



## OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

a meeting of a City Board, Commission, Department, Committee, Agency, Corporation, Quasi-Municipal Corporation, or sub-unit thereof.

Meeting of the: **ROOM TAX COMMISSION**  
Date/Time: **Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 5:30 pm**  
Location: City Hall (407 Grant Street) Board Room, 2nd Floor  
Members: Romey Wagner, Lisa Rasmussen, Tom Neal, Tim VanDeYacht, Tom Weaver

### AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

---

- 1 Call meeting to order
- 2 Discussion and possible action regarding Room Tax Tourism Grant Application, Process and Time Table  
Adjourn

Tom Weaver, Chair

**IMPORTANT: THREE (3) MEMBERS NEEDED FOR A QUORUM:** If you are unable to attend the meeting please notify Mary Goede by calling 715-261-6620 or via email [clerk@ci.wausau.wi.us](mailto:clerk@ci.wausau.wi.us)

This Notice was posted at City Hall and faxed to the Daily Herald newsroom on 3/6/17 @ 3:45 p.m.

Please note that, upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids & services. For information or to request this service, contact the City Clerk at (715) 261-6620.

Other Distribution: Media, Mayor Mielke, Alderpersons, Schock, Lenz

Maryanne Groat, CPA  
Finance Director and Treasurer  
[mgroat@ci.wausau.wi.us](mailto:mgroat@ci.wausau.wi.us)  
(715)261-6645 Phone  
(715)261-0319 Fax



Robert Splinter, CPA  
Assistant Finance Director  
[Robert.Splinter@ci.wausau.wi.us](mailto:Robert.Splinter@ci.wausau.wi.us)  
(715)261-6642 Phone  
715)261-6626 Fax

CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

TO: Room Tax Commission

FROM: Maryanne Groat

RE: Room Tax Commission Tourism Grant Applications

DATE: March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017

As agreed at the last meeting stakeholders provided input on the new application and process. The feedback focused on the six categories noted below. Bullet points following each category provide alternate solutions offered.

1. Eliminate the 50% of eligible costs
  - Promotional budget 10% within service area – paid by nonprofit 90% outside service area paid 100% by room tax
  - Reimbursement at 100%.
  - Reimbursement graduated: Year 1 90%, Year 2 80%, Year 3 70%, Year 4 and beyond 50%
2. Eliminate the 90 mile marketing requirement and remove from matrix
3. Allocate funds in advance rather than reimbursement basis
  - Provide 50% of funds in advance and 50% after receipt of reporting
4. Eliminate invoice documentation
  - Require a spreadsheet of costs
5. Eliminate documented room night language
  - Add checkbox on application as to whether event is reasonably likely to generate paid overnight stays with no burden of proof
6. Remove or change the funding request deadline to provide greater flexibility
  - Grant expires 1 year after authorized

Attached to this memo include the revised applications proposed by two of the stakeholders and the specific comments.

**Recommendation :**

Please accept the following comments and recommendations in regards to the Room Tax Tourism Grant Application.

- Please reconsider the 90-mile verbiage and subsequent outline in the scoring matrix.
- Please consider allocating grant funds to organizations in advance instead of requiring reimbursement.
- Please consider organizations supplying an outline report of expenses instead of invoices. This method would allow for staff time (on both ends) to be efficiently used.
- Please reconsider the "documented hotel night stays". Organizations with small staff would be unduly challenged to complete that requirement.

Please consider taking out the limit of a maximum of 50% of eligible costs.

**Recommendation:**

- We suggest taking the requirement of having to advertise outside a 90 miles radius off of the application and the evaluation worksheet. Restricting advertising to outside a 90 mile radius will ignore the number of people who choose a night away in town, but also hinders the currently successful marketing efforts of nonprofit organizations that successfully produce and execute the community's favorite events and programs.
- It is difficult to determine if an event or program impacts hotel stays due to not being able to collect that data, and therefore it should not be required to provide documented proof, or be removed from the evaluation worksheet. If the intent of the room tax commission is to increase tourism, the application can ask the requester if there is intent to impact hotel stays, but requirement to show documentation is unrealistic.
- We recommend changing the current 50% reimbursement rate to 100%. Only reimbursing 50% will eliminate the amount of tourism marketing, not increase it. This is significantly harmful to some of the smaller nonprofits, which relies on funds up front that cover the entire cost of an advertising buy. A 50% reimbursement rate would decrease the likelihood of stays coming in the first place because organizations would not have the money to put advertising and marketing out in the first place.
- The November 30<sup>th</sup> expiration date should be reconsidered. Some organizations will not even have their advertising invoices in hand by this date.
- There should be more consideration put into the invoice requirement. Taking into consideration that invoices might have other advertisement expenses included. Is there a better expense tracking method that would meet the needs of a possible audit?
- Without the advancement of funds many organizations will not be able to finance the expenses upfront, therefore we recommend the grant be given prior to the event or program.

