



# Destination Partnership Grant Program

## PURPOSE

**Destination Partnership Grants** include three categories: **Meeting/Event Grants/Sponsorships:** To promote, market and encourage new\* and returning events, conventions, meetings and festivals to choose the City of Middleton and Middleton hotel and lodging properties as their destination and home base. **Special Project Grants/Sponsorships:** To promote tourism development for events and attractions, or otherwise designated opportunities for Visit Middleton to expand offerings to its visitor, meeting and convention attendees; may be used toward projects MTC identifies as having significant impact on tourism development but does not yield overnight stays. **Meeting Planner Incentives:** The Meeting Planner Incentive program provides planners special opportunities for qualifying events and meetings brought to Middleton hotel and lodging properties.

Special Projects and Meeting/Event grants or sponsorships may not be awarded in conjunction with Tourism Development & Marketing Grants, but the Meeting Planner Incentive Grant may if the applicant falls within both criteria. Applicant must submit grant applications outlining criteria and requests specific to each grant they are seeking. Grant recipients are required to provide a post-event summary with total overnight stays, survey results and feedback/observations within 45 days of the close of event.

The grant funds are generated by hotel room tax collections that are managed by Visit Middleton and approved by the City of Middleton Tourism Commission (MTC) and are based on available funding per budget year.

Since the Wisconsin State Statute requires a minimum of one hotel representative to serve on the MTC; and since Visit Middleton does not want to discourage business at any Middleton hotel and lodging property; and since Visit Middleton does not wish to penalize any hotel representative providing service to MTC as a commissioner; Visit Middleton will allow event and meeting planners hosting/staying at any Middleton hotel and lodging facilities to apply for tourism grants, even if that facility is one at which a serving Middleton Tourism Commission hotel representative is employed; and as stated below in guidelines, Visit Middleton grant funds may NOT be applied toward facility fees, merchandise\*\*, or catering (unless part of the Meeting Planner Incentive grant). **Middleton hotel or lodging employees** serving a term on the Middleton Tourism Commission may not present the application on behalf of an event or meeting planner conducting business at their property and must recuse themselves from voting on said grant application.

## Application process

- Applications should be submitted at least six months prior to the first day of the event for full consideration and no less than 90 days prior to advertising for the event if applying for grant dollars toward marketing;
- An exception **may** be made if the event is a short-term booking; but then submissions must be received by the first Monday of the month for consideration in that month;
- The Director of Tourism reviews applications, assists with revisions if necessary and presents the application to the Middleton Tourism Commission for final approval;
- The Director of Tourism has discretion to deny an application where it is clear one or more criteria are not met;
- Applications are reviewed by MTC during its monthly meeting, the third Tuesday of every month;
- A written notification in the form of an email will be sent to the applicant advising of MTC's approval or denial of the application;
- Grants will not be advanced ahead of the event except in pre-approved cases;
- Applicants that have been approved for grant funds will submit receipts for approved expenses within 45 days of the close of event along with any requirements for a post-event report;

- Grant recipients are required to provide a post-event report with total overnight room stays at Middleton lodging properties, survey results and feedback/observations within 45 days of the close of event;
- The Director of Tourism will review the post event report and expense receipts. Payment of the grant will be processed within 45 days of the approved submissions;

### Eligibility for Event Sponsorships

- Organizations that are for profit, not for profit or are managed by volunteers may apply;
- **For non-overnight-room-generating events — new to Middleton\***: Sponsorship will not exceed \$3,000 for application toward marketing, talent, transportation, or other as described above, and may not be combined with any other Visit Middleton grant, nor applied to facility fees, merchandise\*\*, or catering. A marketing plan may be required and submitted with application. (Example: Stone Horse Green dedication event)
- **For overnight room-generating events that have aged out of the Tourism Development and Marketing Grant**: Applicants may receive up to \$10 per room night generated by the event, with a maximum of \$3,000 per event for use of marketing, talent, transportation, or other, as described above. A marketing plan may be required and submitted with application. This grant may be awarded along with Meeting Planner Incentive Grant, but no funds may be applied toward facility fees, merchandise\*\*, or catering (unless part of the Meeting Planner Incentive grant). Exceptions to this maximum are at the discretion of MTC based on the application, event, and MTC's opinion on how such an event may positively impact the city, as well as funding availability. Grant recipients must submit a post-event summary report, as stated above.

