Haywood County Tourism Development Authority,
operating as Visit Haywood

Legacy Event Sponsorship Guidelines

All awarded grants must be used between July 1 and June 30

Haywood County is home to a rich collection of long-standing events that have become an important part of our community's character. From cultural celebrations to festivals, these events draw in visitors, showcase our unique appeal, and contribute significantly to our local economy. Recognizing their enduring value, Visit Haywood proudly presents the Legacy Event Sponsorship program.

This program goes beyond simply sustaining these respected traditions. We seek to ignite their continued evolution and growth. We're looking for innovative approaches, impactful enhancements, and exciting new features that will propel these events to even greater heights. Whether it's incorporating cutting-edge technology, expanding accessibility, or forging deeper connections with local communities, we encourage bold ideas that will reinvigorate these events for future generations.

By fostering innovation and supporting change, the Legacy Event Sponsorship program aims to ensure that Haywood County's valued events continue to thrive, captivate audiences, and generate lasting economic and cultural impact.

Legacy Events must meet the following criteria:

- The event must have been held in Haywood County for at least 10 consecutive years (exceptions may be granted for gaps in production due to natural disasters or states of emergency, such as COVID, Helene, etc).
- The event must have a proven track record of attracting both local and broader audiences. This includes:
    - Minimum attendance of at least 1,000 attendees per event
    - At least 25% of attendees coming from outside Haywood County based on historical data or verifiable estimates
- The event must be open to the public.
- The event must take place entirely within Haywood County.
- The event must demonstrate a positive contribution to Haywood County's tourism economy and reputation as a destination. This could include factors like:
    - Increased lodging occupancy
    - Increased spending in local businesses
    - Positive media coverage and promotion of Haywood County
- The requested sponsorship amount must be no more than 25% of the total event budget.

- Applications must be submitted electronically by the specified deadline.
- The event must take place during the July 1 to June 30 fiscal year.
- Eligible applicants include Haywood County non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, museums, attractions, cultural events, governmental agencies, and other tourism-related entities.

Below are examples of projects that will not be considered:

- Family reunions
- Fundraising events such as banquets, annual galas, etc.
- Church or religious activities
- Local school programs
- Community-specific programs
- Political events, lobbying, or legislative activities

We want to help Haywood County's legacy events spark new excitement, attract visitors, and benefit our community. These are the key areas we'll consider when awarding sponsorships:

- **Brand Awareness:** How the event promotes Haywood County as a visitor destination to a wider audience than our local market through the new Visit Haywood brand.
- **Economic Impact:** The potential impact on lodging occupancy, tax generation, and direct spending through increased travel and tourism activity within Haywood County.
- **Attendance:** Whether the event demonstrates solid annual attendance.
- **Community Benefit:** The overall benefit the event provides to the Haywood County community, including demonstrated strong partnerships with local businesses or organizations.

Application Process:

- *Application:* Access the application form from the HCTDA website at https://haywoodtda.com/grants/ and submit electronically through the online portal by the posted deadline, with the following required information:
    - **Application:** The application must be completed and signed by a representative with the authority to bind the applicant organization.
    - **Financial Information:** The applicant must fill out the budget template, available on the HCTDA website, in its entirety.
    - **Marketing Plan:** The applicant must ~~fill out~~ submit and execute ~~the~~ a marketing plan, on the required template, ~~template~~, ~~available on the HCTDA website, in its entirety~~, that fully adheres to the grant advertising requirements, found here [LINK].
    - **Letters of Support (if applicable)**: If the event/project will take place on Town/County property, or has the potential to impact other businesses, the applicant must submit a letter of support from municipalities and/or other businesses.
    - **Sponsorship opportunities (if applicable)**: Explain sponsorship opportunities and benefits offered to potential sponsors.
- *Review:* HCTDA staff will review applications and reach out to applicants if additional information is required. There will be a window of time for the applicant to submit the additional information or amend their application and/or budget, if requested by the HCTDA. The HCTDA reserves the right to reject applications that are not properly filled out. Applications will be reviewed by the Product

Development Committee (PDC) based on the criteria outlined in the "Criteria for Tourism Promotion Grant Awards" section. PDC recommendations are then forwarded to the HCTDA Board for consideration.

- *Award:* All funding decisions will be voted on by the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority Board. Once the HCTDA Board has voted, applicants will be notified of the decision via email.

Additional Notes:

- Grant applicants are fully responsible for following guidelines and meeting deadlines outlined herein.
- Visit Haywood reserves the right to request additional information from any applicant.
- Businesses must be current on all federal, state, local, and occupancy tax payments, or will be disqualified from receiving grant funding.
- All material submitted as part of an application will be a matter of public record, subject to Chapter 132. G.S. 132-1 of NC laws.
- Applications are reviewed by the Product Development Committee (PDC) and the Executive Committee (EC) based on the criteria outlined in the "Legacy Event Sponsorship Awards" section. PDC and EC recommendations are then forwarded to the HCTDA Board for consideration.
- All funding decisions ultimately rest with the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority Board. Depending on funding available and applications received, we may award less than the requested amount, offer alternative support, or not award funding at all. Projects that best align with our criteria will be prioritized.
- ~~We reserve the right to modify or adjust our grant programs at any time. While we strive to be transparent and communicative, please be aware that program details are subject to change.~~ Visit Haywood reserves the right to modify its grant programs, guidelines, or requirements at any time.

Accessing Awarded Funds:

To ensure smooth access to awarded funds, please follow these guidelines:

Project Completion and Documentation:

- Funds are reimbursable and will be disbursed **only after the project has concluded** and all related activities are completed.
- ~~Grantees must submit the following documentation digitally to Visit Haywood **within 45 days** of the project's conclusion or no later than July 15, whichever is sooner:~~ Reimbursement documentation must be submitted digitally within 45 days of project completion and no later than July 10, whichever comes first. Failure to meet the applicable deadline will result in forfeiture of the grant award.
  - Request for Payment Form & Final Evaluation Report: This report should detail the project's execution, successes, challenges, and overall impact. It is mandatory for future funding eligibility. The applicant must be able to articulate the return on investment (ROI) on Tourism Promotion grant funding and show the success of the project or the value to the community through ticket sales, attendance estimate, or other data sources.
  - Recognition Verification: Three (3) forms of proof of Visit Haywood's recognition as required in the grant agreement (e.g., logos, mentions in promotional materials, etc.). Advertising or promotional materials that were not approved in advance by the HCTDA may not be accepted as a form of recognition.

Failure to meet these event evaluation requirements may result in withholding of awarded funds and/or disqualification from future programs.

Contact:

~~If you have any questions regarding the documentation process or fund disbursement, please contact Visit Haywood at 828-944-0761 or email Hayley Printz, Administrative Assistant, at Hayley@VisitHaywood.com~~

For questions about grant requirements, reimbursement, or documentation, please contact Visit Haywood at 828-944-0761 or Hayley Printz, Administrative Assistant, at Hayley@VisitHaywood.com.

If you do not see a "Thank You" confirmation page after submitting an online form, please contact us to verify that your submission was received.