

BEYOND LOCAL GRANT

CANTON TOURISM ATTRACTION MICRO-GRANT PROGRAM

Administered by the Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development (SRPED)

Funding Provided by the City of Canton's Hotel/Motel Tax

GRANT OVERVIEW

Beginning August 1, 2025, the Canton Tourism Attraction Micro-Grant Program will accept applications for a limited number of \$1,000 micro-grants. Funded through the City of Canton's Hotel/Motel Tax, these grants are available to support **tourism-related projects** that promote Canton as a destination and stimulate local economic growth.

The program's purpose is to increase hotel occupancy, boost local sales tax revenue, support targeted marketing efforts, and enhance the overall tourism experience by bringing in visitors from at least 40 miles away. Whether you're a small business owner, a nonprofit group, or part of a community organization, if your project has potential to draw visitors from 40+ miles away, this opportunity could help bring your idea to life.

SRPED welcomes grant requests from **public and nonprofit organizations** that are producing **tourism marketing, promotional activities**, or **tourism-related projects**.

PROGRAM PURPOSE & PRIORITIES

Hotel/Motel tax funds are invested in initiatives that strengthen Canton's tourism economy. This grant program supports efforts that:

- Promote Canton as a destination to **out-of-town visitors**
- Support attractions, events, and experiences that **encourage overnight stays**
- Drive increased spending at **local hotels, restaurants, and businesses**
- Create positive exposure for the community through **regional or national media**
- Improve the **overall visitor experience** in Canton
- Deliver measurable impact and **return on investment** through tourism growth

Projects with strong potential for **ongoing success**, realistic visitor estimates, and clear outreach to **non-local audiences** will be prioritized.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Applications Open:** August 1, 2025
- **Application Deadline:** September 1, 2025
- **Award Notification:** Mid-September 2025

WHO CAN APPLY

- Nonprofit organizations
- Community groups or committees
- Public entities
- Small businesses with a tourism draw

ALL APPLICANTS MUST PROPOSE PROJECTS THAT:

- Directly draw visitors to Canton or generate tourism-related revenue for Canton (e.g., hotel stays, local spending)
- Aim to attract visitors from outside Fulton County (preferably over 40 miles away)
- Have a clear marketing or promotional strategy targeting non-local audiences
- Include measurable outcomes and tracking methods (e.g., zip codes, ticketing, surveys)
- Align with the Hotel/Motel Tax's intent of increasing overnight stays and economic activity in Canton

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Grant funds may be used for:

- Targeted marketing and advertising outside the local area
- Digital or print media campaigns promoting tourism events
- Booking regional entertainment or attractions
- Promotional materials or signage
- Infrastructure or rentals for events that directly support visitor appeal

Not eligible for funding:

- Operational expenses (salaries, utilities, etc.)
- Food, drink, or alcohol purchases
- Projects with only local reach or attendance
- Private social events

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Your completed application package should include the following (if applicable):

- **Grant Application**
- **Project Summary**
- **Letters of Reference**
- **Marketing Plan (if applicable)**
- **Project Budget (if applicable)**
- **W-9 Form**

POST-AWARD EXPECTATIONS

Grant funds will be disbursed in full upon award for approved projects, unless the project is organized by a new event, newly established business, or new organization. In those cases, the grant will be reimbursable upon submission of receipts and proof of eligible expenses.

Applicants falling under the reimbursement category will be required to provide receipts and documentation of approved expenditures.

RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All grant recipients are asked to share a brief follow-up report within 30 days of completing their project, campaign, or activity. This helps us track the impact of marketing efforts and demonstrate the value of tourism investments in our community.

Your report should include:

- A short recap of how the project or promotion turned out
- Estimated attendance or visitor reach, especially those from 40+ miles away
- A note on your marketing efforts — what channels you used and what seemed effective
- Any helpful insights, feedback, or takeaways you'd like to share
- Any photos, media coverage, or success stories you'd like to share (optional, but encouraged)

HOW TO APPLY

Applications can be found online at cantonillinois.org/economic-development and emailed to: marketing@cantonillinois.org

📌 Paper submissions may also be delivered to:

Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development
48 N Main St, Canton IL, 61520

Questions? Contact us at **(309) 647-2677 Ext 3** or via email for assistance.



BEYOND LOCAL GRANT APPLICATION

ADMINISTERED BY SPOON RIVER PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

📍 48 N MAIN ST, CANTON, IL 61520

✉️ MARKETING@CANTONILLINOIS.ORG | 📞 (309) 647-2677 EXT 3

SECTION 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION

Project Title: _____

Organization / Business Name: _____

Applicant Name & Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Type of Organization:

☐ Nonprofit ☐ Business ☐ Community Group ☐ Other: _____

SECTION 2: SUBMIT PROJECT OVERVIEW

Submit a Project Summary:

Describe the event, program, or service. Include a general overview of the project and its purpose.

How does this project attract visitors from 40+ miles away?

Be specific about the target audience and why this project would appeal to them.

Does the project encourage overnight stays in Canton? If yes, explain how.

SECTION 3: MARKETING & PROMOTION

Describe your marketing plan:

Include methods, media platforms, and geographic reach (e.g., social media, print, radio, billboards, digital advertising).

What geographic areas are you targeting with marketing?

(e.g., Peoria, Springfield, Chicago suburbs, Quad Cities, etc.)

SECTION 4: ATTENDANCE & MEASUREMENT

Expected Attendance:

Total: _____

From over 40 miles away: _____ From out of state (if any): _____

How will you track attendance and visitor origin?

(Examples: zip code surveys, ticketing, hotel partner tracking, visitor sign-ins)

How will you measure project success?

(Include any post-event evaluation or tracking plans)

SECTION 5: BUDGET

Total Estimated Project Budget: \$_____

Provide a simple budget breakdown below or attach a detailed version:

EXPENSE	AMOUNT	NOTES

SECTION 6: SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Please attach the following (if applicable):

- ☐ Letters of Support / Reference
- ☐ Project Summary & Marketing Plan
- ☐ W-9 Form

SECTION 7: AGREEMENT & SIGNATURE

I certify that the information provided is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if awarded funds, I will be responsible for completing a final report and documentation of outcomes.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____