

## **STARKVILLE VISITORS AND CONVENTION COUNCIL (VCC) SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

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### **Summary**

The goal of this program is to fund tourism and community development projects that positively impact the City of Starkville and Oktibbeha County's economy.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Eligible applicants for funding consideration are local non-profit entities submitting applications for projects that have the primary objective of supporting tourism in Oktibbeha County.

The emphasis of this program is to assist projects and events to become established and self-supporting. Successful projects may receive up to three years of support. After the third year, an organization may be eligible for sustaining grant funds if the project is deemed to have significant impact in Starkville and Oktibbeha County. Organizations who have proven sustained success with projects and events through the VCC Sponsorship Program have the opportunity to become a VCC Board sponsored Tourism Partner.

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Only projects or events that will be completed within the upcoming fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) will be considered.

### **Eligible & Applicable Costs**

- (1) Advertising through paid media (including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and billboards). A media schedule is required.
- (2) Printed materials (including brochures, inserts, and direct mail pieces) for distribution outside of Oktibbeha County. A distribution list is required.
- (3) Production of an event designed to attract tourists.
- (4) Agency fees (including research, copy development, design, and layout) not to exceed 25% of project funds requested.
- (5) Development of a permanent tourist attraction.

### **Ineligible Costs**

- (1) Administrative expenses (including travel, meals, lodging, and salaries).
- (2) Operating expenses (including maintenance, repair, rent, electricity, and telephone charges).
- (3) Office supplies.
- (4) Sales tax.

## **Process**

The VCC will administer the selection process. The VCC Board is a nine-member committee formed by Mississippi Legislation, charged with the administrative responsibilities of community development, tourism, and convention enhancement projects for the Starkville and Oktibbeha County area.

All projects for consideration must be submitted electronically to the VCC at [www.starkvillecvbgrants.com](http://www.starkvillecvbgrants.com) by August 26, 2016 by 5:00 p.m. All submissions will be electronically time stamped.

Each applicant will be judged based on the merits of the project as it relates to Starkville and Oktibbeha County tourism and community development. The decisions rendered by the VCC are final.

Applicants will be notified in writing of their status regarding funding within 30 days of submission.

## **Selection Criteria**

The VCC will use the following criteria when reviewing projects for funding consideration.

- (1) The total effort is well researched and reasonable.
- (2) Demonstrates substantial potential for economic return.
- (3) Demonstrates creativity, uniqueness, and good design.
- (4) Offers overall benefit to the tourism and community development industry of Starkville and Oktibbeha County.
- (5) Demonstrates a plan of sustainability if intended to be a multi-year effort.

## **Project Requirements**

All projects receiving grant funding must include and use the Starkville logo, which will be provided by the VCC, during the event and on all marketing pieces.

## **Awarding of Funds**

Projects will be awarded 100% of the allocated funding once the VCC Board approves the Final Report submitted by the Project Director.

All projects/events awarded grant funding must be completed within the upcoming fiscal year (October 1 – September 30).

Applying project directors will be accountable for all monies awarded.

The sponsorship program is a reimbursement program. Funding will not be allocated until the submission of a completed and approved final report. Funding will not be allocated in the event of a change in project scope from that which was approved by the VCC. In the event of a scope change, VCC approval is needed prior to the completion of the event to remain eligible for reimbursement funds.

**Questions**

If you have any questions regarding the Starkville VCC Sponsorship Program Guidelines and/or application, please contact Jennifer Gregory at 323-3322 or [jgregory@starkville.org](mailto:jgregory@starkville.org).