

**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	Modified
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY24-1
Funding Opportunity Title	Tourism Incentive Grant Program
CSFA Number	420-25-3338
CSFA Popular Name	Tourism Incentive Grant Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	0
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$15,000,000
Award Range	\$50000 - \$5000000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	No
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	Yes : Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) does not allow administrative cost. Cost allowed is a financial incentive provided by a unit of local government, a local promotion group, a not-for-profit organization, a for-profit organization, or a convention center authority to attract a convention, meeting, or trade show that, but for the incentive, would not have occurred in the State or been retained in the State; or (2) a financial incentive provided by a unit of local government, a local promotion group, a not-for-profit organization, a for-profit organization, or a convention center authority for attracting a sporting event that, but for the incentive, would not have occurred in the State or been retained in the State; but (3) only a financial incentive offered or provided to a person or entity in the form of financial benefits or costs which are allowable costs pursuant to the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act.
Posted Date	01/25/2024
Application Date Range	01/25/2024 - 05/01/2024 : 5:00PM
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... <a href="https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3338-2683.html">https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3338-2683.html</a>
Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 02/05/2024 : 1:00PM Registration link : <a href="https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/rbc3e21576a1db0873037dca23736d3ed">https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/rbc3e21576a1db0873037dca23736d3ed</a>

# Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

## Tourism Incentives Grant Program

**NOFO ID: 3338-2683**

For information about grants please visit <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/granteeresources.html>.

**\*REVISED 2/1/24 – Updated Review and Selection Process.\***

### 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 grant funding for establishment of an incentive grant program used by eligible entities to attract new out-of-state events to Illinois when competing with other states’ destinations. It may also be used to retain existing business when documentation is provided that the entity is competing against other states’ destinations to retain the business in Illinois. Grant funds for the incentive program cannot be offered to an event if multiple Illinois destinations are in competition for this same event.

#### Program Description

Section 8a(3) of the Illinois Promotion Act (20 ILCS 665/1 *et seq.*) authorizes the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to award grants for a tourism Incentives program. Applicants should provide detailed information on the incentive program they are establishing for their area for the purposes of attracting or hosting new events in Illinois and supporting the retention of such events when competing with other states’ destinations for the events. Incentive grant funds are to be used to increase business or leisure travel to Illinois by attracting and hosting these new out-of-state events in Illinois. Events occurring in Illinois in the last three years will not be eligible for the incentives, unless there is competition from other states.

Incentive is defined as (1) a financial incentive provided by a unit of local government, local promotion group, not-for-profit organization, for-profit organization, or convention center authority to attract a convention, meeting, or trade show but for the incentive, would not have occurred in the State or been retained in the State; or (2) a financial incentive provided by a unit of local government, local promotion group, not-for-profit organization, for-profit organization, or convention center authority for attracting a sporting event, but for the incentive, would not have occurred in the state or been retained in the State; but (3) only a financial incentive offered or provided to a person or entity in the form of financial benefits or costs which are allowable costs pursuant to the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act.

The incentives provided for the events must be able to be tracked and reported to the Department to receive funding for the incentives provided to the events.

The program can be developed at the local level and may include, but not limited to:

- Event space/venue rental: Room rental, event staging – build, setup, trussing, lighting, pipe and draping, power and sound, security, traffic control. If the applicant is a venue that owns the facility and controls any assets outlined in this example those costs are not allowable.
- Event rentals: Tables, seating, décor, tents, dinnerware, flatware, glassware, linens
- Food/Beverage: Meals, beverages (excluding alcoholic beverages), service labor fees
- Audio/Visual Support: Microphones, screens/projectors, other specialized equipment, internet access, service labor fees

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- Entertainment (as part of an otherwise planned event): Speakers, DJs, performing acts
- Registration & Event Management: Event management technology software that handles online event registration; virtual, hybrid and onsite solutions and attendee engagement
- Transportation: Shuttle service provided to move overnight guests to and from the event/venue space on a master account (individual guest receipts are not eligible). Shuttle service to pick up overnight guests at the airport and drop them off at the hotel and vice versa upon the conclusion of the meeting/event; this is for guests on a master account as individual guest receipts are not eligible.
- Bid fees associated with attracting a new event to Illinois
- Room night credits that are actualized, contracted, revenue-generating group room nights directly sourced by the bureau and must exceed 300 for outside the City of Chicago and 5000 for the City of Chicago

### Program Design

1. Applicant applies in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity.
2. If awarded, the maximum funding to attract events to Illinois is stated in the grant agreement.
3. When the event is identified to attract to Illinois, the Grantee informs the Department of the project and that process is described below.

