

State of Illinois Uniform Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Summary Information

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	Greg Mihalich (ceo.tourismgrants@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY26-1
Funding Opportunity Title	Tourism Attraction Grant Program
CSFA Number	420-25-2168
CSFA Popular Name	TAP Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	0
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$1,800,000
Award Range	\$15000 - \$200000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	Yes
Indirect Costs Allowed	No
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	10/03/2025
Application Date Range	10/03/2025 - 11/03/2025 : 5:00 PM
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/0246058fbc18442aadfbf504b7ae6e58
Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 10/09/2025 : 10 AM Registration link : https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/r2b3d6432abf82a39b81bea283b5338e0

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Tourism Attraction Grant Program

NOFO ID: 2168-3161

For information about grants please visit:

<https://dceo.illinois.gov/dceo-grants.html>

A. Program Description

Notice of Funding Opportunity Intent

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (the "Department" or "DCEO") is issuing this Notice of Funding Opportunity ("NOFO") to provide grants to assist in the development or improvement of tourism attractions that increase the economic impact of tourism throughout the State. Grantees must be able to match grant dollars as described below in C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching. The Tourism Attractions Grant program is part of a broader effort underway to help reinvigorate tourism in Illinois and help the tourism industry on a path to economic recovery and welcome more visitors to Illinois. Grants up to \$200,000 will be awarded to develop and enhance Illinois tourism attractions

Program Description

Section 8a(1) of the Illinois Promotion Act (20 ILCS 665/1 et seq.) authorizes the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to award grants to counties, municipalities, units of local government, not-for-profit organizations, local promotion groups and for-profit businesses for the development or improvement of tourism attractions in Illinois.

Tourism Attractions are defined as fishing and hunting areas, State parks, historical/cultural sites, areas of historic or scenic interest, museums, recreation areas, botanical gardens, theme/amusement parks, interpretive programs and other facilities or businesses that attract or serve visitors that are open to the public for a minimum of 100 days per year (if the tourism attraction is entirely event-driven, then it shall be open for a minimum of 200 hours per year), and are marketed and promoted to visitors from more than 50 miles away.

Program History

This grant program has received funding annually in various amounts per year.

Performance Goals and Measures

Applicant must identify performance measurements they will use to identify successful outcomes as a result of the capital investment; such as:

1. Anticipated number or percentage of increased visitation as a result of the capital investment;
2. Anticipated increase in local hotel tax revenue to the area served after completion of the project;
3. Anticipated increase in local sales tax revenue after completion of the project;

Other Information

N/A

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state funds appropriated by Public Act 104-0003. Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is \$1,800,000. Awards will range from \$15,000 to \$200,000.

The period of performance is expected to be date of grant execution through June 30, 2026.

Pre award or prior incurred costs are allowable if they are incurred on or after July 1, 2025 through the date of the grant execution.

Expenditures and activities for which grant funds can be utilized by Grantees include, but are not limited to, the following for Tourism Attractions:

1. Capital Projects- land and building acquisitions, construction and renovations of buildings for the purpose of creating or enhancing a Tourism Attraction;
2. Equipment – purchase and installation of machinery and equipment designed to create or enhance the Tourism Attraction, or rental of equipment for a Festival;
3. Training – development and presentation of hospitality, quality service and/or other types of tourism training programs intended to provide a competitive workforce for the tourism industry of Illinois;
4. Interpretive Programs – creation, implementation and staffing of, and fabrication of exhibits for, interpretive programs located within historic/cultural sites.

Ineligible projects and activities for Tourism Attractions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1.
2. Debt refinancing;
3. Contingency funding;
4. Normal payroll or operating expenses;
5. Administrative expenses;
6. Purchase of alcoholic beverages

The release of this NOFO does not obligate the Department to make an award.