## **Recommendation:**

### **1. 90-Mile Radius for Marketing and Advertising:**

There is no basis in the statute for this requirement as proposed in the City's Tourism application. It is arbitrary, baseless, and unnecessary to conform with the law. Moreover, would harm events, programs, and nonprofits subjected to such a requirement, as well as create a potentially negative ripple effect in the local media community.

Advertising and marketing events and programs to people within 90 miles is necessary to make the program or event work in Wausau. Many times people come from out of town to attend an event because someone in town told them it was happening. Requiring a 90 mile radius, or any specified distance of outside advertising or marketing lessens the ability of organizations to capitalize on the most valuable advertising: word of mouth and first-hand experience.

More than ever, people are looking to their peers, friends, and family for recommendations and reviews before deciding to attend something. No amount of out-of-area billboard, radio, TV, or other advertising buys can or will change that. Requiring that events and programs suddenly market in areas in which they've never had a presence is a waste of advertising money and is not reasonably likely to generate a hotel stay more than effective word of mouth, and creating an event and community that people actually want to visit.

In addition, we hear more frequently than ever of people well WITHIN a 90 mile radius, and often within the City of Wausau itself, staying overnight in downtown Wausau hotels and B&Bs to experience a walkable weekend or staycation. Advertising to people within 90 miles is what allows this to happen.

A further unintended consequence of this is that relations between local nonprofits and local media may suffer because they are no longer "allowed" (or at least encouraged by way of financial compensation) to purchase advertising with local media to promote an event. Prohibiting advertising based on mileage restricts potential ad buys that benefit the local economy.

If the ultimate goal of the law is to generate hotel and motel overnight stays, restricting advertising to outside a 90 mile radius not only ignores the growing number of people who simply choose a night away downtown, but also impedes the currently successful marketing efforts of these nonprofit organizations that successfully produce and execute the community's favorite events and programs. For these reasons, I request that the 90 mile radius advertising requirement be removed from the application.

### **2. Hotel Stay Documentation:**

There is no statutory requirement that Tourism grant/room tax recipients provide documentation of hotel stays; it only requires that money expended from the room tax fund support a variety of marketing efforts and tourism services which are "reasonably likely to generate paid overnight stays at more than one establishment" on which municipal room tax is imposed. Reasonable likelihood is a far lower standard of proof than documentation. In my view, this simply requires a small addition of a question on the current application asking "Do you reasonably expect this program/event to generate paid overnight stays in the City of Wausau?" with a yes or no check box. "Reasonable likelihood" is a low burden of proof, so requiring that nonprofits that are already limited in time and monetary resources expend extra time and/or money to gather this documentation is unreasonable and over-burdensome.

In addition, requiring this kind of documentation of events like ARTrageous weekend, Downtown Wausau Dining Weeks, or First Thursdays - events that do not have an established entrance or exit point, provide these activities and events for

free and therefore do not ticket for admission, and which do not have central information points or roaming volunteer intercept surveyors, makes it nearly impossible to collect and document any hotel stay information. We know events like these generate tourism, as similar events in other communities have received Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grants from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, an entity tasked with only expending money that generates tourism. If we can assume these types of events generate tourism because they are operated in a similar fashion to those that receive state tourism marketing dollars, they should not be required to produce hotel stay documentation when budgets and time to do so are already tight. I request that this requirement be amended to more accurately fit the statutory requirements that do not require such a process.

### 3. November 30 Reimbursement Deadline:

There is no statutory requirement that money from room tax be expended by November 30 of any year. This is an arbitrary deadline that especially harms events and programs that operate in the winter and holiday seasons, as they would be prohibited from spending money during the very time at which they are operating. For example, about half of Wausau River District's marketing budget is spent during this time (and though not outside a 90 mile radius, we do purchase significant advertising in Merrill, Stevens Point, and Minocqua) to bring in holiday shoppers. Expending these funds over the holiday season means that we do not receive invoices for those purchases until January or February of the following year. Especially if the reimbursement requirement is kept, this means we would have no money to advertise in those markets for events like Christmas on First, Small Business Saturday, and to promote the general holiday atmosphere and shopping environment.

