



## ***VISIT HIGH POINT TOURISM GRANT GUIDELINES 2023***

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### **PURPOSE**

Visit High Point is a 501 (c) 6 non-profit tourism agency, state legislated by NC HB 1621. Funded by the 3% Guilford County occupancy tax, Visit High Point's mission is to position High Point as a destination that visitors will enjoy and that locals will want to promote. Any tourism dollars that are invested through a grants cycle of Visit High Point, must be used to drive more outside visitors to High Point, ultimately staying overnight in local room night accommodations as well as boosting economic impact by increased spending in restaurant, retail, event, and supporting hospitality venues. The organization is legislated to invest at least 15% of its annual occupancy tax in specific tourism-related projects.

### **HOW TO APPLY**

1. Download the application and guidelines through the Visit High Point website at [www.visithighpoint.com](http://www.visithighpoint.com)
2. Click on the tab for PARTNERS and then GRANT FUNDING
3. To fully craft a strong grants request, we encourage you to download the Destination Strategic Plan also located on the Visit High Point website under PARTNERS.
4. Review the guidelines carefully to complete the application. The application requires a complete understanding of the criteria, format, reporting, and deadlines.
5. Please note that this grant criteria is planned under a matching grant model. Adequate proof of partners and subsequent funding must be stated in the application. The exception for full project funding applies if an agency or business would like to apply for a first-time accreditation to become a Certified Autism Center through IBCCES. Any renewal of the accreditation will be awarded under a matching model.
6. Applicants may make separate requests for outlined project categories for 1) Tourism Event Development 2) Tourism Strategic Planning, 3) Autism Certification and Tourism Programming, and 4) Sports Tourism. The same project cannot receive funding in multiple categories.

7. The following is a list of criteria that is not eligible for this grant cycle:
  - a. to support capital campaigns;
  - b. to support existing debt reduction;
  - c. to support administrative costs such as salaries, travel expenses, operating expenses, and benefits;
  - d. to support new construction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation, or acquisition of an existing structure;
  - e. to purchase land;
  - f. to support future projects beyond the completion date of June 30, 2024;
  - g. to fund a direct vendor as any payments will be made to the grant applicant;
  - h. to fund expenses accrued for the outlined project prior to the grant request;
  - i. to fund the re-print of an existing brochure, guide, rack card, or existing printed collateral;
  - j. to fund the maintenance and hosting of an existing website;
  - k. to support events that draw local attendees of 75% or more.
8. Although we would like to fund all projects, priority funding will be given to those comprehensive applications that prove the most visitor impact through outside visitation attendance, room nights through local accommodations, hospitality partnerships to inspire multi day visitation, and unique programming that attracts the most visitors outside a 90-mile radius.
9. Complete the application in full, making sure to include any addendums noted in the application. Applications **must be typed and signed by the applicant.** Incomplete applications will not be accepted.
10. If applicable, addendums to the applications may include a copy of the organization's non-profit letter, budget or financial statement, evidence of additional funding sources, and/or partners for your project. Examples may be matching grants, foundation funding, and donor income.
11. Grants are eligible to all entities. Priority will be given to non-profit organizations.
12. The deadline to apply is **Wednesday, June 21, 2023.** Applications must be received by 5:00 pm on that date. We have a quick turnaround to process and review so no exceptions!
13. Mail or email completed applications to: *Grants Administrator; 1634 N. Main Street Suite 102; High Point, NC 27262.* Visit High Point office hours are Monday-Friday 8:30 am – 5:00 pm. The email address is [lvierling@visithighpoint.com](mailto:lvierling@visithighpoint.com).
14. If your application passes the first phase of review, you will be invited to meet with the Visit High Point Grants Committee for an interview to discuss your project. The grants administrator will notify you if your project did not move forward to the interview phase of the process.
15. The grants administrator will notify the entity of the date of the interviews and will schedule a time on the dates set by the board for **Monday June 26 or Tuesday June 27th.** If you cannot attend the

interview, please arrange for a representative from your organization or board to attend on your behalf.

16. If your application is approved, please provide detailed delivery instructions for payment of the grant funds.
17. If funding is granted, Visit High Point must be acknowledged with a statement “funding provided in part by Visit High Point” or official logo of Visit High Point. Failure of acknowledgement may jeopardize future funding from Visit High Point.
18. Please note that the organization should not rely solely on these grants from year to year. Grants are contingent on approval.
19. If the project is cancelled, Visit High Point must be notified immediately, and monies must be returned.
20. Please note that a final report will be required **before June 30, 2024.**

## CRITERIA

1. Applications are available for projects which will enhance the growth of the visitor economy through four areas of focus:
  - a. Tourism Events Development
  - b. Tourism Strategic Planning/Research and Development
  - c. Autism Certification through IBCCES/Programming/Special Events
  - d. Sports Tourism
2. The minimum grant request to Visit High Point is \$5,000 for impactful requests in the following categories: Sports Tourism, Tourism Events, and Strategic Planning. Any requests for Autism Certification will be reviewed after consultation with IBCCES to establish investment. Any requests for independent programming targeting visitors who have sensory or neurodivergent needs, will need to be requested with a minimum \$5,000 proposal.
3. Projects that have the best potential for outside visitation will receive a higher scoring. Creating a project that will draw from outside a 90-mile radius will bring more potential overnight rooms for High Point and the surrounding area.
4. Projects must provide an economic opportunity for High Point, NC and/or the region, and the applicant must be able to clearly define the project. Priority will be given to projects that take place within the city limits of High Point.
5. The applicant must be able to communicate a business plan to fund, market, implement, and measure the project from start to finish.