C. Eligibility Information

An entity must be registered in the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, <https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>, at the time of grant application. The portal will verify that the entity:

- Has a valid FEIN number (<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number>)
- Has a current SAM.gov registration (<https://sam.gov>). SAM.gov registrations must be marked as “public” to allow the GATA Grantee Portal to expedite the review of the federal information;
- Has a valid UEI number (<https://sam.gov>)
- Is not on the Federal Excluded Parties List (verified at <https://sam.gov>)
- Is in Good Standing with the Illinois Secretary of State, as applicable (https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/business_services/corp.html)
- Is not on the Illinois Stop Payment list (verified once entity is registered in GATA Grantee Portal); and
- Is not on the Department of Healthcare and Family Services Provider Sanctions list (<https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/oig/Pages/SanctionsList.aspx>)

Entities on the Illinois Stop Payment List and/or the Federal Excluded Parties List at time of application submission will not be considered for an award.

An automated email notification to the entity alerts them of “qualified” status or informs how to remediate a negative verification (e.g., not in good standing with the Secretary of State). A federal Debarred and Suspended status cannot be remediated.

At this time, federal memo M-21-20 allows entities to apply for grant awards without a valid UEI number. The UEI number must be obtained prior to grant execution. The State of Illinois has adopted this guidance for the issuance of state awards also.

Pursuant to the policy of the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, to receive grant funds from the State of Illinois, a grantee must be considered a regarded entity by the IRS for federal income tax purposes. Disregarded entities will not be eligible to receive grant funds.

1. Eligible Applicants include:

1. Units of local government means counties, municipalities, townships, special districts, and units, designated as units of local government by law, which exercise limited governmental powers or powers in respect to limited governmental subjects, but does not include school districts.;
2. Counties;
3. Municipalities;
4. Not-for-profit organizations;
5. Local promotion groups means any non-profit corporation, organization, association, agency or committee thereof formed for the primary purpose of publicizing, promoting, advertising or otherwise encouraging the development of tourism in any municipality, county, or region of Illinois ; and
6. For-profit businesses

The Department complies with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment and equal employment opportunity including, but not limited to: The Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq.), The Public Works Employment Discrimination Act (775 ILCS 10/1 et seq.), The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) (42 USC 2000a-and 2000H-6), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794), The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.), and The Age Discrimination Act (42 USC 6101 et seq.).

2. Cost Sharing or Matching.

The Grantee shall provide matching funds to the total project costs identified in the Uniform Budget submitted for this opportunity. Matching funds must not be funds from other DCEO funded grant programs or funds used to match any other grants and the expenses must be necessary and irrevocably obligated to the project.

Match amounts required are:

- If the grantee is a county, municipality, not-for-profit organization, unit of local government or local promotion group, match required shall be no less than 50% of the total project costs.
- If the Grantee is a for-profit business, match required shall be no less than 75% of the total project cost.

Allowable match includes:

- Term loan proceeds, bond sale proceeds, or other forms of financial institution participation;
- Other public grant or loan program funds;
- Retained earnings, proceeds of a public stock offering, or other cash equity, excluding

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- pre-project office notes payable, off-balance sheet debt financing and goodwill;
- Local hotel/motel tax, membership dues, other cash contributions;
- In-Kind contributions necessary to complete the project and for which the cash value is easily documented (i.e., donated labor, equipment, supplies and materials), and that are eligible grant and match line-item expenditures identified in the budget of the grant agreement. In-Kind contributions may only be used as allowable match by municipalities, counties, not-for-profit organizations, Units of local government or local promotion groups and cannot exceed 25% of the match requirement.

Unallowable match includes:

- Funds from other Department funded grant programs (although they may be used to further the project);
- Existing equipment, buildings, furnishings, or inventory, already owned;
- Lines of credit;
- Post project costs such as normal operational expenses;
- Contract for deed without a due and payable clause or that is an apparent substitution for simple rent;
- Debt refinancing;
- In-kind contributions, if the grantee is a for-profit business. If grantee fails to match any portion of the grant award in a given Fiscal Year, that portion of the grant shall be refunded to the Department in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement

3. Indirect Cost Rate.

The grant will not compensate for indirect costs, overhead or administrative expenses associated with the execution of the program.