While I understand that accounting requires money be used by a certain date, I would request that this piece of the application be amended to more flexibly fit the variety of events and programs that may fall throughout the year.

### 4. 50% Reimbursement Requirement:

#### 4a. 50%:

There is no requirement in the statute that funds be reimbursed, much less at a rate of 50%. Doing so requires that nonprofits, which by the very nature of their operations do not have excessive cash on hand, put up funds up front to cover the cost of a marketing purchase, with only the hope of being reimbursed at half the rate of the actual cost. This is significantly harmful to some of the smaller nonprofits, including Wausau River District (WRD), which relies on funds up front that cover the entire cost of an advertising or marketing buy. If WRD were to face a 50% reimbursement rate, we would have to significantly cut our marketing budget. Looking back to the spirit of the law, which is to generate paid overnight stays in the City of Wausau, cutting a reimbursement rate would lessen the likelihood of those stays coming in the first place because we would not have the money to put advertising and marketing out in the first place. I ask that this requirement be removed from the Tourism/room tax grant application.

#### 4b. Reimbursement/No Advancement of Funds:

There is nothing in the statute that requires that allocated money be for reimbursement of costs incurred, or that prohibits advancing funds to a qualifying organization, activity, or program. This is a baseless requirement that further burdens nonprofits by requiring that they have cash on hand to purchase what is needed to promote and market the event or program that is reasonably likely to generate paid overnight stays. Many nonprofits, by nature of their operations, do not generate enough revenues to make an up-front purchase possible, especially when this is coupled with the possibility of not receiving any, or a very limited, reimbursement. Because this is an unnecessary requirement that overburdens already-stretched nonprofits that create the programming that makes the City of Wausau a top destination to visit, play, and live, I ask that this requirement also be removed from the Tourism/room tax grant application.

### Continuing Appropriations and "Other Requests":

I would request that, at least for this year, organizations receiving Continuing Appropriations be considered through the City's funds in Finance and that "Other Requests" go through the Room Tax Commission. I believe this is the right way to operate this year, because 1) there is not enough money in either pot to fully finance all of the entities and programs, 2) "Other Requests" have always been held to a slightly higher standard than Continuing Appropriations, and 3) if we keep the pots separate for this year, all entities are weaned off room tax funds, and none face total de-funding. This third point is especially important, as all involved entities recognize and respect each other's value in the community, and none of us want to see any one defunded. By keeping the requests separate this year, all entities realize a squeeze on funds without sacrificing any one of the organizations that help make our community great.

### Recommendation:

We respectfully ask city representatives to keep in mind that the state room-tax law change was designed to ensure that cities use room tax dollars on tourism-related activities – encouraging the best, most efficient expenditures to maximize visitors' economic impact in each city. The effect of this original proposed Room Tax Commission grant application would be to render Room Tax Commission-controlled tax dollars inaccessible to the attractions that continually attract visitors to Wausau and that are best-positioned to do so most effectively and efficiently.

We propose four changes (Specific suggested revisions and justifications are listed in the application, attached.):

- eliminating the "beyond-90-mile" language in the application and scoring matrix
  - cost sharing: Recipients commit to paying for all of the project's in-service-area marketing (10 percent of project's total promotional budget). Room Tax Commission grant dollars would pay for all out-of-service-area costs (90 percent of project's total promotional budget). Scoring matrix would encourage seeking to attract overnight visitors by giving more points for plans that use room tax grant dollars to target travelers reasonably likely to stay overnight.
  - distributing grant dollars in advance or concurrently with expenditures, instead of requiring that recipients overextend while awaiting reimbursement.
  - requiring a detailed expenditure report instead of invoices
1. Eliminate "beyond-90-mile" language: The currently proposed application language requires – not simply encourages – beyond-90-mile marketing. The Woodson Art Museum, as the only full-service art museum in the northern half of Wisconsin and committed to always-free admission for forty-two years, coincidentally has a 90-mile service area. The Museum routinely – throughout every year, every three months, for every changing exhibition – substantially invests its own dollars to promote within its 90-mile-radius service area these changing exhibitions to attract visitors to Wausau. The city has benefited for years from the significant economic impact that the Woodson Art Museum continually generates.

