



PLATTE COUNTY

IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

PURPOSE OF FUNDS

The purpose of the Platte County Improvement Fund grant is to provide funding for the improvement of existing or creation of new visitor attractions and facilities in Platte County. The funds available through this program are provided from the lodging tax revenue fund and are to be used for visitor attractions or recreational facilities that attract visitors to Platte County, Nebraska, owned by the public or any nonprofit organization, as the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §81-3724, et seq. provides.

USE OF FUNDS

Tax revenues are deposited in one or both of two funds: 1) a County Visitors Promotion Fund and/or 2) a County Visitors Improvement Fund.

For the County Visitors Promotion Fund, a maximum 2% lodging tax can be collected for use in tourism promotion and marketing, but not for construction of attractions or other tourism facilities.

For the County Visitors Improvement Fund, a maximum 2% lodging tax can be collected for: 1) making grants for planning, construction, renovation, expanding, and improving attractions owned by the public or any nonprofit organization (except for attractions where pari-mutuel wagering is conducted), or 2) tourism promotion and marketing, when the attractions in a county are determined to be adequate and not needing improvement. Revenues in only the County Visitors Improvement Fund can be used for capital construction and must be for attractions that are open to the public and are of educational, cultural, historical, artistic, or recreational significance. Revenues may also be used for acquiring or expanding exhibits for existing attractions. The maximum grant from the Improvement Fund cannot be greater than the annual proceeds from a 1% lodging tax for a term not to exceed 20 years.

Revenues in both funds can be used for printing brochures, erecting signs, mass media advertising, and other tourism promotion and marketing.

CRITERIA FOR GRANTS:

Applications for funding from the Improvement Fund will be considered based on the Committee's assessment of these criteria:

- a project's potential to draw overnight guests to Platte County will be given priority consideration.
- long-term investment in the community, and will provide a good "rate of return" to the region comparing the amount of money requested with the total revenue from out-of-town.
- is unique to the area; something that can be identified with Platte County and when visitors think of the attraction, they think of Platte County.
- will encourage and solicit attendance from the general public.
- attraction must generate positive visibility for Platte County.

EXCLUSIONS

No part of the grant funds may be used for:

- general operating funds
- for additional or current personnel salaries
- for supplies and equipment
- for general maintenance of an existing facility
- for items not included in the approved grant application
- in any manner that would violate the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §81-3724, et seq. All grants are discretionary, based upon available funds, other anticipated uses, appropriateness and anticipated effectiveness of proposed use.

APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION

Each grant application must include a complete grant application; project description, timeline and budget; contractor bids, proof of nonprofit status and letters of support (minimum of 3). No faxed or emailed copies of the grant will be accepted. Failure to complete the entire application may result in rejection of your fund request.

DEADLINES

All Visitor Improvement Fund Grant applications must be submitted to the Columbus Area Convention & Visitors Bureau office by 12:00 pm CT Wednesday, October 1, 2025. NO EXCEPTIONS. One original application and 8 complete copies must be submitted at this time. No faxed or email copies will be accepted.

The Columbus Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Committee will review each grant application. Upon approval or modification by the Platte County Board of Supervisors, considering the Advisory Committee recommendation, notification will be made in writing to the winning applicants.

Projects funded through the Improvement Fund must be completed within 18 months of the date of application approval, unless written authorization of deadline extension is received from Platte County. For projects not completed within the 18-month time frame without written authorization of extension, the grant will immediately be terminated, and funds will not be distributed. Multi-year projects must provide a progress report quarterly.

PRESENTATION

- Applicants must be present at the Advisory Committee meeting at which their application is reviewed.
- Applicants will be notified of presentation date & time by the Convention & Visitors Bureau Director.
- Presentations must not be longer than 15 minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARD

Approved applicants will be notified by the Columbus/Platte County Convention & Visitors Bureau and additional paperwork will be required.

CONTRACT

All awards are subject to Platte County (Grantor) and awarded applicant (Grantee) entering into a contract detailing each parties' obligations. If the parties are unable to enter into a mutually agreeable contract, then the awarded grant will be disallowed.

The Grantee will obtain all necessary local and state permits.

CREDITING REQUIREMENT

Upon project completion a permanent sign or plaque acknowledging the Columbus Area Convention & Visitors Bureau's support shall be placed in a prominent location. For multi-year improvement projects, temporary signage acknowledging the support of Columbus Area Convention & Visitors Bureau should be placed in a prominent location.

REPORTING

Thirty days after the completion of the project, or the end of the calendar year for multi-year projects, a report will be submitted to the Convention & Visitors Bureau giving final results or progress toward results. The report must outline if the objectives of the project were met, if not, what were the circumstances that led to the lack of progress. The report will also include copies of all paid receipts/invoices and copies of checks used to pay the invoices. No money will be released until the final report is presented and approved. Furthermore, no money will be released beyond those expenses documented by paid receipts.

PAYMENT

- Grants are paid directly to the grantee, not to vendors of products or services.
- Upon receipt and acceptance of the final project report or the end-of-year progress report, the Columbus Area Convention & Visitors Bureau will request a check from the Platte County Clerk for the payment of grant funds, depending upon availability of funds. This check will be sent by the Clerk directly to the grantee.
- The Platte County Board of Supervisors and the Columbus Area Convention & Visitors Bureau can only use proceeds from the Platte County Visitors Improvement Fund to fund any project herein and shall not obligate itself to use any money outside the Platte County Visitors Improvement Fund to fund any project herein.
- Furthermore, the Convention & Visitors Bureau shall not give multi-year grants (taking into consideration all other grants) that obligate Platte County to amounts over and above amounts accruing in the Improvement Fund through the collection of the 2% Lodging Tax.

REVIEW PROCESS

Grants are discretionary, based upon available funds, other anticipated uses, appropriateness and anticipated effectiveness of the accepted project. Furthermore, said project must continue to comply with the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §81-3724, et seq.