



Graham County Travel & Tourism
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Your Natural Destination!
GrahamCountyTravel.com

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Grant Purpose

To make small, strategic investments that attract non-resident visitors to Graham County and drive measurable increases in visitation, overnight stays, and visitor spending by enhancing tourism experiences, tourism assets, and tourism marketing efforts.

Available Funding

Travel and Tourism has allocated \$30,000 for the 2025-2026 grant cycle. Funding is offered through three paths:

Event Development and Promotion

Typical award: \$1,000 – \$3,000

Supports the development, enhancement, and promotion of events that attract non-resident visitors, generate overnight stays, and contribute to Graham County's tourism economy.

Destination Enhancement

Typical award: \$2,000 – \$5,500

Supports small-scale improvements and stewardship initiatives that demonstrate a clear connection to visitor experience, tourism sustainability, and/or responsible destination management.

Marketing and Business Development

Typical award: \$3,000 – \$7,500

Supports the development and implementation of marketing strategies and projects as well as staff and leadership development

Typical award amounts are intended to provide guidance on the scale of projects this program is designed to fund. Projects should be of sufficient size to have a measurable impact. The Tourism Authority reserves the right to partially fund requests or to award amounts greater than those requested.

Grant Timeline

Grants are accepted on an ongoing basis and are given first-come, first-served consideration at the next full Travel and Tourism Authority Board meeting. To be considered, applications must be received at least 10 business days prior to the published meeting date for that month. No grant applications will be considered, voted on, or approved between Board meetings.

Application Process

Grant applications must be completed online. Printed or handwritten submissions will not be accepted. Application instructions and required documentation are outlined on the program website.

Eligibility

Grants may only be awarded to established nonprofit and for-profit entities who have been in operation for a minimum of one year and whose proposed project is directly tied to tourism promotion, visitor engagement,

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or the development or enhancement of tourism-related assets. Applicants with an open grant may not make a new application. All supported assets and events must be open to the public. Please contact the Travel and Tourism Authority staff if assistance is needed to identify a partner and establish an eligible partnership.

Strong consideration is given to collaborative projects involving public and private organizations, community partnerships, and projects that include applicant investments and/or matching funds. While matching contributions may include donated materials, volunteer labor, and partner contributions such as paid staff time, cash matches are given higher priority within the Tourism Development Grant Program.

Matching Grants

Funds from this program may be used as matching funds for grants awarded by other organizations. Applicants must disclose if a Tourism Development Grant will be applied as matching funds at the time of application. Applicants are also required to notify the Graham County Travel and Tourism Authority of the outcome of the related grant being matched. Acceptance of Tourism Development matching funds are contingent upon the successful award of the corresponding grant.

Priority Funding

Priority funding is given to projects and initiatives that:

- Have an off-peak season impact (Dec 1 – March 31)
- Use sustainability and stewardship practices to develop, enhance or restore a tourism asset
- Include a well-designed plan or demonstrated strategy to increase overnight visitation, length of stay, or visitor spending by travelers from outside Graham County
- Include a strategic marketing reach and/or effectiveness plan; or demonstrate increased reach or visitation for existing projects growth or enhancement funding

Application Review

Applications are evaluated by the Travel and Tourism Grants Committee who decide which projects meet program requirements and should be recommended to the Board for consideration. The Grants Committee reserves the right to request more information from applicants and/or request that applicants meet with Travel and Tourism Authority staff before making a recommendation.

Recommendations are based on the application's demonstrated alignment with Tourism Development Authority statutory requirements, program priorities, projected tourism impact, project feasibility, budget clarity, and relevance to overnight visitation and off-peak season travel.

Award Notification

Applicants will receive written notification delivered by email. Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement outlining requirements.

Acknowledgement

All funded projects must include appropriate acknowledgment of the Graham County Travel and Tourism Authority, as specified in the grant agreement.

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Eligible Uses of Funds

All eligible uses of funds must be directly tied to tourism promotion or the development, enhancement, or marketing of assets that attract overnight visitors from outside Graham County. Below are examples of eligible uses of funds:

Event Development and Promotion	Destination Enhancement	Marketing and Business Development
Digital Advertising (social, search, display)	Trail Improvements (signage, kiosks, small-scale infrastructure)	Development of Marketing or Branding materials & assets
Print advertising (regional publications)	Visitor amenities (benches, lighting, interpretive panels)	Staff or leadership training & development
Photography or videography for promotional use	Public art installations or placemaking elements that interpret natural or cultural assets	Event attendance that will develop regional and national tourism related relationships
Event branding to be visible in photography or videos (banners, signs, flags, etc)	Wayfinding signage	Website or landing page development for tourism promotion
Event marketing targeting visitors more than 50 miles away	Small-scale facility upgrades that enhance visitor experience	Public relations, media outreach, or market research

Ineligible Uses of Funds

Examples of ineligible uses of funds include, but are not limited to: general operating expenses, staff salaries not directly tied to tourism promotion, undeclared grant program matches, disproportionate administrative expenses, debt service or loan repayment, political or religious programming, and projects that primarily serve residents or local businesses without a clearly defined and documented tourism promotion or overnight visitation component.

Disbursement & Reporting

Funds may only be disbursed to an established business or nonprofit entity. Post-project reports are due within 45 days of project completion and must follow the reporting format designated in the grant agreement. Example requested documentation of tourism-related outcomes might include but is not limited to estimated visitor attendance, overnight stays generated, marketing reach outside the county and other project relevant performance metrics. Reports must also include proof of expenditures, such as receipts and invoices. Milestone check-ins or interim reports may be requested in some project agreements.

The Graham County Travel and Tourism Authority reserves the right to seek reimbursement of funds for uncompleted projects, projects that deviate from approved plans, or projects that restrict public access following development. Failure to complete post-project reports is considered an uncompleted project.

Contact Information

Contact Graham County Travel and Tourism Authority at 828-479-3790 or email info@grahamcountytravel.com

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