

Community Support Grant Program FAQ

1. What is the Community Support Grant program?

The Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism sets aside 5-10% of their annual fiscal budget to assist with development and promotion of local events and projects that demonstrate an economic impact through overnight hotel stays, sales tax generation, enhancing the visitors experience and publicity of Muskogee as a destination for visitors.

2. What kind of events qualify?

Any event that is open to the public and promotes, or is conducive to, overnight hotel stays in Muskogee.

3. How much can I ask for?

The limit for an individual grant is \$5,000. All applicants are encouraged to apply for as much as they will need. The committee has the discretion to alter the grant amount as they see fit.

4. How many requests can I submit at a time?

We will only accept one request per event. There is no re-application process in the event of denial. However, event organizers are free to submit a request for any and every separate event they host.

5. When is the deadline?

The requests must be received by the 5th of the month in order to be heard at that month's meeting.

6. How far in advance should I turn it in?

The further in advance you apply, the more time we have to request any missing documentation or to request more information on the event. It is strongly encouraged that you apply a minimum of 60 days in advance. This will also allow for maximum marketing opportunity.

7. Who makes the final decision?

The CSG program goes through several processes before a final decision is reached. **It is important to note that the Chamber & Tourism staff serve only an advisory role in the process and have no final say in the approval or denial of requests** A CSG Sub-Committee, which is comprised of representatives from local hotels and attractions, reviews the requests in detail and makes an official recommendation to the tourism committee for approval or denial. The tourism committee is comprised of 11 community volunteers that serve as an oversight committee for how the tourism funds are spent. The final vote belongs to the Chamber Board of Directors. Within 48 hours of this final decision, notice is sent to the event organizer.

8. If I'm approved, how long will it take to receive a check?

The tourism committee meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, and the Chamber Board of Directors meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month. The final decision will be made at the Board of Directors meeting, so the week following (typically the last week of the month) is generally when checks are cut.

9. What is a "host hotel" and why is it important?

A host hotel is a designated lodging choice used in the promotion and tracking of an event. This hotel is referenced in all marketing material and serves as a verification tool for the success of an event to attract overnight stays. Typically, a host hotel will offer a discounted rate to event attendees.

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10. Can my event still be approved, even without hotel arrangements?

The goal of this program is to create more overnight stays and to grow the lodging tax collection. This tax is our sole funding source. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to make lodging arrangements to help further this mission.

11. What if my event is cancelled, postponed, or changes format?

Any changes in the event from that which was presented will result in consideration by the CSG Sub-committee to either disqualify the event from future funding, and possibly request remittance of funds granted.

12. What can these funds be used for?

The purpose of the funds is typically outlined in the decision sheet. The majority of grants are for marketing the event outside of the Muskogee area.

13. Once I'm approved, am I guaranteed a grant next year for the same event?

The goal of the CSG program is to provide seed funding for new events and to help promote growth for sophomore events. Requests are reviewed individually, and previous funding plays a role in the final decision. The CSG program will typically deny requests for events that have received 3+ years of previous funding from tourism.

14. If my request is denied, can you still help with my event?

We do offer marketing assistance and other services, regardless of your application status in the Community Support Grant program. We can organize a host hotel with special event rates, create a press release and share it with our industry partners, provide free advertising through several avenues such as; social media, billboards, print publications, radio promotions, and more.

15. What am I required to submit with my request?

A list of required documents can be found on the application form itself. In addition to these, you are required to submit your Post-event report and attendee surveys within 60 days following the event.

16. Where can I find more information on the Community Support Grant Program?

You can find more information, including the application, on Visitmuskogee.com under "Visit > Plan your event". You can also contact the Tourism Director, Ashley Wilbourn, at ashley@muskogeechamber.org.