

2027 Cultural Tourism Grants

Overview

Cultural Tourism Grants aim to increase regional visitation and economic impact through visitor spending by supporting arts and cultural events, programming, and marketing initiatives. **2027 Cultural Tourism Grant program will invest up to \$200,000 in support of approved projects.**

Goals/Metrics

ArtsinStark/Visit Canton Grant Program grant projects must:

- Increase attendance and visitor spending by attracting NEW guests from outside of Stark County
- Enhance events, programs, or their destination through arts and cultural elements.
- Foster growth and community collaboration through arts and culture experiences.

Eligibility

Eligible organizations, initiatives, or events must represent:

- Visual Arts/Museums
- Performing Arts/Entertainment/Theatres
- Historic Attractions/Cultural Sites
- Community Festivals & Special Events

** If a for-profit enterprise is a lead or partner applicant, the project must show a partnership or economic benefit for the community or county.*

Project Eligibility

- Projects must demonstrate programs, entertainment, or experiences that will attract visitors and add cultural or artistic value to the community.
- Projects must showcase experiences that cannot be found within 90 miles and/or 90 days of the project.
- Projects cannot solely be reliant on Cultural Tourism grant awards and must have 50% of matching funds invested in the project (in-kind or other grant funding is acceptable)

Eligible Expenses

- **New Experiences, Temporary Exhibitions, & Seasonal Productions – Up to \$20,000**
Qualifying expenses - marketing and event/exhibition acquisition expenses such as shipping, display/exhibit resources, one-time fees/licenses, etc.
- **Music & Arts Entertainment – Up to \$20,000**
Qualifying expenses – marketing and production expenses for nationally touring acts and entertainment
- **Community Festivals & Special Events – Up to \$5,000**
Qualifying expenses – marketing and expenses for arts, culture, history, and heritage activities or entertainment, such as artists, musicians, dancers, speakers, etc.

Ineligible Expenses:

- Venue or equipment rentals
- Staffing/standard operating costs
- Food or alcohol expenses

Repeat Events/Program Expenses:

- If a project is a repeat event that received prior Cultural Tourism funding, the request will only be considered for NEW investment in eligible expenses. No funding for recurring or sustainability costs.

Awards and Timeline

- Grant requests **up to \$20,000** per project will be considered in a competitive application process.
- Applicants may apply for multiple projects per grant cycle, but the total award for Cultural Tourism Grants per organization cannot exceed \$20,000 per cycle.
- Cultural Tourism Grant applications must be submitted at least 90 days before project execution.
- Projects must be completed within the 2026 calendar year.
- The Committee will not judge incomplete applications.

Application Proposal Timeline

If you have questions about the grant process or are planning a project that falls outside the timelines outlined in the program criteria, please contact Allison Gromofsky at allisong@visitcanton.com.

Grant Cycle #1- Projects for January 1-June 30, 2027

September 15th - 9 am- October 15th - 5 pm | Online Applications OPEN: <https://visitcanton.grantplatform.com/>

Awards announced by November 15th, 2026

Grant Cycle #2 Projects for July 1-December 31, 2027

February 15th - 9 am – March 15th - 5 pm | Online Applications OPEN: <https://visitcanton.grantplatform.com/>

Awards announced by April 15th, 2027

Grant Application Information

Applicants must provide the following to be considered:

- Applicant organization's name and contact info
- Detailed project description
- Project operational budget with revenue & expenses
- Project marketing plan with targeted audiences
- Requested performer/vendor/marketing quotes and/or contracts
- Estimated attendance for the project with tracking methods to calculate visitor spending
- Repeat events must present attendance and visitor spending data from past events
- Statement on partial funding: If this project is not awarded at 100% of the request, how will the project proceed?

Scoring Considerations

Applications that have addressed all requirements above will be scored. **Applications that showcase collaboration with multiple partners on the project are highly desired.**

Recognition and Acknowledgement Requirements

- Initiatives using Cultural Tourism Grant Funds must acknowledge Visit Canton and ArtsinStark by including their logos on all project marketing materials.
- Awarded grantees must complete a Memorandum of Understanding to receive funding. Grant funds will be distributed as follows: **70% disbursed upon receipt of a signed MOU, and the remaining 30% will be disbursed following review of the final evaluation report submitted by the recipient organization.**

Final Evaluation Reporting

- A detailed summary of all expenditures from grant funding, including but not limited to invoices and receipts.
- Return on investment data, including visitor numbers and locations, the economic impact on the recipient organization, and the estimated effect on the Stark County community.
- **The final evaluation form must be submitted within 30 days of project completion.** Should the Committee require any additional information, the grantee will have 10 business days to submit the requested data.
- If the grantee does not submit a completed report, the remaining 30% of the grant will be forfeited. This forfeiture will also be considered when evaluating future Cultural Tourism Grant applications from the grantees.²