Visitors who live less than 90-miles away also generate economic impact and should be valued in the application. These include day-trip visitors (from more than 30 miles away) and potential overnight visitors who live less than 90 miles away yet stay overnight, perhaps for multiple days during weekend, holiday, and spring break and fall getaways to see *Birds in Art* and other frequently changing special exhibitions year-round at the Woodson Art Museum. In calculating estimated economic impact, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism uses data provided by Longwoods International and Tourism Economics that each day-trip visitor spends at local restaurants, shops, and gas stations an average of \$58 per day; each overnight visitor spends an average of \$180 at local businesses, including – but not limited to – hotels. That considerable economic impact from tourists closer to home should be valued in the application.

2. Cost sharing: Consider the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's highly competitive Joint Effort Marketing grant program. JEM grants have enabled the Woodson Art Museum to use state dollars to advertise beyond the Museum's 90-mile-service area throughout Wisconsin, the Twin Cities, and Chicago on three occasions, for three months each, during the past eight years. All of those extended marketing costs were paid with state Department of Tourism dollars; the Museum paid all in-market (within a 90-mile radius) promotional costs, which represented 25 percent of the total promotional budget for each of those three JEM grant-funded projects.

A JEM grant recipient's "effort" requires a considerable investment of both dollars and staff time, which can deter application. The same deterrence likely could occur for Wausau's Room Tax Commission grant program, even if our suggested revisions are implemented. Because the city benefits more directly than the state from attractions' successes in attracting visitors to the city, we propose that the city offer a more generous "joint-effort requirement" than the state: the recipient pays for all in-service-area marketing (10 percent of the project's total promotional budget) and the room tax grant dollars pay for all out-of-service-area marketing (90 percent of the project's total promotional budget).

3. Up-front or concurrent distribution instead of reimbursement: Over and above the Woodson Art Museum's continual investment in marketing within its 90-mile-service-area, this application would require that the Museum spend its own funds, up front, for 100 percent of beyond-90-mile marketing expenses with the prospect of only 50 percent reimbursement. As a non-profit art museum committed to always-free admission, the Museum cannot afford to use its dollars for beyond-90-mile-marketing because that lies beyond our primary service area.
4. Requiring invoices, in addition to final reports that list expenditures, before up-front expenses are reimbursed would further deter applicants. Detailed final reports would provide the city with documentation of expenditures.



## CITY OF WAUSAU ROOM TAX COMISSION ROOM TAX TOURISM GRANT APPLICATION

Beginning January 1, 2017 the State Law mandates the City forward to a tourism commission any room tax revenue exceeding the amount the municipality may retain. The Commission must spend room tax revenue on tourism promotion and tourism development.

Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development is defined in the Wisconsin Statutes to mean any of the following that are significantly used by **transient tourists** and **reasonably likely** to generate paid overnight stays at more than one establishment in the municipality on which room tax is imposed:

- Marketing projects, including advertising buys, creation and distribution of printed or electronic promotional tourist materials, or efforts to recruit conventions, sporting events or motor coach groups.
- Transient tourist informational services.
- Tangible municipal development, including a conventioncenter.

Transient tourist means any person residing for a continuous period of less than one month in a hotel, motel or other furnished accommodations.

The Commission is obligated to submit on an annual basis a detail report of its room tax expenditures to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

The Room Tax Tourism Grant program is designed to promote **tourism related activity** ~~within the community with specific emphasis on increasing~~ **reasonably likely**

**Justification:** “Reasonably likely” are the terms in the new state statute. These terms are repeated above in this original proposed application’s summary. Elsewhere in the original proposed application, however, the standard is ratcheted up considerably higher, which would make compliance overly onerous and deter applicants.

~~to generate paid overnight stay in hotel facilities.~~ **day trip visitors (from more than 30 miles) and overnight visitors.**

**Justification:** In calculating estimated economic impact, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism in its JEM (Joint Effort Marketing) grant program, uses data provided by Longwoods International and Tourism Economics that each day-trip visitor spends at local restaurants, shops, and gas stations an average of \$58 per day; each overnight visitor spends an average of \$180 at local businesses, including hotels. That considerable economic impact from tourists closer to home would be supported with the proposed revision and do-able for applicants.

