



**Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

Community Tourism Action Plan Grants

Application Due: September 15, 2023

275 E. Court St., Suite 102, Kankakee, IL 60901

815-935-7390

[VisitKankakeeCounty.com](http://VisitKankakeeCounty.com)

# **Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau**

## **Community Tourism Action Plan Grants**

The Kankakee County Convention & Visitors Bureau's (KCCVB) mission is to market and develop branded Kankakee County destination experiences to enhance community economic growth and quality of life. To achieve this mission, the KCCVB is pleased to unveil a newly structured Community Tourism Action Plan (CTAP) Grants Program for 2023.

### **Background**

In late 2022, the board of the KCCVB met and discussed its desire to continue investing in Kankakee County tourism efforts by expanding on the good work that had been done to drive visitation. Since the Bureau's inception, Kankakee County and its municipalities have benefited economically from growth in tourism visitation, but the board wanted to stimulate even more progress as its communities emerged from the pandemic.

To achieve this, the board updated its CTAP grant program and increased its capacity to work cooperatively with governments, businesses and community organizations on both small and large projects that will have an impact on the community's visitor economy.

### **Purpose of the new KCCVB CTAP grants program**

The primary purposes of the KCCVB CTAP grants are to add vibrancy to communities in Kankakee County and to generate new economic impact through visitation by non-residents.

Additional purposes:

- To expand the tourism products in Kankakee County
- To expand existing or create new visitor experiences in Kankakee County to attract new visitors and extend the stay of current visitors
- To provide co-op marketing assistance to support new signature events that will generate overnight visitation to Kankakee County
- To generate overnight visitors and measurable hotel room nights in Kankakee County

### **CTAP grants description**

CTAP grants are investments in tourism-related projects that will foster and stimulate increased visitation and visitor spending within Kankakee County. They are not intended to be a project's primary source of funding, but rather an incentive to assist the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in bringing worthy projects and great ideas to fruition in a timely fashion.

Examples of desired projects include, but are not limited to, the development or expansion of visitor attractions and venues, hands on experiences and activities, high impact traveling exhibitions, public shows that are uniquely qualified to extend a visitor's stay, and multi-day new signature events that are likely to generate overnight stays.

Grants are not intended for general operating expenses, annual fund drives, endowment funds, research, travel, staff salaries or other overhead expenses. CTAP grants are not intended for projects where they would be the first funds committed, either. It is the strong desire of the KCCVB board to consider projects where “but for” this grant, the project could not move forward. See the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) attachment for further information.

After discussion and reflection, while also taking into consideration current economic conditions, the board significantly revised the program to better meets its goals and increase its investments in the community. Moving forward, KCCVB will offer two different grant programs through a competitive application process:

**Kankakee County Product Enhancement Grant** - Grant Amounts: \$5,000 to \$24,999

- Required minimum applicant match – 25% cash
- Matching funds must be secured before a grant is awarded

**Kankakee County Major Investment Grant** - Grant Amounts: \$25,000 - \$500,000

- Required minimum applicant match - 50% cash
- Matching funds must be secured before a grant is awarded

**Funding levels**

Assuming the continuation of current funding, the board expects to dedicate as much as 25% of its annual budget toward grants, to be divided between two grants: Product Enhancement Grants (\$5,000 - \$24,999) and Major Investment Grants (\$25,000 - \$500,000). The board may choose to expend any amount of its grant funds within a specific grant cycle or fiscal year and retains the exclusive right to set the amount and criteria for each grant program as it sees fit. If grant monies are not fully expended during the fiscal year, at the board’s sole discretion, funds may be rolled into the following year’s grant programs or returned to the general fund. For complete specifications of each grant program, please refer to the FAQ attachment.

**Application Deadline**

**Applications Available:** August 1, 2023

**Applications Due:** September 15, 2023

**Applicants Notified:** September 29, 2023

Applications and FAQs are attached. Additional questions should be directed to Nicole Gavin, Executive Director, at [nicole@kccvb.com](mailto:nicole@kccvb.com).



Date Received by KCCVB:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2023 Community Tourism Action Plan  
Product Enhancement Grant Application (\$5,000-\$24,999)**

**Organization Information**

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Media Handles: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization (check all that apply):

Nonprofit  Civic  Local government  Business  Other (*Explain*)

**Primary Contact Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (direct) \_\_\_\_\_ (mobile)

**Project Description:**

Name of the project: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your project an expansion or improvement of an existing facility or activity? *Explain.*

\_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe your project below. Attach an additional sheet if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the date and time frame of your project? (Start, end, and preparation time needed)

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the total budget of your project (revenue and expenses by category)? (Attach a budget)

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the total amount of funding you are seeking? \_\_\_\_\_

List the other revenue you have secured for your project including the source, amount and status (secured, pending, etc.) Matching funds of at least 25% cash are required.

