



DRAFT -- LTAC Grant Program -- DRAFT

Lodging Tax Resources & Revenue

Currently, the City manages two fund reserves that are capitalized by annual Lodging Tax Revenue:

1. \$2.9 million City Debt-Service Guarantee (2024 value)
2. \$6.3 million Cash Reserves for future tourism programmatic or capital expenditures (2024 value)

Annually, the City generates approximately \$3 million in lodging tax revenues.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue	\$2.7 M	\$1.5 M	\$1.4 M	\$3.2 M	\$3.7 M

Of the annual revenues generated each year, City Council has approved 50% going toward debt-service related to the construction and expansion of the City Convention Center. The other 50% is available for tourism-related activities designed to attract visitors to Vancouver.

Eligible Use of Funds

According to RCW 67.28.1816(1), lodging tax revenues may be used directly by any municipality or indirectly through a destination marketing organization for:

- a. Tourism marketing;
- b. Marketing and operations of special events and festivals designed to attract tourists;
- c. Capital expenditures and operating expenses of tourism-related facilities owned or operating by a municipality or a public facilities district;
- d. Operating expenses of tourism related non-profits.
- e. Administrative costs associated with managing the Lodging Tax Program and facilitating the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (RCW 67.28.1815)

Qualifying tourism events should be targeted towards one or more of the following:

- a. People who are in Vancouver away from their home or work and spending the night in paid accommodations (i.e. 'heads in beds');
- b. People who travel fifty miles or more from an origin in Washington to come to Vancouver (e.g., Castle Rock (50m) or White Salmon (58m));
- c. People who travel from another state or country to come to Vancouver (e.g., Portland).

LTAC Grant Categories

1. Cultural Enrichment Grant

Purpose: Resources to support emerging events or festivals that support the cultural enrichment of Vancouver.

Eligibility:

- The event is hosted or fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 nonprofit organization authorized to do business in the city of Vancouver.
- The event or festival must be less than **three years** old.
- The event must be open to the public, whether ticketed or not.
- The event demonstrates contributive potential that aligns with the City of Vancouver's values. Without limitation, this may be demonstrated by meeting one or more of the following:
 - The event is an annual cultural celebration, cultural festival, cultural awareness, and/or fundraiser (e.g., galas, scholarships, symposiums, and luncheons) designed to advance awareness or appreciation of one or more "vulnerable populations" as defined by RCW 70A.02.010(14).
 - The host organization or institution demonstrates the event's contributive potential to raise awareness or support for issues faced by multicultural, women, LGBTQIA2S+, or communities with accessibility needs.
- Funds are restricted to the marketing and operations of events or festivals designed to attract tourists (*visitors spending night in paid accommodations* or *attendees who travel 50 miles or more from an origin in Washington* or *people who travel from another state or country*).

Award Amount: The requested grant must not exceed the greater of **15%** of event budget or **\$2,500**. Decisions will be made based on available funds and performance against designated evaluation criteria.

2. Large Event/Festival Grant

Purpose: Resources to support events or festivals designed that contribute to the local tourism economy, attract a significant number of visitors, and enhance Vancouver as a tourism destination. Priority may be afforded to events or festivals that align with the City of Vancouver's priorities of Equity, Climate Resilience, and/or Community Safety.

Eligibility:

- The event is hosted or fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 nonprofit organization that services the city of Vancouver.
- The event or festival anticipates attendance of **2,500+** people.
- Funds are restricted to the marketing and operations of events or festivals designed to attract tourists.
- The event expects **25%** of visitors to:
 - *Spend the night in paid accommodations, or*

- Travel 50 miles or more from an origin in Washington, or
- Travel from another state or country.
- The event must be open to the public, whether ticketed or not.
- An event or festival cannot receive a grant award more than **two** times unless it can demonstrate a change in approach or scope to attract significantly more **(20%)** attendees and/or reach new communities.

Award Amount: There is no grant award cap. Decisions will be made based on available funds, economic impact, and performance against designated evaluation criteria.

3. **Tourism Organization Operating Grants**

Purpose: Resources to support the operations of organizations that promote the tourism industry, enhance the tourism experience, or attract visitors to Vancouver. Priority may be afforded to tourism promotion demonstrated to align with the City of Vancouver’s priorities of Equity, Climate Resilience, and/or Community Safety.

Eligibility:

- A 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 nonprofit organization that directly services the city of Vancouver’s tourism industry through marketing and promotion.

Award Amount: There is no grant award cap. Decisions will be made based on available funds, established programs and initiatives designed to market the destination or grow the Vancouver’s tourism industry, and performance against designated evaluation criteria.

4. **Tourism Program or Facilities Grants**

Purpose: Resources to support programs or facilities designed to enhance the tourism experience or grow Vancouver’s tourism industry. Priority may be afforded to programs or facilities that align with the City of Vancouver’s priorities of Equity, Climate Resilience, and/or Community Safety.

Eligibility:

Proposals must meet the eligible use of lodging tax funds as outlined in RCW 67.28.1816(1):

- Programs focused on tourism marketing and promotion.
- Supporting the operations and capital expenditures of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by a municipality or a public facilities district created under chapters 35.57 and 36.100 RCW
- Supporting the operations of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by nonprofit organizations described under 26 U.S.C. Sec. 501(c)(3) and 26 U.S.C. Sec. 501(c)(6) of the internal revenue code of 1986, as amended.

Award Amount: There is no grant award cap. Decisions will be made based on available funds, established programs and initiatives designed to market the destination or grow the Vancouver’s tourism industry, and performance against designated evaluation criteria.

Grant Evaluation Criteria

To be updated with criteria being developed as part of the evaluation tool.

Proposed Grant and Award Recommendation Timeline

- Step 1 (June/July) – City staff engages the LTAC to review and finalize grant evaluation criteria and categories.
- Step 2 (August) – City staff engages the LTAC to review and finalize grant applications.
- Step 3 (September) – Application portal opens.
- Step 4 (October) - Applications are evaluated by the LTAC and award recommendations are submitted to City staff.
- Step 5 (November/December) – City staff prepares LTAC Award Recommendations and submits to Council for consideration.
- Step 6 (November/December) – Council takes action on the LTAC Award Recommendations. Council actions could include:
 - a. Adoption of proposed LTAC award recommendations, or
 - b. Sending proposal back to City staff and LTAC with comments and a request for a resubmittal.
- Step 7 (Q1 2025) – City staff prepare contracts with recipient organizations.
- Step 8 (2025 ongoing) – City staff process recipient invoices and report grant impact data to the State of Washington.