Emulating the state’s the “Joint Effort Marketing” model, we propose that applicants commit to investing through their in-service-area marketing expenditures 10 percent of the project’s **total** promotional budget in order to receive room tax grant dollars that would pay for all of the project’s out-of-service area promotional expenses (90 percent of the project’s **total** promotional budget).

### APPLICATION DEADLINES:

Submit your application electronically to the City of Wausau: mgroat@ci.wausau.wi.us

**2017:**

**4:00 PM March 24<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**4:00PM on the Fourth Friday in August**

**In subsequent years:  
4:00PM on the Fourth Friday in February  
4:00PM on the Fourth Friday in August**

**ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND USE OF FUNDS:**

- Design, production and placement costs for marketing that targets prospective visitors that live outside a 90-mile radius of the City of Wausau. See justification above.
- This includes but is not limited to: brochures, fliers, posters, direct mail, registration materials, print ads, radio ads, television ads. Web site enhancements that are likely to increase tourism and overnight hotel stay. Web and social media marketing that increase traffic of visitors outside the 90-mile radius and generates significant overnight stays reasonably likely to generate day-trip and overnight-visitor economic impact. See justification above.
- Purchase of marketing lists, search engine marketing ad words, googlead words.
- Offsite signage such as billboards targeting visitors that live outside a 90 mile radius of the City of Wausau.
- Fees must be payable to a third party vendor. In-kind fees are not eligible.

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

- Not for Profit Organizations with an IRS determination.
- Not for Profit Organization is in good standing with the City.
- The event or promotional opportunity must demonstrate reasonable likelihood of significant economic impact from day-trip and overnight visitors as it relates to tourism. This may be fulfilled by showing documented City of Wausau hotel room nights booked or the number of day-trip and overnight visitors, tourists traveling into Wausau from outside a 90-mile radius. Other means of documenting the tourism impact may also be considered.

### GRANT RECOGNITION:

All awarded marketing projects must include the City of Wausau logo and, where space allows, the following grant recognition: "Sponsored in part by City of Wausau Room Tax"

### GRANT LIMITS:

- All grants will be used to pay only for beyond-service-area marketing expenses and are limited to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs. 90% of the project's total promotional expenses. Recipient pays for all within-service-area marketing expenses, representing at least 10 % of the project's total promotional expenses. Maximum grant amount of funding available per event is ?
- Grants will be limited based upon funding.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- All grants will be evaluated on established criteria and ranked competitively by the Commission.
- A grant agreement must be signed by the organization.
- Funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis after the submission of In the grant report, include a budget detailing: the expenditure of grant funds and the, an accounting of the project/event expenses, total attendance and tourist attendance data, number of hotel room nights booked in City of Wausau hotels OR sample survey data from which to calculate the estimated number of day-trip and overnight visitors, how goals and objectives were met, the estimated economic impact of the event/program and copies of marketing invoices and costs. No funds will be provided in advance.
- Any grants outstanding on November 30<sup>th</sup> will expire.

### EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Completeness and quality of the application
- Consistency with the eligibility requirements
- Impact on tourism, including but not limited to the ability to demonstrate a reasonable likelihood of day trips and overnight stays, a substantial impact through documented City of Wausau hotel room nights
- Effectiveness of the marketing plan to attract visitors for day trips and overnight stays, outside the 90-mile radius of the City of Wausau.
- Quality and appeal of the event
- Methodology of sample survey data collection.

### REVIEW AND AWARD PROCESS:

- Timely grant requests will be reviewed by staff for completeness.
- The Commission will review, score and rank proposals based upon the Evaluation Criteria.
- Staff will compile ranking for Commission consideration.
- Commission will review and make a final grant determination.
- Grant applicants will be informed of the grant determination.



