orange county, texas
preserving resources :: developing the future

Orange County Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund
Eligibility Requirements

<mark>**Please review this document in its entirety, sign, and return the last page with your application.**</mark>

By law of the State of Texas, Orange County collects a Hotel Occupancy Tax from hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, and inns located in Orange County. Under state law, the revenue from the Hotel Occupancy Tax may be used only for specific tourism-related purposes. Tax funds may only be used if the two-part test is met. ***First, the funds must be used in a manner that encourages overnight visitors to Orange County. Secondly, expenditures must fall within one of the following categories:***

Organization Eligibility

1. Applicant organization must have a government issued Tax Identification Number. Applications for proposed events/use of funds must be for events/purposes located in Orange County, Texas. Applications must be submitted by the entity/organization that will be hosting the event/project.

2. Applications submitted by for profit organizations _may_ be considered at the discretion of the Orange County Hotel Occupancy Tax Committee, and Orange County Commissioners Court. These applicants will be limited to a maximum allocation amount of $5,000 per application.

Project Eligibility

1. **Convention Centers and Visitor Information Centers:** the acquisition of sites for and the construction, improvement, enlarging, equipping, repairing, operation and maintenance of convention center facilities or visitor information centers, or both;

2. **Registration of Convention Delegates:** the furnishing of facilities, personnel, and materials for the registration of convention delegates or registrants;

3. **Advertising, Solicitations and Promotions that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry*:** advertising and conducting solicitations and promotional programs to attract tourists and convention delegates or registrants to the county;

4. **Promotions of the Arts that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry:** that the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and

application of the arts, including instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture photography, graphic and craft arts, motion picture, radio, television, tape and sound recording, and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms,

5. **Historical Restoration and Preservation Activities that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry:** historical restoration and preservation projects or activities or advertising and conducting solicitation and promotional programs to encourage tourists and convention delegates to visit preserved historic sites or museums.

6. **Sporting Event Expenses that Substantially Increase Economic Activity at Hotels:** Expenses including promotional expenses, directly related to a sporting event in which the majority of participants are tourists who substantially increase economic activity at hotels and motels within the county.

7. **Certain Portions of Sporting Facilities:** Expenses for a certain percentage of a facility's patrons that are directly contributing to increased local hotel activity.

8. **Shuttle Services for Convention Activities:** Shuttle services for an event is an eligible expense provided the shuttle services begins or terminates at a local hotel facility.

Priority for Hotel Tax Funds
Priority will be given to those events/projects/operations based on applicant's potential to generate overnight visitors through the event's/project's/operation's quality, visitor appeal and administration.

*Funding for advertising must show proof of distribution outside of Orange County.

Quality
- High artistic and/or programmatic quality as perceived by peers, critics, or others.
- Innovative and creative originality.
- Effective use of community resources.
- Quality of marketing materials, marketing plan, and reach of marketing effort.
  o Examples of marketing of the events/projects/operations that are likely to generate and encourage overnight visitors to Orange County.

Visitor Appeal
- Organizations commitment to attract visitors from outside the area to encourage overnight stays.

- Verifiable information regarding past success (prior attendance figures, demographics, etc.)
  - Historic information on the number of room nights used during previous years of the same events/projects/operations requesting hotel tax funds;
  - Current information on the size of a room block that has been reserved at area hotels to accommodate anticipated overnight guests attending the event/project/operations requesting hotel tax funds;
  - Historical information on the number of guests at hotel or other lodging facilities that attended the funded event/project/operations;
  - Days and hours of operation and relation to potential off-peak seasons.
- Number of programs, events, and opportunities for visitor participation.

Administrative Ability
- History of organizational growth and stability
- Community involvement.
- Diverse funding sources.

NO more than 25% of the total available Hotel Occupancy Tax funds shall be used for the purposes of historical restoration and/or preservation.

Review Process

All applications will be reviewed by a Hotel Occupancy Tax Committee and applicants may be asked to interview with the Committee representatives. The HOT Committee will hold a Public Hearing to make a recommendation to the Orange County Commissioners for Hotel Occupancy Tax fund allocation. An open meetings notification will be published. The Orange County Economic Development Corporation will send notification letters to applicants informing them of the decision by the Orange County Commissioners Court. Funds, as approved, will be disbursed through a post-event reimbursement process once all supporting documentation has been received.

Post Event Report, Invoices, and Proofs of Payment

These materials must be submitted not later than sixty (60) days following the event/project/operation and should be submitted to the Orange County Economic Development Corporation. The post event report should mirror the budget presented in the applicant's original application, and proofs of payment must be copies of receipts that reflect actual monies expended, fully executed payment contracts, or fully executed bids. If applicant did not spend the total amount of funding approved, or expenditures did not meet eligibility requirements, then that amount will not be funded.

Funding will not be issued until all supporting documents are received, including the post-event report.

Failure to receive funding in one budget year does not prevent a re-submission in the next budget year.

Hotel Room Usage Reports

Hosts of multi-night events will be required to report overnight stays at local hotels as well as how this data was captured.

Application Availability and Submission Deadline

Applications may be submitted via email to jirvin@orangecountyedc.com or delivered by mail or in person to 123 S. 6th Street, Orange, Texas 77630, Attention: Jessica Irvin

orange county, texas
preserving resources :: developing the future

Acknowledgement of Qualifications and Procedures

I have read the HOT Tax Fund Grant Application Process including the rules governing the eligibility and application, and the reimbursement process.

I fully understand the HOT Tax Fund Grant Application Process, rules governing the eligibility and application, and the process established by Orange County, Texas. I intend to use this grant for the aforementioned event/project to forward the efforts of Orange County, Texas in directly enhancing and promoting tourism and the convention and hotel industry by attracting visitors and hotel guests from outside Orange County, Texas into the community.

I understand that if I am awarded a HOT Fund Grant, any unauthorized deviation from the approved project, or from the rules governing the application, may result in the partial or total withdrawal of the HOT Fund Grant or a requirement to refund any and all funds received.

Business/Organization Name: _____

Applicant's Signature:_____ Date:_____