### Funding of Events

The attraction of events to Illinois requires the ability to access funds in short notice as part of the grant agreement. If event is approved for this program, the Department is committed to responding within 36 hours of requests for funds and will supply a letter of support, committing the Department to providing these funds as a reimbursement. When requesting funding from the Department for incentives, a standardized form will be provided, which will include the following details:

1. Event Name, Event Venue Name, Event Venue City, Event Venue County, Event Dates.
2. Type of Event: Meeting, Trade Show, Convention, Sporting Event, Conference, Other.
3. Documentation that this is a new event – not held in Illinois in last 3 years or would have been relocated out of state without the incentive and competition with other states' destinations.
4. Host Hotel(s)
5. Attendance and number of room nights booked during the event – must be a minimum of 300 for non-City of Chicago events and 5,000 for City of Chicago events. If attendees stay at one or more than one lodging property, the property or properties must agree to report the room nights booked for the qualified event. Upon completion of the event, the property must verify in writing the total room pick-up associated with the specified event. If a pickup report is unavailable, documentation from the property on business letterhead, signed by the property general manager or another officer with the authority to make such a statement on the property's behalf.
6. Eligible hard costs provided as incentive must include documentation to support the eligible hard costs.
7. Contract or other binding documents for bid fees.
8. Documentation that indicates only non-Illinois destinations were competing to hold this event.

### Program History

This is a new program to offer eligible entities access to incentive funds to attract or retain conventions, meetings, sporting events and tradeshow.

### Performance Goals and Measures

Program goals or performance measures must include, but not limited to:

1. Estimated hotel room nights booked as a result of the events.
2. Economic impact of the events.

3. Attract or retain events to Illinois that would not have otherwise occurred in Illinois.

### Other Information

Once a finalized grant agreement has been executed, the funds will be paid to the grantee as needed for the offered incentives with the required supporting documentation. The term of this grant is five years, with applicable costs reimbursed until grant funds are depleted.

If the grantee fails to meet the minimum rooms requirement for events, funds will not be disbursed for that event.

## **B. Funding Information**

This grant program is utilizing State Funds appropriated by the General Assembly in Section 8a(3) of the Illinois Promotion Act (20 ILCS 665/1 *et seq*). Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is \$15,000,000. Awards will range from \$50,000 to \$5,000,000.

Anticipated start date for awards is March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The period of performance is expected to be January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 through January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2029.

The maximum amount requested for entities outside the City of Chicago is \$500,000 unless supporting documentation can be provided that shows an amount in excess of this is needed with specific funding needs outlined.

Any costs that are not offered as an incentive to attract or retain the event(s) are not eligible.

**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/individuals/international-taxpayers/taxpayer-identification-numbers-tin#:~:text=You%20can%20use%20the%20IRS%27s,for%20Individual%20Taxpayer%20Identification%20Number>);
- 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.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/business\\_services/corp.html](https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/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.

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:**

Eligible applicants include:

1. Unit of local government
2. Local promotion group,
3. Not-for-profit organization;
4. For-profit organization;
5. Convention center authority.

If applicants are in a service area covered by a certified convention and visitors bureau, this may be a joint effort between the bureau. If the entity intends to implement its program jointly with the certified convention and visitors bureau, the application should submit a letter of intent from the bureau providing details of the joint effort.

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.**

No match is required for this grant opportunity.

**3. Indirect Cost Rate.**

Indirect costs are not allowed.