4. Freedom of Information Act/Confidential Information.

Applications and accompanying materials are subject to disclosure in response to requests received under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.). Information that could be proprietary, privileged, or confidential commercial or financial information should be clearly identified as such in the application materials. The Department will maintain the confidentiality of that information only to the extent permitted by law.

5. Other, if applicable.

Applicants may submit one (1) application for this opportunity.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package.

Grant application forms are available at the web link provided in the "Grant Application Link" field of this announcement or by contacting the Program Manager:

Greg Mihalich
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
1011 S. 2nd St
Springfield, IL 62704
Tele: 217-299-1323
Email: ceo.tourismgrants@illinois.gov

2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

A standard application package must be submitted to and reviewed by DCEO. Each package must contain the following items:

- ☐ Uniform Grant Application in fillable PDF format.
 - Signature page must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Uniform Budget utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project.
 - The entire Excel document with all the tabs included, even if the tabs are not relevant to the grant opportunity, must be submitted.
 - Do not send a restricted version of the Uniform Budget.
 - Certification page must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Disclosure.
 - Conflict of Interest Disclosure must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally
- ☐ Mandatory Disclosure.
 - Mandatory Disclosure must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
 - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
 - Can be signed digitally

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also requires the submission of the following other programmatic specific items as part of the program application:

- ☐ Program Application

Please note there is a maximum upload of 10 documents in the web form that you submit the application, so combining files may be necessary.

3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM).

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM. To establish a SAM registration, go to <https://sam.gov> and/or utilize this instructional link: How to Register in SAM from the gata.illinois.gov Resource Library tab. SAM.gov registrations must be “public.”
- (ii) Provide a valid UEI number in the GATA Grantee Portal registration.
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency. The State awarding agency may not make a Federal pass-through or State award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the State awarding agency is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the State awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal pass-through or State award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal pass-through or State award to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times.

Applications for this opportunity must be submitted by 30 days.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/0246058fbc18442aadbfbf504b7ae6e58>.

The Department is under no obligation to review applications that do not comply with the above requirements. Failure to meet the application deadline may result in the Department returning application without review or may preclude the Department from making the award.

5. Intergovernmental Review, if applicable.

N/A

6. Funding Restrictions.

This opportunity does allow reimbursement of pre-award costs. Other restrictions can be found in Sections A., B., and C.

7. Other Submission Requirements.

Documents stored in Google Docs or other cloud-based servers are not allowed.

The applicant can receive a copy of their submitted application by checking the “Send me a copy of my responses” box at the bottom of the application submission form.

Applicants may confirm receipt of the application and documents by contacting the program contact listed in this NOFO.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria.

Grant proposals will be reviewed on a competitive basis. Each proposal will be scored on a 100-point scale (or on a percentage scale). The Department shall consider the following criteria when evaluating the application submittal: Need, Capacity, and Quality.

Need- Identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose	
The extent the project is viable and funds are needed to develop or improve the tourism attraction including. If applicable for infrastructure, the extent the project enhances the visitor amenities/experience and increases visitation to the attraction. Application provides geographic and/or physical address location for capital project.	10 Points
The extent the project will have the potential for sustainable economic growth and job creation, or a significant impact on the area's overall tourism efforts.	10 Points
Capacity- The ability of the applicant to execute the project according to requirements of the grant program	
The extent the project will be completed and open to the public with regular scheduled hours at the end of the grant period.	10 Points
The extent the project will increase expenditures from additional visitors to generate a return on investment (ROI) for the State within three years.	10 Points

The extent the tourism attraction is/will be marketed to visitors outside a 50-mile radius in order to increase attendance.	10 Points
Quality- The totality of features and characteristics of the project that indicate its ability to satisfy the requirements of the grant program	
The extent the costs itemized on the budget are reasonable and necessary to develop a new tourism attraction or improve the tourism attraction to help increase attendance and justification for the costs provided.	10 Points
The extent there are established tracking and evaluation methodologies and performance measures with estimated outcomes to reflect the success of the tourism attraction.	10 Points
The extent the attraction meets the definition of a tourism attraction as defined as fishing and hunting areas, State parks, historical/cultural sites, areas of historic or scenic interest, museums, recreation areas, botanical gardens, theme/amusement parks, interpretive programs and other facilities or businesses which attract or serve visitors that are open to the public for a minimum of 100 days per year (if the tourism attraction is entirely event-driven, then it shall be open for a minimum of 200 hours per year), and are marketed and promoted to visitors from more than 50 miles away.	10 Points
The extent the project will increase visitation, length of stay and/or tourism expenditures from outside 50 miles.	10 Points
The overall effectiveness of the project.	10 Points

