

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM (TOURISM) PROGRAM NARRATIVES

Secretary: Anne Sayers

asayers@travelwisconsin.com

Agency Contact: Heidi Schultz

hschultz@travelwisconsin.com

Program

JOINT EFFORT MARKETING GRANT

Website

<https://www.industry.travelwisconsin.com/industry-resources/grants/joint-effort-marketing-jem-grant-program/>

Agency

Tourism

Inception

1975

Expected Outcomes

- Increase visitors and their associated spending in an area, measured by visitor counts x average expenditure numbers from Longwoods/Tourism Economics or similar research or tax revenues
- Value of advertising provided by grant recipients/marketing deliverables, measured by paid advertising invoices

Program Goal

The Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant Program assists in the development and marketing of Wisconsin tourism events and destinations. Qualified projects are awarded reimbursement for marketing expenses and must demonstrate substantial return on investment through increased traveler spending, overnight stays, and marketing deliverables.

Incentives and Available Funding

\$1,130,000 per fiscal year

Program Description

JEM Grants provide partnership funding to help nonprofit Wisconsin organizations promote tourism in their areas, e.g., destination marketing, new events, sales promotion, existing events, and one-time/one-of-a-kind events.

Projects must show that they will generate an increase in visitors and make a positive economic impact in the local area. The advertising plan must be consistent with the current statewide marketing plan and target markets beyond the local area. Applications are reviewed five times a year. Destination marketing deadlines are April 1 and Sept. 1. All other categories adhere to application deadlines of Feb. 1, April 1, Aug. 1, and Nov. 1.

Program Activity

55 projects were awarded in FY23.

Program

JOINT EFFORT MARKETING GRANT (CONTINUED)

Eligibility Requirements

Statutory Requirements (Ch. 41.17)

At least \$1.13 million must be awarded annually.

Any public or private nonprofit organization, including a tribal organization of a federally recognized American Indian tribe or band in Wisconsin, is eligible to apply.

Tourism can reimburse up to 75% of a project's first-year promotional costs, but no more than 50% of the total budget. In subsequent years, up to 50% of the promotional costs for the second year and 25% for the third year may be allowed in some categories.

A certain percentage of the grants must be matched through cash or in-kind contributions.

Grants fund only marketing expenses, i.e., email marketing, print and broadcast ads, direct mail, publicity, and billboards. Grant funds may not be used for operational costs.

Administrative Rulemaking (Ch. Tour 1)

- An eligible applicant may submit an application no less than 90 days prior to the first date advertising is scheduled to begin.
- The JEM Committee reviews all applications and makes funding recommendations to the department's secretary.
- An applicant shall submit a written evaluation of the project within 45 days of completion of all project activity in such form as the department may require. Of the total award amount, 10% is withheld until a suitable evaluation is submitted.
- Contracts are terminated if evaluations and project invoices are past due.

Underwriting Criteria

- Applicant originations must be tourism-related Wisconsin nonprofit organizations.
- The application process is competitive.
- Contractual obligations for ongoing JEM projects must be met before any new contracts will be issued.

Recommended Changes

None

Program

MEETINGS MEAN BUSINESS (MMB) GRANT PROGRAM

Website

<https://www.industry.travel.wisconsin.com/industry-resources/grants/meetings-mean-business-mmb-grants-program/>

Agency

Tourism

Inception

2010

Expected Outcomes

More than \$4.3 million in projected visitor expenditures for FY23 grants.

Program Goal

Provide funding to destination marketing organizations to help defray the costs of bidding on and hosting large or midsize meetings and conferences.

Incentives and Available Funding

\$110,000 annually

Program Description

The Meetings Mean Business (MMB) Grant Program gives Wisconsin a competitive edge and top-of-mind awareness as the premier place to host meetings or conventions by providing destinations with financial assistance for bid fees or facility costs. Destinations may use the program to attract the types of meetings and conventions that best fit their business model (e.g., association and organization meetings, trade shows, reunions, education, or social groups). Attracting national or Midwest regional meetings and conventions generates significant economic impact from additional room night bookings and traveler spending in the community in which they are held. Many destinations have invested in substantial conference infrastructure in order to capture meeting and convention business.

The fund has \$110,000 per year available for matching grants. Destinations may apply for 50% of the costs for convention facility rental, in-community convention transportation, and/or host costs, up to a maximum of \$30,000 per fiscal year.

Applications are reviewed three times annually. The deadlines are Jan. 1, April 1, and Sept. 1 at 11:59 p.m..

Program Activity

6 MMB Grants awarded in FY23

Eligibility Requirements

- Applications must be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism through a recognized Wisconsin destination marketing organization (e.g., convention and visitors bureau or chamber of commerce) and must be signed by the director or president of that organization.
- Organizations receiving funding through this program may not also request funding from the JEM Grant Fund for the same event during the same fiscal year.
- This grant does not fund in-state events that are regularly scheduled or that routinely rotate to destinations within the state.

Recommended Changes

None

Program

READY, SET, GO! (RSG) GRANT PROGRAM

Website

<https://www.industry.travelwisconsin.com/industry-resources/grants/ready-set-go-rsg-grant-program/>

Agency

Tourism

Inception

2006

Expected Outcomes

FY23 RSG grants are projected to generate approximately \$13.5 million in visitor expenditures.

Program Goal

To provide funding to destination marketing organizations to help defray the costs of bidding for and hosting competitive sporting events.

Incentives and Available Funding

\$110,000 annually Edit Incentives and Available Funding

Program Description

The Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) Grant Program generates visitor spending by securing or creating competitive sporting events with a structure that both draws a spectator/athlete base for the event and creates an economic impact for the area.

The program is designed to assist destinations in securing competition-related events that require an up-front financial commitment. Grant funding may be used for bid/commitment fees paid directly to the event holder or financial commitments needed to secure a venue or municipal services for an event.

The department provides \$110,000 for RSG grants each fiscal year.

Applications are reviewed three times annually. The deadlines are Jan. 1, April 1, and Sept. 1 at 11:59 p.m..

Program Activity

12 awards were funded in FY23.

Eligibility Requirements

- Destinations may request 50% of the bid/commitment fee or 50% of the venue/municipal fees, up to a maximum of \$30,000 per fiscal year.
- Applications must be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism through a recognized Wisconsin destination marketing organization (e.g., convention and visitors bureau or chamber of commerce) and must be signed by the director or president of that organization. Events that have been secured prior to the written grant application must be submitted at least 180 days prior to event. Organizations or events that are currently funded through statutorily required expenditures are not eligible for funding through RSG. Organizations requesting funding from the RSG Grant Fund are not eligible to also request funding from the JEM Grant Program for the same event during the same fiscal year.
- Events that have been hosted in Wisconsin previously will be considered for grant funding based on prior event evaluation and documented economic impact.

Recommended Changes

None