**4. 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  
607 E. Adams, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Springfield, IL 62701  
Email: [ceo.tourismgrants@illinois.gov](mailto:ceo.tourismgrants@illinois.gov)

**2. Content and Form of Application Submission.**

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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 printed, signed, scanned and submitted with application.
- Uniform Budget utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project. The entire budget with all worksheets included even if the worksheets are not relevant to the grant opportunity must be submitted with the application materials. Signature page must be printed, signed, scanned and submitted with application.
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure
- Mandatory Disclosures
- Letter of intent from certified convention and visitors bureau, if applicable

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also requires the **submission of the following other programmatic specific items as part of the program application that can be found on the website where you accessed the application document:**

- 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 [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov) and/or utilize this instructional link: [www.grants.illinois.gov](http://www.grants.illinois.gov) Resource Links 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 Department will 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 Department is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the Department 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 February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 5pm CST. If funds are remaining after this deadline, applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 or until funds are depleted.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/cff9da54495a42048a8566b40f2b23eb>

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 to January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, with written approval from the Department. Other restrictions can be found in Sections B. and C.3.

**7. Other Submission Requirements.**

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

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. DCEO shall consider the following criteria when evaluating the application submittal:

(20 points) Need – The applicant demonstrates that a state grant is warranted based on their prior experience in attracting and hosting new out-of-state events in Illinois, and providing incentives, without which the events would not have occurred in Illinois. Points in this category will be based on:

- Demonstration of need for state assistance to provide these incentives to attract more events to Illinois and provided relevant examples of past incentives or upcoming needs
- Event location in an area that has yet to recover from 2019 record high visitor spending according to the Annual Economic Impact Study from Tourism Economics (see *Appendix A* from <https://www.enjoyillinois.com/tourism/>)
  - Events are planned for an area that was still down more than 5% from 2019 impact numbers - 10 points; Events are planned for an area that is down from 2019 but less than 5% - 7 points; Events are planned for areas that have recovered from 2019 impact levels - 5 points

(30 points) Capacity – The applicant demonstrates the ability to successfully complete the project and comply with grant requirements. Points in this category will be based on:

- The applicant's ability and experience in hosting and supporting major events in Illinois
- The applicant's ability and experience in tracking room nights of an event and other necessary metrics to ensure events meet minimum room night requirements

(30 points) Quality – The applicant has provided a detailed narrative that includes all necessary attachments to outline their planned incentive program and types of new out-of-state events they plan to attract. Points in this category will be based on:

- A complete and sufficiently detailed project narrative of the estimated types of programs of incentives to be offered for various new out-of-state events and retention of existing events needed to retain them in Illinois

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- Applicant demonstrated the knowledge and experience in knowing the events to go after and the procedures to vet an event and have controls in place to know they are meeting those marks
- Applicant is a certified convention and visitors bureau or submitted documentation that they are working in partnership with their certified convention and visitor's bureau (if represented by a convention and visitor bureau)

(20 points) Economic Impact – The applicant's estimated return on the incentives provided will result in a positive economic impact for the state. Points in this category will be based on:

- Planned number of hotel rooms meet or exceed the 300 minimum room night requirement for non-City of Chicago events or 5,000 for City of Chicago events for incentives being offered.
- Planned events will be held during a need period – indicate proposed dates by month for events you plan to use these funds to secure.
  - December – March – 10 Points
  - August – October – 7 Points
  - April – July – 5 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. After February 26, 2024 at 5pm CST, grants will be awarded on a rolling basis based on the applicant's score. All applicants with a merit review score that exceeds 75 will receive a recommendation for an award, if funds are available. After May 1, 2024, DCEO may recommend additional applicants with a merit review score that exceeds 65 for award, if funds are available. These additional awards may be selected based on merit review score, as well as geographic dispersion of awardees.

The Merit Based Review process is subject to appeal. 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 in writing to the Department within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published. The written appeal shall include the name and address of the appealing party, the identification of the grant and a statement of reasons for the appeal. To file an appeal, applicants must submit the appeal in writing and in accordance with the Merit-Based Application Review Appeals Process listed on the Grant Opportunities page of the DCEO website:  
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/meritappreview.html>.

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

After the application period is closed, the Department will conduct a merit based 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.



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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 shall apply (See 30 ILCS 708/65(c)).

## **G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

Grant Help Desk  
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

Email: [CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov)

**H. Other Information, if applicable**

The State government is not obligated to make any State award as a result of this announcement. Only grants officers can bind the State government to the expenditure of funds.