2. Review and Selection Process.

Applications will be graded using the Merit Review Process and scored on the criteria specified in Section E.1. The Department will designate an Evaluation Committee to grade each application received for this funding opportunity. The final score of each Committee member will be calculated and an average of all scores will be the final applicant score. Grants will be awarded in order from highest score to the lowest score until funding is exhausted as well as geographical dispersion will be considered. An application must receive a minimum of 60 of 100 possible points to be considered eligible for funding.

The Merit Based Review process is subject to appeal per <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/meritappreview.html>. However, competitive grant appeals are limited to the evaluation process. Evaluation scores may not be protested. Only the evaluation process is subject to appeal. The appeal must be submitted through the merit review appeal request form (<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/6444bed39ef140c589f002f53b9bc092>) within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published.

3. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates, if applicable.

After the application period is closed, the Department will conduct a meritbased review of eligible applications. Successful applicants will receive a Notice of State Award (NOSA) to initiate the grant agreement phase. During this phase, you will be contacted by a grant manager to develop a grant agreement, which can be a months long process depending on complexity, cooperation, and conformity with all applicable federal and state laws.

The Department reserves the right to issue a reduced award, or not to issue any award.

F. Award Administration Information

1. State Award Notices.

The Notice of State Award (NOSA) will specify the funding terms and specific conditions resulting from the pre-award risk assessments and the merit-based review process. The NOSA must be accepted in the GATA Portal by an authorized representative of the grantee organization. The NOSA is not an authorization to begin performance or incur costs.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

Subrecipients and Subcontractors: Agreement(s) and budget(s) with subrecipients and subcontractors must be pre-approved by and on file with DCEO. Agreements can be submitted to DCEO when available. Subcontractors and subrecipients are subject to all applicable provisions of the Agreement(s) executed between DCEO and the grantee. The successful applicant shall retain sole responsibility for the performance of its subrecipient(s) and/or subcontractor(s).

Grant Uniform Requirements: The Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/1 *et seq.*) (and its related administrative rules, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000), was enacted to increase the accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds from whatever source and to reduce administrative burdens on both State agencies and grantees by adopting federal guidance and regulations applicable to those grant funds; specifically, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200).

Procurement: Grantees will be required to adhere to methods of procurement per the Procurement Standards (2 CFR 200.317 – 2 CFR 200.327).

3. Reporting.

Periodic Performance Report (PPR) and Periodic Financial Report (PFR)

Grantees funded through this NOFO are required to submit in the format required by the Grantor, at least on a quarterly basis, the PPR and PFR electronically to their assigned grant manager. The first of such reports shall cover the first three months after the award begins. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.328, Periodic Financial Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.329, Periodic Performance Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Any additional reporting requirements will be disclosed in the NOSA. Grantees are required within 45 calendar days following the end of the period of performance to submit a final closeout report in the format required by the Grantor (See 2 CFR 200.344).

Monitoring

Grantees funded through this NOFO are subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring visits by the Department in accordance with 2 CFR 200.337. They must have an open-door policy allowing periodic visits by Department monitors to evaluate the progress of the project and provide documentation upon request of the monitor. Program staff will also maintain contact with participants and monitor progress and performance of the contracts. The Department may modify grants based on performance.

Audit

Grantees shall be subject to Illinois' statewide Audit Report Review requirements. Terms of the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 USC 7501-7507), Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200, and the audit rules set forth under the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act Admin Rules shall apply (See 44 IL Admin Code 7000.90).

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Grant Help Desk
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Email: CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov

H. Other Information, if applicable

N/A