\_\_\_\_\_

How will you fund this project if you are not awarded the full amount you are seeking, or if the project costs increase?

\_\_\_\_\_

How will you continue to fund this project in subsequent years (without recurring CTAP grants?)

\_\_\_\_\_

How many days will this project draw visitors over one year? (If an event, list the length of the event)

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the experience of the primary contact or applicant organization in managing similar projects or activities. Attach an additional sheet if needed.

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**Estimated Community Impact of the Project:**

Total attendance projected: \_\_\_\_\_ Ticketed? Y/N (price) \_\_\_\_\_

Total people who will benefit from this project and its impact: \_\_\_\_\_

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Provide a detailed description of your methodology for estimating community impact. Attach an additional sheet if needed.

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Will more than one community within the county benefit from this project Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

*Explain:* \_\_\_\_\_

If this project is an event, does it have the potential to recur in future years? Explain.

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How do you intend to market or promote this project to reach visitors from outside Kankakee County? Please attach your marketing plan/outline and examples. Provide details of the target audience, geographic reach, potential media/PR opportunities, social media campaigns, etc.

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**Bonus Points:**

Total hotel room nights anticipated: \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel block needed? Y/N

If you have already arranged a room block, please specify the hotel(s) being used: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Additional Attachments to Support Your Application (for nonprofits):**

- Attach a legible copy of your determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service specifying your tax-exempt status
- Attach a recent financial audit or most recent year-end financial statement
- Attach a list of current board members
- Attach a legible copy of your W-9 form

**Additional Attachments to Support Your Application (for private businesses):**

- Attach a copy of your certificate of good standing from the Secretary of State’s office or accreditation from the Better Business Bureau.
- Attach a copy of your current license to do business in Kankakee County (or in your municipality)
- Attach copies of additional certifications or accreditations bestowed by state or national associations or governing bodies in your field of work.

*I have read the terms and conditions of the CTAP grants and certify I have completed this application truthfully to the best of my ability. I understand that if selected for a grant, my organization will be required to acknowledge the support of the KCCVB publicly and to work cooperatively with the CVB on marketing and promotional activities to ensure maximum benefit to the grantee organization, visitors and the KCCVB. I also understand that KCCVB and my organization will execute a written agreement outlining the requirements of each party prior to any funding being disbursed.*

Applicant signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit completed form and attachments to:  
Nicole Gavin [nicole@kccvb.com](mailto:nicole@kccvb.com) by September 15, 2023**



Date Received by KCCVB:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2023 Community Tourism Action Plan**  
**Kankakee County Major Investment Grant Application**  
**(\$25,000-\$500,000)**

**Organization Information**

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Media Handles: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization (check all that apply):

Nonprofit  Civic  Local government  Business  Other (*Explain*)

**Primary Contact Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (direct) \_\_\_\_\_ (mobile)

**Project Description:**

Name of the project: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your project an expansion or improvement of an existing facility or activity? *Explain.*

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Briefly describe your project below. Attach an additional sheet if needed.

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What is the date and time frame of your project? (Start, end, and major milestones)

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What is the total amount of funding you are seeking for this grant? \_\_\_\_\_

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List other revenue you have secured for your project including the source, amount, and status (secured, pending, etc.) Matching funds of at least 50% must be in cash (not in-kind services) and can come from the applicant’s own resources, other private funds, or grants from foundations or other units of government (excluding the State of Illinois). Units of local government applying for funding do not have to provide matching funds from their own budgets but doing so may improve their chances of receiving an award.

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What is the total budget of your project (Attach a complete budget with revenue and expenses itemized by category.)

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How will you fund this project if you are not awarded the full amount you are seeking, or if the project costs increase?

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It is the desire of the KCCVB to make payments over several years, instead of in a lump sum, for large projects. Explain how this could be done with your project, including whether you are seeking a loan or will use the grant to make payments toward debt service, will use other sources of funding for up-front costs, etc.

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What are the anticipated continuing costs of this project after implementation, and how will those expense be covered? (e.g., ongoing maintenance, etc.)

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How many days will this project draw visitors over one year? (If this is an event, list the length of the event).

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Describe the experience of the primary contact or applicant organization in managing similar projects or activities. Attach an additional sheet if needed.

