

SHORES & ISLANDS^{OHIO}

Erie County Visitors Bureau, Inc.

2024 Destination Development Grant Program

Purpose and Goal

The Destination Development Grant Program has been created to assist organizations and businesses in Shores & Islands Ohio (S&IO) – East (Erie County) in developing projects that will attract and engage visitors and residents, serve and educate regional tourism partners, and generate economic growth for the community through travel and tourism development.

Applicant Eligibility

- Organizations with active projects funded through the Destination Development Grant program are not eligible to apply until the previously funded project is complete and all requirements have been fulfilled.
- Award finalist must be a partnering business/organization with Shores & Islands Ohio. Partnerships will be discussed at the finalist meeting.
- One proposal per property per business/organization.
- Applications must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the applicant to perform the project. The lead applicant is responsible for meeting all grant requirements. Eligible organizations include, but are not limited to, local governments, for-profit enterprises, and non-profit organizations.

Project Eligibility

- Projects should target the development of quality-of-place amenities, attractions, and facilities that enhance the visitor and resident experience and foster connectivity within the specific destination or geographic area. Includes new tourism product development that adds to the tourism inventory.
- Projects should align with Shores & Islands Ohio's mission and strategic plan and increase the likelihood of visitation from outside the area. Partnerships that bring together local and regional organizations, economic development and/or government organizations and tourism-related businesses will be looked upon favorably. An example includes, wayfinding signage programs.
- High consideration will be given to thoroughly researched projects that include, feasibility studies, financial analysis, and marketing studies dedicated to improving and developing tourism specific attractions.
- While interior public/forward-facing projects will be considered, higher consideration will be given to public/forward-facing projects including: placemaking improvements, private exterior beautification via storefront enhancements, façade, signage, murals on buildings, or revitalization/restoration.

Examples of expenses that are **ineligible** for grant funding include but are not limited to:

- General business maintenance including trash removal, plumbing, HVAC, upkeep, etc.
- General operations equipment including kitchen equipment, hot water tanks, etc.
- Creation of Advertising and production of, collateral, books, brochures, flyers, billboards, website and social media development, etc.
- Mortgage, rent, lease, personnel, or utility costs.
- Purchase of items the State the Ohio prohibits for the use of public dollars.
- Contingency funding or debt refinancing.
- Projects that do not have a regional impact, either directly or indirectly.
- Updates required for brand/franchise/flag standards except when consistent with project eligibility criteria outlined in this application.

Limits & Awards

- Projects must be initiated in the year applied for and completed within two years of receiving an award.
- Maximum grant monies available are dependent upon budget restrictions and collective number of applicants received. Grant budget limits are evaluated annually.

Larger Projects, Matching Program - Grant requests between \$10,000- \$50,000

- The program is **not** designed to cover the entire cost of a project. The Destination Development Grant is a matching grant program; therefore, the grantee must secure an equal amount of funds as granted towards the project. Project budget total must be \$20,000 to \$100,000 +
 - For example, Project X has a budget of \$50,000. The grantee was awarded \$8,000 in destination development grant funds. Project X must secure \$8,000 towards the project in order to receive grant funding. The grantee is also responsible for the balance of the project.

Smaller Projects, non-matching- Grant requests up to \$5,000

- The program is designed to cover the entire cost or a portion of a project costing up to \$10,000. There will be a cap of 10 approved projects.
- Higher consideration will be given to small businesses, non-profits, start-ups, etc.
 - Example 1, Project X has a budget of \$8,000. The grantee was awarded \$5,000 in destination development grant funds towards that project. The grantee will have to secure the additional \$3,000.
 - Example 2, Project X has a budget \$4,000 and the grantee was awarded \$4,000, therefore covering the cost of the project.

Application Proposal Submission

Application Proposals are due by **12:00 pm on Wednesday, January 31, 2024.**

PREFERABLY by email to: Amanda@shoresandislands.com or mailed to: Shores & Islands Ohio at 125 E. Water St., Sandusky, OH 44870 Attn: Amanda Smith Rasnick. Proposals must arrive by the deadline.

IMPORTANT DATES and TIMES
<u>Call for Destination Development Grant Proposals for Erie and Ottawa counties</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday, October 23, 2023
<u>Grant Process Informational Meetings</u> – applicants from either county are welcome to attend a session in the opposite county. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday, November 2, 2023, at 9 am & 2 pm<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ S&IO East Office - 125 E. Water St., Sandusky, OH 44870• Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at 9 am & 2 pm<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ S&IO West Office - 770 SE Catawba Rd., Port Clinton, OH 43452• Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 9 am<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ S&IO East Office - 125 E. Water St., Sandusky, OH 44870• Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 2 pm<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ S&IO West Office - 770 SE Catawba Rd., Port Clinton, OH 43452
<u>Application Proposals Due</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wednesday, January 31, 2024, before 12 pm
<u>Erie Co. Finalist Notification</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friday, March 1, 2024
<u>Erie Co. Finalist Meetings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• March 4-15, 2024

Grant Proposal Requirements

Grant proposals must include the following. Please number, in order as outlined below, your responses. Please submit in the file format (Word, PowerPoint, etc.) of choice.

Cover Sheet to include:

- Primary contact name, phone number, and email.
 - Name of organization/business (as shown on your tax return/W-9) address, city, state, zip, county.
 - Name of project and type of project, for example, new tourism product, façade improvements, expansion, etc.
 - Grant funding amount being requested.
 - Have you received a grant from S&IO in recent years? If so, is it completed or ongoing?
 - Are you currently a member of any S&IO boards or committees?
- 1) Provide a brief overview and history of the applying business/organization. Include current involvement with Shores & Islands Ohio, local chambers, main streets, or other community partners.
 - 2) A detailed description of the project and line-item budget showing overall project scope and sources and uses for all funding associated with the project and identifying status of funding.
 - 3) A project timeline.
 - 4) Project photograph(s) and/or rendering(s), if applicable.
 - 5) Competitive vendor quotes, if applicable.
 - 6) If a project impacts multiple community partners, letters of support from those impacted, are highly recommended.
 - 7) Explain the impact of receiving this grant on a business level, local level, and regional level.
 - 8) Quantitative demonstration of benefits from the project, which may include economic impact projections or other data demonstrating a benefit to the local economy.
 - 9) Qualitative demonstration of benefits from the project. For example, an explanation of how this project will enhance the visitor experience as well as quality of life for residents.
 - 10) Marketing and sustainability plans that explain how the asset will be promoted and maintained into the future.
 - 11) Completed W-9 form.
 - 12) Authorized signatures from the applicant's Board Chair, Executive Director, CEO or Owner approving all matching funds are on hand and documentation of commitment from all organizations supplying matching funds.

*****Proposals that do not include all of the requirements will not be scored*****

Please direct any questions regarding the grant or the process to Shores & Islands Ohio Destination Development & Experience Director, Amanda Smith Rasnick at Amanda@shoresandislands.com or 419-625-2175