6. When applying for Autism Travel Funding, please use the following criteria:
  - a. Entities who are requesting Autism Certification Training through IBCCES for the first time will fill out the request form to Visit High Point who will then set up a consultation to determine the costs per agency. There is not a one-time fit all cost as each agency has varied scopes of deliverables for training.
  - b. Entities who are applying for Autism Certification Training Renewals through IBCCES, will need to fill out the request form to Visit High Point and apply ½ of the cost to make up a matching request. Please attach the official quote from IBCCES in your renewal letter with your grant request to Visit High Point.
  - c. Entities who are applying for Autism Programming, Events and Marketing, will need to fill out the full application to Visit High Point and apply ½ of the cost to make up a matching request.
  
7. When applying for Tourism Event Funding, priority will be given to events that are:
  - a. signature events that draw significant attendance from outside a 90-mile radius;
    - i. a signature event is defined as an event promoting High Point’s brand, heritage, traditions, or a new concept that has potential to recruit outside visitors.
  - b. first-time events that utilize community partners and city assets;
  - c. multi-day events;
  - d. highlighting an attractor such as headlining artist, sport, festival, venue, or trend;
  - e. promoting the region as a whole;
  - f. complementing the events calendar in High Point
  - g. utilizing area accommodations to book overnight rooms for event opportunity.
  
8. When applying for Sports Tourism funding, priority will be given to projects that:
  - a. Utilize High Point facilities, fields, and venues;
  - b. Is a multi-day event that encourages overnight room usage in area accommodations;
  - c. Encourages team registration from outside a 90-mile radius;
  - d. Generates a spectator experience;
  - e. Enhances the experience to encourage return participation.
  
9. When applying for Tourism Strategic Planning, Research & Development, priority will be given to projects that can:
  - a. Prove demand;
  - b. Encourage multi-day events;
  - c. Generate audiences outside of a 90-mile radius;
  - d. Support the 10-year destination strategic plan for tourism in High Point;
  - e. Address an opportunity or threat in regard to strategic tourism planning.

- f. Strengthen High Point's brand;
- g. Build upon High Point's qualities as a year-round destination.

#### SCORING OUT OF A POSSIBLE 100

1. **Up to 20 points – Tourism Promotion Impact** - complements the 10-year strategic destination plan or overall mission of the Visit High Point Board. Be sure to provide details of economic impact such as potential attendance, states represented in the attendance numbers, how many days the event will last, demographics targeted, and other key performance measures.
2. **Up to 20 points – Room Nights Generated** - events that can attract from over a 90-mile radius have the most impact to generate room nights. Applicants should be detailed on how their project will be able to generate room nights and how many rooms will be utilized for how many nights during the scope of the project.
3. **Up to 15 points – Scale/Capacity to Attract Visitors** – projects priority should be given to visions that support a demand driver or an attractor for visitors to High Point. The primary goal of the project should be to generate a distinct visit. Note that attractors and attractions are different. Attractor = reason to visit. Attraction/Amenity = enhance the visitor experience once a visitor is here.
4. **Up to 10 points – Benefit to the Destination** – the project should:
  - a. provide value to High Point as an economic generator;
  - b. be an enhancement to the overall landscape and to High Point's branding;
  - c. enhance the visitor experience;
  - d. exemplify High Point's heritage;
  - e. add to the beautification efforts;
  - f. enhance the reach of potential visitors to the destination; and
  - g. instill local pride that inspires locals as ambassadors.
5. **Up to 5 points – Enhance Visitor Experience** – serves as an attraction once the visitor is here by providing an exceptional experience that is one-of-a-kind, authentic to High Point, memorable, and marketable.
6. **Up to 5 points – Program Components** – projects have clearly defined timeline, business model, partners, purpose, and sustainability.
7. **Up to 5 points – Quality of Research** – applicant is able to demonstrate the data and supporting information that support the plan. This may include data from past events in other communities, research of demographics, and spending history. Research may also include user fees and environmental impacts.

8. **Up to 5 points – Comprehensive Marketing Approach** – projects should have a clear marketing strategy including timeline, demographics, public relations plan, online/and or social media presence, direct mail, cross-marketing campaigns, etc.
9. **Up to 5 points – Suitable Target Market** – the plan should pinpoint a clear target market that would attract visitors to High Point for a specific reason. Examples could include spectators for concerts, participants for a race, designers for continuing education credits, festival goers, etc.
10. **Up to 5 points – Evidence of Partnership** – applicants must demonstrate that they have solid partnerships to make the project a success. Suitable evidence may be letters of support, documented donations, final reports, board lists, etc.
11. **Up to 5 points – Organizational Structure/Management Capability** – grant request must exemplify a sustainable organization with a strong management structure.

**Grant Deadline:**  
**Wednesday, June 21, 2023**