

Gov. Pritzker Announces \$15 Million in Additional Funding to Support Local Festivals and Tourism Across the State

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WHEATON — Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced \$15 million in funding to support tourism sector across Illinois, through the second round of the Tourism Attraction and Festivals Grant program offered by the State.

Through the \$15 million investment, which is open for applicants beginning today, \$5 million will be reserved for festivals, which serve as economic drivers while bringing communities together, and \$10 million will support a broad range of other tourism-related project such as attractions, museums, live performance venues and more. This grant is funded using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars.

“When the pandemic struck, the tourism industry across the globe lurched to a standstill,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “That’s why, last August, I launched the Tourism Attraction and Festivals Grant program—delivering the support our communities needed to bring back parades, festivals, and cultural celebrations that are so vital to families in neighborhoods across our state. Today, I’m proud to announce an additional \$15 million for this successful program to continue supporting our tourism sector, driving economic development, and bringing our communities together.”

"From boosting local economies and small businesses to showcasing the beauty of our state, Illinois' tourism industry contributes more than fun experiences for all of us. It is also about history and community—and preserving the rich, diverse stories that make Illinois a great place to live in and visit," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "Our administration has been committed to supporting the tourism industry's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic because of how integral it is to our state's communities. This additional \$15 million in funding is a testament to that."

This round of funding prioritizes downstate communities, communities that have experienced declines in hotel tax revenues and provides \$5 million specifically for festivals. Additionally, in order to maximize funding, applicants are required to submit matching funds with the goal of attracting additional visitors to localities and events, thereby supporting local hotels, restaurants, and businesses. Through the revised approach for the second round of funding, the State is ensuring localities and tourism entities hardest-hit by the pandemic receive additional support.

Through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), localities, tourism and festival businesses, and entities can apply for grants of up to \$500,000 that may be used to establish and enhance tourism attractions or festivals. Applications will be accepted until Friday, September 23, 2022. To view the NOFO and apply for the grant, please visit [this page](#).

"There are so many things I love about our community that I can't wait to share with folks from across the state," said State Senator Laura Ellman (D-Naperville). "Not only will this funding showcase our community and bolster our tourism, it will boost our local economy and help us grow and thrive for years to come. I'm so glad to see this well-deserved investment."

“Illinois tourism attractions, festivals and live venues bring scores of visitors to communities all around our state,” **said State Senator Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago).** “These grants will go a long way to rebuild the diverse attractions that makes Illinois the middle of everything!”

"From historic Route 66 to its beautiful state parks and cities, tourism continues to play an important role in the economy, culture and vitality of Illinois," said State Representative Lamont J. Robinson (D-Chicago). "This critical funding will provide for more good-paying jobs and strengthen our tourism industry as it bounces back from the COVID-19 pandemic."

“The tourism industry boosts local revenues, spurs economic development and creates jobs for residents across the state,” said State Senator Suzy Glowiak Hilton (D-Western Springs). “By investing an additional \$15 million statewide, we can support the festivals, museums and other live performances that sustain working families and attract visitors to Illinois.”

“Illinois’ travel and tourism industry continues to position and grow the state’s visitor economy,” **said Dave Herrell, chairman, Illinois Council of Convention & Visitor Bureaus (ICCVB).** “This strategic investment last year created significant value across the many destinations throughout Illinois and today’s announcement by Governor Pritzker will continue to make a substantial impact for tourism and the communities leveraging this opportunity for future growth.”

“With world-class attractions, festivals, and historical sites in every part of Illinois, we’re proud to support the unique destinations that make Illinois a great place to live, work and do business,” said Sylvia I. Garcia, Director of DCEO. “Under Governor Pritzker’s leadership, DCEO recognizes the importance of investing and reinvesting in tourism attractions and festivals that are important to residents and visitors alike, which is why today we’re announcing the award of \$10 million to 41 grantees across the state and making an additional \$15 million available for continued growth of our tourism economy.”

Building Upon \$26 Million Total Investment in Tourism Attractions

The Tourism Attraction and Festivals Grant program, launched in August 2021 and awarded on a quarterly basis, helps organizations fund efforts intended to spur tourism. As part of this, \$10 million in first round funding was met with \$16 million in matching funds, for a total of \$26 million in investments for 41 projects designed to support ongoing recovery efforts in the hard-hit tourism industry.

The first round of the grant program supported a broad array of tourism attractions, sites, and events throughout the state, including a five-month outdoor art exhibit featuring dozens of mythical animals inspired by Mexican folklore at Cantigny Park in Wheaton.