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**Estimated Community Impact of the Project:**

Total attendance projected: \_\_\_\_\_ Ticketed? Y/N (price) \_\_\_\_\_

Total people who will benefit from this project and its impact: \_\_\_\_\_

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Provide a detailed description of your methodology for estimating community impact. **Attach a feasibility study or other documentation that ensures the viability of the project.**

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Will more than one community within the county benefit as a result? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

*Explain:* \_\_\_\_\_

If this project is an event, does it have the potential to recur in future years? Explain.

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How do you intend to market or promote this project to reach visitors from outside Kankakee County? Please attach your marketing plan/outline and examples. Provide details of the target audience, geographic reach, potential media/PR opportunities, social media campaigns, etc.

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**Bonus Points:**

Total hotel room nights anticipated: \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel block needed? Y/N

If you have already arranged a room block, please specify the hotel(s) being used: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Additional Attachments (for all applicants):**

- Three letters of endorsement in support of this application (from organizations or individuals)

**Additional Attachments (for nonprofits):**

- Attach a legible copy of your determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service specifying your tax-exempt status
- Attach a recent financial audit or most recent year-end financial statement
- Attach a list of current board members
- Attach a legible copy of your W-9 form

**Additional Attachments (for private businesses):**

- Attach a copy of your certificate of good standing from the Secretary of State office or accreditation from the Better Business Bureau.
- Attach a copy of your current license to do business in Kankakee County (or in your municipality)
- Attach copies of any additional certifications or accreditations conferred by state or national associations or governing bodies in your field of work.

*I have read the terms and conditions of the CTAP grants and certify I have completed this application truthfully to the best of my ability. I understand that if selected for a grant, my organization will be required to acknowledge the support of the KCCVB publicly and to work cooperatively with the CVB on marketing and promotional activities to ensure maximum benefit to the grantee organization, visitors and the KCCVB. I also understand that KCCVB and my organization will execute a written agreement outlining the requirements of each party prior to any funding being disbursed.*

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit completed form and attachments to:  
Nicole Gavin [nicole@kccvb.com](mailto:nicole@kccvb.com) by September 15, 2023**

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How do the new grants differ from previous grants?**

Previously, grants were dedicated to participating Kankakee County municipalities to support new or enhanced visitor-based programming focused on promotion or product development activities. These modest matching grants were reviewed by a CTAP committee, approved by the KCCVB Board, and allocated to the municipality.

The new grants are open to a wider range of applicants, including governmental units, nonprofit organizations and private businesses. The Kankakee County Convention and Visitors Bureau (KCCVB) will utilize an independent adjudicator to perform an initial scoring of applications, then meet to discuss the applications and vote on the awards.

## **How much funding is available in each application period?**

Tapping into the reserves it currently has, the board anticipates it will award up to \$1 million over the first three grant cycles.

Assuming the continuation of current funding, the KCCVB board expects to dedicate as much as 25% of its annual budget toward grants, to be divided between the Product Enhancement and Major Investment grants.

The board may choose to expend any amount of its grant funds within a specific grant cycle or fiscal year and retains the exclusive right to set the amount and criteria for each grant program as it sees fit. If grant monies are not fully expended during the fiscal year, at the board's sole discretion, funds may be rolled into the following year's grant programs or returned to the general fund. Tapping into the reserves it currently has, the board anticipates it will award up to \$1 million over the first three grant cycles.

There are required matches for grants, and applicants must have this secured before applying for a CTAP grant. It is the strong desire of the KCCVB board to consider projects where "but for" this grant, the project could not move forward.

### **Product Enhancement Grants**

- Grant amounts - \$5,000 - \$24,999
- Required applicant match – minimum of 25% (cash)

### **Major Investment Grants**

- Grant amounts - \$25,000 - \$500,000
- Required applicant match – minimum of 50% (cash)

### **What kind of projects will be funded?**

The projects the KCCVB hopes to incentivize include, but are not limited to:

1. New or expanded visitor attractions or venues
2. Hands-on experiences and activities
3. High impact traveling exhibitions
4. Public shows that are uniquely qualified to attract new visitors or extend a visitor's stay
5. Multi-day new signature events that are likely to generate overnight visitation

This is a partial list and additional proposals and initiatives will be considered for tourism-related projects that will foster and stimulate increased visitation and visitor spending within Kankakee County. KCCVB also desires that their awards are not a project's primary source of funding, but rather an incentive to assist the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in bringing worthy projects and great ideas to fruition in a timely fashion.

### **Is there anything specific the grants will NOT fund?**

Yes. KCCVB does not fund the following types of expenses:

1. Operational support
2. Annual fund drives
3. Endowments
4. Staff Salaries
5. Overhead expenses
6. Travel
7. Projects to solely benefit a single lodging owner

### **What is the process to apply?**

Applications may be submitted by any public, private, or nonprofit sector Kankakee County business or organization for projects adhering to the provisions set forth in state law to promote tourism, conventions, expositions, theatrical, sports and cultural activities within Kankakee County or to otherwise attract nonresident overnight visitors to Kankakee County.

