



McCurtain County Special Projects Grant Application and Guidelines

Introduction

The McCurtain County Tourism Authority is funded by a hotel lodging tax. This tax is 3% and is collected only by hotels or lodging facilities that are located outside of the city limits. Each city in the county has their own tourism tax that is collected within their city limits. This tax is solely generated by tourists visiting our community. The purpose of the tax is to promote, encourage, and develop tourism and recreational activities beneficial to McCurtain County. Economic strengthening of the local economy will enhance the quality of life enjoyed by McCurtain County residents. The local economy will be strengthened by the development of tourism and recreation.

The purpose of the special projects grants available through the McCurtain County Tourism Authority is to assist in the development of tourism and recreational activities within McCurtain County. Projects should be beneficial to McCurtain County and be designed to be utilized by visitors to our county. McCurtain County strives to continue to attract overnight visitors to our county.

The details of this process are:

MCTA will set aside 5% of the budget each fiscal year as long as the existing 3% lodging tax is collected through the county. This 5% amount will be for the Special Projects Grants. This amount will be set aside and granted on a first come first serve basis. Non-profits, governmental, state, city, and federal entities located within McCurtain County can apply for assistance if they meet the established criteria. All applications are reviewed by the McCurtain County Tourism Authority Board. Issuance of grants requires board action. The McCurtain County Tourism Board has the sole discretion of whether or not to fund special projects or not. Generally, those entities seeking assistance must demonstrate that their event or project will result in overnight stays within the McCurtain County area or encourage the development of tourism and recreational activities within our county.

How to Apply

A request must be submitted to the McCurtain County Tourism Authority office 10 days prior to their board meeting in order to get on the agenda to present your special project to the board. The board meets July, September, November, January, March, and May. However, the board will hear special project proposals at the annual grants meeting in May. The ones approved in May will be for the following fiscal year beginning July 1st. Exact dates of meetings can be found at <https://visitmccurtaincounty.com/meetings-minutes/> or contact the Charity O'Donnell, the Executive Director at bchamber@pine-net.com or call 580-584-3393.

On meeting day, you will be placed on the agenda to present your project. At this meeting you submit a typed proposal of the special project you are requesting assistance with. You will also need documentation showing you are a nonprofit or governmental entity, W-9, along with plans, budgets, estimates, partnerships etc. Special project must support McCurtain County Tourism mission to promote, encourage, and develop tourism and recreational activities beneficial to McCurtain County. Bring 9 copies of everything with you to the meeting.

Guidelines and Criteria for Funding

Assistance through the grant process is available to support a planned project. The McCurtain County Tourism Authority cannot make multi-year financial commitments. McCurtain County's fiscal year runs from July through June. If granted amount is not spent within fiscal year approved, you will lose it and must reapply the following year.

All projects must be nonprofit and have a valid EIN number before funding can be approved. Must submit a W-9 form. Must provide a McCurtain County logo and wording on a plaque.

Proposals must have three community letters of support and letters of any partnerships involved in this project.

Successful projects funded will adhere to the following:

Have detailed documents of proposal of project, complete with support letters, budgets, estimates, etc. and show how your project could enhance or develop tourism and recreation in McCurtain County.

McCurtain County follows the Oklahoma Open Records Act and State Central Purchasing Act Title 19 outlining county purchasing guidelines all funding granted for special projects must follow these guidelines as well.

Multiple estimates must be obtained and you must submit them with your final documentation and show us why you went with who you did to complete the project. If you go out to bid, please submit all that documentation as well.

Expenses not eligible for grant special project funding:

- Food, Lodging, Mileage, or transportation costs
- Purchase or rental of computers, software, projectors, or other similar equipment
- Advertising and marketing to solicit funds for special project
- Reception materials or food or talent for grand openings or ribbon cuttings.
- Personnel costs and or salaries
- Telephone expenses, postage, or other office type supplies
- Membership dues or sponsorships
- Any items to promote project like a banner or sign.
- Any items for resale or promoting sponsors, MCTA will not reimburse for programs, projects, or items that contain sold advertising within them.
- We will not reimburse for any in kind services.

We will only help with expenses used for the development of tourism and recreation in McCurtain County. Funding is to be used for materials purchased to develop the project.

Once funding for project is approved, pay out of funds will happen in one or two payments. This is a reimbursement grant so you must spend the money, show MCTA the proper documentation and we will reimburse for the amount granted. 1st payment will be based on beginning materials for the project. 2nd payment will be paid out after project is completed and all documentation of actual receipts has been submitted. Also, a one payment at the completion of the project is an option as well.

If budget of the entity doesn't allow for this type of payout system, that must be presented in original proposal to the board. The McCurtain Board will work with entity to approve disbursements ahead of time. This will only happen is all governmental guidelines can be met.

MCTA is a county governed organization that runs all of its paperwork through the county commissioners. MCTA adheres to all governmental guidelines in spending tourism tax funds,

including title 19 purchasing guidelines for the state of Oklahoma as well as various other state statutes. MCTA also follows the state Open Meetings Act.

Grantee must maintain financial and accounting records and evidence pertaining to the contract in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and other procedures specified by MCTA and county and state guidelines. All expenditures related to this special project must be documented in a unique job folder and a binder kept specifically for that project. This includes all internal allocated expenditures and external subcontracted expenditures. All vendor invoices and all receipts must be kept in binder as well. This includes all packing slips for product deliveries as well. At the completion of the project before final payout amount, MCTA must have a copy of all these records. These records must be made available at all reasonable times to MCTA and/or its designees during the project and for seven (7) years from the date of final payment on the contract or extension thereof.

The agency shall maintain a listing of all approved estimates including a description of the expenditures and the amounts. For quotes or bids, notes must be kept documenting why you chose one entity over another.

The agency shall obtain competitive bids on any expenditure for the account as follows, unless directed by MCTA to engage a particular vendor. Documentation of the bid process must be included in the appropriate task folders and yearly binder:

- Up to \$5,000 – Up to three bids, may be phone bids
- \$5,001 - \$10,000 – At least three phone/email bids
- \$10,001 and over – At least four bids

Proper documentation of bids received, and why one was chosen over another must be well documented. After project is approved and granted, 3 copies of everything will need to be submitted from that point forward.

At the completion of the project, pictures will need to be submitted for MCTA's files. Also, a plaque will be required stating project was made possible by funds from McCurtain County Tourism Authority or some similar wording.

Upon completion, all documentation – estimates, bids, expenditures, packing slips, invoices along with an invoice requesting reimbursement must be submitted to MCTA. There must be 3 copies of each. Then a check will be cut within 6 weeks from receiving all required documentation.