contract.

Appeal Process

Applicants can appeal the decision of a funding award based on improprieties in the grant selection process. These include misrepresentation of information, non-presentation of information, or improper procedures. A denial of funding, or dissatisfaction with the amount of the award, is not justification for an appeal. To appeal a funding decision, send a letter stating the reason for the appeal to tourism@tompkins-co.org or STPB chair within 14 days of receiving written notification of the grant decision.

Grant Recipient Responsibilities

Please check for COVID updates available on the Tompkins County Health Department website: <https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health>

Grant awardees are required to enter into a contract with Tompkins County. Several of the responsibilities listed below are included in the contract.

Awards will be paid directly to registered not-for-profit organizations or municipal governments. (Successful applicants under the fiscal sponsorship of a municipality should contact their individual municipality for payment instructions.)

Grant funds are disbursed upon the receipt of an authorized payment voucher. This grant is paid in advance. All unspent funds must be returned to the County.

Grant recipients are required to acknowledge the support of the Tompkins County Tourism Program in all public relations materials, posters, and programs. The standard acknowledgment statement is: "This program was made possible in part by a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program." Grant recipients may use the Tompkins County Tourism Program logo in accordance with the [recognition guidelines](#).

Grant recipients are expected to submit a grant report no later than 30 days after their event. The grant report asks for information about attendance, actual expenses, and event promotion. A template report is attached to each contract.

Prepare and Submit Your Application

Pre-Application Checklist

- ✓ My organization is an **eligible recipient**.
- ✓ My celebration is an **eligible activity**.
- ✓ I have documented **matching funds** equal to at least 50% of the total project cost.
- ✓ I have a detailed **project budget** to attach to my application.
- ✓ I have the other **required attachments**.

- ✓ I have reviewed the **evaluation criteria** and **considerations**.
- ✓ I understand the **grant recipient responsibilities**.

Application Instructions

All applications must be submitted through [Common Grant Application](#). Use one of the links below to start an application:

- Already have an account: [Log in to start an application](#).
- First time applying: [Register for a new account and start an application](#).
- Review [other grants](#) offered by Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability/Tourism Program.

Resources

The **Tompkins Festivals Program** is available to help event organizers with:

- Technical event assistance to support budgeting, fundraising, site planning and permitting, volunteer management, site management, succession planning, etc.
- Event equipment loan service
- Tompkins County event vendor lists
- Tompkins County event planning manual

For more information, visit the [Tompkins Festivals website](#) and contact Scott Rougeau at the Downtown Ithaca Alliance: scott@downtownithaca.com.

The **Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)** is available to provide technical assistance related to promoting your event. Grant recipients are encouraged to work with the CVB if they would like to attract visitors from outside Tompkins County. For more information contact Peggy Coleman, VP Tourism & Community Relations, peggy@visitithaca.com.

Additional funding opportunities are listed on the following websites:

- [Tompkins County Administration](#)
- [Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County](#)