**CITY OF WAUSAU ROOM TAX COMISSION  
ROOM TAX TOURISM GRANT APPLICATION**

Name of Organization:
Authorized Official Name and Title:
Email Address:
Organization Website URL:
Organization Address:
Daytime Telephone:

Grant Request Amount:
Total Project/Event Budget:
Event Date(s) or Date Range:
Event Location:
Projected Number of Attendees :
Projected Number of <b>day-trip visitors</b> <del>Attendees outside the 90-mile radius of the City of Wausau:</del>
Projected Number of <b>overnight visitors</b> <del>City of Wausau Lodging Nights</del> from the Project/Event:
New Event/Project <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Event/Project <input type="checkbox"/>

Project/Event Description:
----------------------------



Estimate the economic impact the project/event will have on other local businesses such as retail sales, concession revenue and restaurant revenue. **Recipients should not be expected to forecast nor should be held accountable to report information beyond their purview and out of their control.**

OTHER REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- ORGANIZATION WIDE BUDGET
- PROJECT OR EVENT BUDGET
- RECENT YEAREND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
- IRS DETERMINATION
- BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*I understand the restrictions placed on the expenditure of room tax funds governed by the Room Tax Commission and certify that the requested funds will be used for the purposes described in this application or approved by the Commission. I understand that the use of funds is subject to review and a post event reporting will be required, ~~prior to reimbursement of funds. In addition, I understand that funds will be reimbursed upon presentation of appropriate invoices and/or other documents that certify the marketing expenditures outlined in this application.~~*

---

Name

Title

Date

**CITY OF WAUSAU ROOM TAX COMISSION  
ROOM TAX TOURISM GRANT APPLICATION  
APPLICATION EVALUATION WORKSHEET**

**Reviewer Name:**

**Applicant Organization:**

**Project/Event:**

Maximum Points	Criteria	Notes	Score
10	Quality and completeness of the application		
20	The applicant has a well-developed marketing strategy designed to attract visitors both from within its service area with its own investment (10 percent of project's total promotional budget) and out-of-service area with room tax grant dollars (90 percent of project's total promotional budget) from more than 90 miles away		
20 5 5 10	The event and application substantiate a reasonable likelihood of local economic impact from Local visitors Day-trip visitors Overnight visitors a significant impact of documented hotel room nights in the City of Wausau		
20 40	Quality and appeal of the event or program to drive outside interest in coming to the City of Wausau		
20	The applicant has documented additional economic impact of the event such as retail sales, concession and restaurant revenue.	This consideration is factored in via the above weighted criteria (Dept. of Tourism figures: \$58/day-trip visitor; \$180/overnight visitor) without putting additional undue tracking burden on applicants – unreasonable because such tracking is out of their control	
10	The methodology proposed to survey attendees is well developed and will likely generate good quality information regarding the number of attendees and where they live individuals traveling more than 90 miles to attend.		





**CITY OF WAUSAU ROOM TAX  
COMMISSION ROOM TAX TOURISM  
GRANT APPLICATION**

Beginning January 1, 2017 the State Law mandates the City forward to a tourism commission any room tax revenue exceeding the amount the municipality may retain. The Commission must spend room tax revenue on tourism promotion and tourism development.

Tourism Promotion and Tourism Development is defined in the Wisconsin Statutes to mean any of the following that are significantly used by transient tourists and reasonably likely to generate paid overnight stays at more than one establishment in the municipality on which room tax is imposed:

- Marketing projects, including advertising buys, creation and distribution of printed or electronic promotional tourist materials, or efforts to recruit conventions, sporting events or motor coach groups.
- Transient tourist informational services.
- Tangible municipal development, including a convention center.

Transient tourist means any person residing for a continuous period of less than one month in a hotel, motel or other furnished accommodations.

The Commission is obligated to submit on an annual basis a detail report of its room tax expenditures to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

The Room Tax Tourism Grant program is designed to promote tourism related activity within the community with specific emphasis on tourism that is reasonably likely to generate overnight stays in hotel facilities.

**APPLICATION DEADLINES:**

Submit your application electronically to the City of Wausau: [mgroat@ci.wausau.wi.us](mailto:mgroat@ci.wausau.wi.us)

**2017:**

**4:00pm March 24, 2017**

**4:00pm on the Fourth Friday in August**

**In subsequent years:**

**4:00pm on the Fourth Friday in February**

**4:00pm on the Fourth Friday in August**

**ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND USE OF FUNDS:**

- Design, production and placement costs for marketing that targets visitors from outside the City of Wausau and its surrounding communities. This includes but is not limited to: brochures, fliers, posters, direct mail, registration materials, print ads, radio ads, television ads. Website enhancements that are reasonably likely to increase tourism and overnight hotel stay. Web and social media marketing that increase traffic of visitors from outside the City of Wausau and its surrounding communities.
- Purchase of marketing lists, search engine marketing ad words, google ad words.
- Offsite signage such as billboards targeting visitors that live outside the City and its surrounding communities.
- Fees must be payable to a third party vendor. In-kind fees are not eligible.