### Eligibility for Meeting Planner Incentives

- Organizations that are for profit, not for profit or are managed by volunteers may apply;
- Meeting Planner Incentives may be granted to new or returning business to Middleton hotel and lodging properties **that generate overnight stays**. They may be granted in coordination with a Tourism Development & Marketing Grant or Destination Partnership Event Sponsorship, and meeting planners may apply for more than one of the following options. MTC will deduce, based on overnight stays, impact to local economic development, and available funding how many of the following will be granted to each applicant. Applicants should indicate preference when applying. To qualify for a Meeting Planner Incentive grant, the criteria are as follows:
  - Must have a minimum of 150 overnight stays to qualify for a sponsored coffee service (up to 150 attendees); must have a minimum of 300 overnight stays to qualify for sponsored coffee service (up to 300 attendees);
  - Must have a minimum of 150 overnight stays to qualify for a sponsored board member luncheon (up to 10 attendees) at the hotel or lodging property. These incentives do not only apply at Middleton hotel properties that provide these services; only in the case that a lodging property does not provide catering, the meeting planner may be granted \$320 to cater in for the board meeting or host off site at a Middleton restaurant;
  - Must have a minimum of 50 overnight stays to qualify for one (1) sponsored Visit Middleton gift basket; and 150 overnight stays to qualify for two (2) sponsored Visit Middleton gift baskets. These may be used by meeting planners as VIP gifts or event giveaways but cannot be raffled off for money unless pre-approved by the Director of Tourism (allowances may be made in cases of charity fundraising events);
  - Must have a minimum of 100 overnight stays to qualify for four (4) hours sponsored transportation service from Middleton hotel or lodging property to a Middleton location of choice (i.e., downtown district, specific restaurant, Capital Brewery, Hidden Cave Cidery, Middleton tour, etc., and with exception to Marshall Boats, and any part of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, which extend into other cities). This incentive will be offered in accordance with local trolley availability. If trolley is unavailable, other transportation options, such as a rented van or bus, will be considered.

### Eligibility for Special Projects

- Special Projects are defined as tourism development opportunities within the City of Middleton, brought to the City of Middleton with specific tourism-related value, relevance, scope and/or ability to generate overnight stays at Middleton hotel properties. The most important category to be considered will be the project's ability to generate overnight stays;
- Applicants may submit a grant request outlining the project, its scope, its impact on Middleton economic development, its impact on Middleton culture, and its overnight stay generating possibilities;

- Applicants may be called on to present grant requests in person for the MTC (a hybrid option via Zoom could, but will not always, be considered);
  - The amount granted will be decided per request and at the discretion of the Middleton Tourism Commission and based on available funding.
- (Example of a Special Project grant: CXC Outdoor Center trailhead building)

### **Application guidelines**

- **In addition to criteria mentioned above,**
- Grant awards are at the discretion of MTC and the amount is determined by available funds;
- Applications must be complete, signed and dated for consideration;
- Lodging property representatives sitting on MTC at the time an applicant is up for review for an event/convention scheduled at that property may not present an application on behalf of the event coordinator but must provide a proxy, or request the Director of Tourism to present, as well as recuse themselves from the vote;
- MTC also reserves the right to make any exception to grant amounts and criteria if MTC identifies applicant's case as having significant impact on tourism development.

### **Grant specifications**

- The event or project will generate significant paid overnight stays at Middleton hotel properties;
- Applicants offering multiple hotel options are required to request room blocks from Middleton properties;
- Grant awardees will submit a post-event report;
- No grants may not be applied toward hotel facility fees, catering, or merchandise\*\*;
- Applicants applying for marketing sponsorship grant funds may be required to provide a marketing plan outlining how the event will be advertised to those within and outside of Dane County;
- Event or project will provide projection of the economic impact to the City of Middleton;
- Grant awardees may be required to conduct an event survey as part of their post-event report;
- Visit Middleton will be listed as an event sponsor where appropriate for events/festivals/conferences on program material, advertising, etc.; and/or listed as a contributor/donor where appropriate for Special Projects and Meeting/Event Sponsorship grants.

### **Review Criteria**

- Completeness of application
- Economic impact of event or project
- Overnight rooms generated
- Multiple year booking (meetings, conventions and conferences)
- Need for financial assistance
- New or reoccurring event or project

**\*New events** are defined as events that are in their first, second or third year in operation or of hosting at a City of Middleton venue or hotel/lodging property. An event held at one Middleton property one year and at another Middleton property its second year, is in its second year in Middleton.

**\*\*Merchandise** is defined as branded and non-branded materials for sale or distribution, excluding race T-shirts or co-sponsored giveaway items (ex. co-branded beer mug at Bockfest).