There will be two application periods each year, although the board, at its sole discretion, may decide to accept applications outside of those periods when extenuating circumstances are presented.

Each application will be considered on its own merits and the KCCVB has the sole authority to approve or deny any grant for any reason or to grant funding that is less than the amount requested by the applicant. Unsuccessful applications may be amended and/or resubmitted in subsequent grant cycles. All decisions of the KCCVB board are final.

In instances where the KCCVB board wishes to award funding for a project but does not yet have funds available, they may designate the project as a strategic priority when funds become available. Such projects would receive priority consideration in the next cycle and would not need a new application provided no substantive changes have been made to the project.

**How are grants paid?**

The timing of grant payments will be determined at the time of the award. For Product Enhancement Grants, no more than 50% of the grant amount will be remitted up front, with the remaining 50% paid upon conclusion of the project following an accounting of expenses. For Major Investment Grants, the awards may be paid over several years. The conditions will be spelled out in the award letters issued.

KCCVB will not make payments to vendors or individuals. Payment will only be made to the applicant organization that is responsible for its deliverables.

**Are multiple applications allowed from one entity?**

Yes. However, it is anticipated there will be more applications than available funding, so applicants are encouraged to be judicious in considering the projects that will have the clearest impact in the shortest time.

**If my project is not funded, may I resubmit my application in a different cycle?**

Yes. In some cases, projects are not funded because of competition from other applications that were deemed to be stronger, or having a greater impact, or being more “shovel ready” and available for immediate implementation. Your notification letter will have some basic information about any deficiencies that were noted. It is advised that you improve on those deficiencies before reapplying.

**How will applications be evaluated?**

Applications will be evaluated according to these criteria:

- Likelihood and degree to which the project or activity will add vibrancy to communities in Kankakee County while generating spending through visitation by non-residents.
- Applicant’s ability to clearly address how it will expand existing or create new visitor experiences in Kankakee County and increase visitation.
- Required funding match identified and the organization’s ability to raise additional funds needed to bring the project to completion
- Strength of the promotional activities planned to draw outside visitors to Kankakee County
- Experience and capacity of the applicant to carry out the project

- Appropriateness of the project’s budget and timeline
- Timeliness of the project and its ability to impact visitation in the near future
- Applicant’s ability to track and measure performance and demonstrate tourism impact
- Ability to generate new incremental hotel room nights

**How can an applicant demonstrate visitor impact?**

Demonstrating visitor impact is not an exact science, but there are ways to estimate the impact. Here are some ideas for Product Enhancement Grants.

- Understanding the prior history is one of the best ways to estimate impact. Has this kind of event or project been done before? If so, what was the resulting visitation? If the project hasn’t been done in Kankakee County, is there another location, venue or business that may have done something similar? If so, will they share information with you about attendance and origin market?
- Once you have this, you will need to set your projections based on conditions you expect in Kankakee. For example, if the project or event you are benchmarking against has a long history, your projections will likely need to be scaled back considerably to account for the fact this is a new event or project.
- Work with the KCCVB staff to query hotels for rates and availability. If applicable, set up a hotel room block and a registration process that allows the hotel to know which bookings can be attributed to your event.
- Consider ways to track attendance and visitor origin through a survey where you query guests about their residency and whether they came for a day visit or stayed in a hotel.

If you are applying for a Major Investment Grant of more than \$25,000, you will need to provide a feasibility study that assesses the economic viability, operational considerations, market dynamics and potential for success of the project. This will give KCCVB (and other supporters and investors) an objective estimation of the project’s impact over time to evaluate the project fully.

**What are the requirements of successful applicants?**

Grant awardees will be required to acknowledge the support of the KCCVB publicly and to work cooperatively with the CVB on marketing and promotional activities to ensure maximum benefit to the grantee organization, visitors and the KCCVB.

The parties will execute a written agreement outlining the requirements of each party prior to funding being disbursed. Recipients will be required to submit a final project report within 90 days of the completion of the project to include activities used to market the project, event or experience. Additionally, recipients are required to submit methodologies used to capture out-of-market visitation, hotel room night projections and actual pickup, along with copies of survey instruments used for data collection.

**Are there any other criteria?**

Projects may not solely benefit a single lodging owner, nor benefit solely members of a private club or organization where the impact is not imparted broadly. Events, activities, experiences, and projects must allow participation or viewing by the public at large.