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:**

- Not for Profit Organizations with an IRS determination.
- Not for Profit Organization is in good standing with the City.
- The event or promotional opportunity should demonstrate economic impact as it relates to tourism and is reasonably likely to generate multiple hotel stays.

**GRANT RECOGNITION:**

All awarded marketing projects must include the following grant recognition: “Sponsored in part by the City of Wausau Room Tax” and include the City of Wausau logo.

**GRANT LIMITS:**

- The maximum grant available is \$10,000.
- Grants will be used to fund promotional expenses as it relates to tourism. A graduated scale will be used for each application submitted regarding the same event.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> YEAR: Up to 90% of tourism marketing expenses that are reasonably likely to generate multiple hotel stays will be eligible for grant submission
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> YEAR: Up to 80% of tourism marketing expenses that area reasonably likely to generate multiple hotel stays will be eligible for grant submission
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> YEAR: Up to 70% of tourism marketing expenses that area reasonably likely to generate multiple hotel stays will be eligible for grant submission
  - 4<sup>th</sup> YEAR AND BEYOND: Up to 50% of tourism marketing expenses that area reasonably likely to generate multiple hotel stays will be eligible for grant submission
- Grants will be limited based upon funding.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- All grants will be evaluated on established criteria and ranked competitively by the Commission.
- A grant agreement must be signed by the organization.
- 50% of the funds will be disbursed when a signed acceptance agreement of the grant is submitted to the City. The remaining 50% of funds will be disbursed when the summary report is submitted to the City.
- Any grants outstanding a year after they were granted will expire.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

- Completeness and quality of the application
- Consistency with the eligibility requirements
- Impact on tourism as defined on page 1.
- Effectiveness of the event/activity to attract transient tourists to the City.
- Quality and appeal of the event

**REVIEW AND AWARD PROCESS:**

- Timely grant requests will be reviewed by staff for completeness.
- The Commission will review, score and rank proposals based upon the Evaluation Criteria.
- Staff will compile ranking for Commission consideration.
- Commission will review and make a final grant determination.
- Grant applicants will be informed of the grant determination.



**CITY OF WAUSAU ROOM TAX  
COMISSION ROOM TAX TOURISM  
GRANT APPLICATION**

Name of Organization:
Authorized Official Name and Title:
Email Address:
Organization Website URL:
Organization Address:
Daytime Telephone:

Grant Request Amount:
Total Project/Event Budget:
Event Date(s) or Date Range:
Event Location:
Projected Number of Attendees :
<b>Estimated Number of Hotel Stays from the Project/Event:</b>
New Event/Project <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Event/Project <input type="checkbox"/>

Project/Event Description:
----------------------------



Estimate the economic impact the project/event will have on other local businesses such as retail sales, concession revenue and restaurant revenue.

OTHER REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- ORGANIZATION WIDE BUDGET
- PROJECT OR EVENT BUDGET
- RECENT YEAREND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
- IRS DETERMINATION
- BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*I understand the restrictions placed on the expenditure of room tax funds governed by the Room Tax Commission and certify that the requested funds will be used for the purposes described in this application or approved by the Commission. I understand that the use of funds is subject to review and a post event reporting will be required-*

---

Name

Title

Date

**CITY OF WAUSAU ROOM TAX COMMISSION  
ROOM TAX TOURISM GRANT APPLICATION  
APPLICATION EVALUATION WORKSHEET**

**Reviewer Name:**

**Applicant Organization:**

**Project/Event:**

Maximum Points	Criteria	Notes	Score
10	Quality and completeness of the application		
20	The applicant has a well-developed marketing strategy <b>that can reasonably be expected to generate multiple hotel stays.</b>		
5 5 10	The event and application <b>substantiate a reasonable likelihood of local economic impact from</b> Local visitors Day-trip visitors Overnight visitors		
20	Quality and appeal of the event or program to drive outside interest in coming to the City of Wausau		
10	The applicant has documented additional economic impact of the event such as retail sales, concession and restaurant revenue.		
10	The methodology proposed to survey attendees is well developed and will likely generate good quality information regarding the number of attendees and where they <b>live.</b>		