“Alebrijes: Creatures of a Dream World at Cantigny Park is a perfect example of how we can advance meaningful programs to serve our local communities, while lifting the state as a whole. A remarkable group of collaborators made this happen. Thank you to Governor Pritzker, DCEO and the Illinois Office of Tourism for this grant that enabled our artists from Mexico City to bring this dream to life, celebrating cultural diversity and personal connection through art,” said Beth Marchetti, DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director.

In order to be selected, each applicant demonstrated how this award would help businesses in the surrounding area, as well as the project’s ability to attract visitors for overnight stays. Projects scored higher based on proximity to commercial corridors and services - including hotels/motels, restaurants, retail, and other commercial operations.

Applications for this grant were awarded on a rolling basis with awards ranging from \$11,500 to \$562,500, with an average award of \$243,902 for a total of \$10 million. Below is the full list of projects from the first round of funding.

Location & Recipient	Description	Funding
Anna, City of Anna	Support for Gumdrop Drive - a drive thru lights exhibit through the city’s park.	\$11,500.00
Arcola, S.A.B.L.E., INC.	Support for various improvements to Aikman Wildlife Adventure.	\$184,000.00
Arlington Heights, Arlington Heights Frontier Days Inc.	Support for 2022 Arlington Heights Frontier Days Festival.	\$111,000.00

Arthur, Illinois Amish Information Exhibits, Inc.	Funding to support bringing historic barns to the Illinois Amish Heritage Center.	\$305,000.00
Brookfield, Chicago Zoological Society	Support for the Ice Age Giants 2022 Exhibit.	\$250,000.00
Chicago, The Magnificent Mile Association	Support for the Magnificent Mile Lights Parade.	\$485,104.55
Chicago, Navy Pier, Inc.	Support for Chicago LIVE! Again festival of performances.	\$562,500.00
CHICAGO, Illinois Restaurant Association	Support for the Chicago Gourmet festival.	\$242,837.94
Chicago, Art Expositions LLC, dba EXPO CHICAGO	Support for the International Contemporary & Modern Art expo.	\$508,162.10
Chicago, Chicago Media Project	Support for the Doc10 Film Festival, Chicago's only all-documentary film festival.	\$78,000.00
Chicago, Music and Dance Theater Chicago Inc.	Support for Harris Theater's audio/visual technical enhancements.	\$500,000.00

Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art	Support with creation, fabrication, and implementation the Nick Cave: Forothermore exhibition.	\$148,330.00
Chicago, Chicago Independent Venue League (CIVL)	Support for 14-night music & comedy festival.	\$100,000.00
Chicago, The Revival LLC	Support for construction for a new improv theater.	\$164,361.00
Rock Island, Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, Inc.	Support for Arts Alley, an outdoor pedestrian area and venue for special events and social gatherings.	\$267,181.20
Edwardsville, Madison County Historical Society, Inc.	Support for restoration and renovation of the museum building.	\$185,000.00
Freeport, Greater Freeport Partnership	Support for Pretzel City Brewfest Weekend 2022.	\$10,000.00
Geneva, Geneva Chamber of Commerce	Support for Swedish Days Festival & Festival of the Vine.	\$61,238.07
Glencoe, Chicago Horticultural Society	Support for a new welcome plaza, picnic glade and ramble at the Chicago Botanic Garden.	\$500,000.00

Glenview, Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago, Inc.	Support for Kohlights: A Mesmertastic Holiday Lightacular.	\$57,190.58
Grafton, Aerie's Management, Inc.	Support for the installation of an alpine coaster at Aerie's Resort.	\$500,000.00
Coal Valley, Rock Island County Forest Preserve District	Support for design fees and construction for the African Painted Dogs Exhibit at Niabi Zoo.	\$233,000.00
Joliet, City of Joliet	Support for exterior illumination of the 1858 Old Joliet Prison Historic Site.	\$250,000.00
Joliet, Joliet Park District	Support for the Taste of Joliet.	\$249,133.00
Ottawa, Starved Rock Country Community Foundation	Support for the Starved Rock Country Festival of the Arts.	\$15,852.00
Lemont, Lemont Quarries Operations Inc	Support for capital expansion of The Forge: Lemont Quarries.	\$500,000.00
Lisle, The Morton Arboretum	Support for landscaping & structural additions for the Grand Garden at Morton Arboretum.	\$500,000.00

Madison, Gateway Acquisitions, Inc.	Support for raceway improvements at World Wide Technology Racetrack.	\$500,000.00
Morton, Morton Chamber of Commerce	Support for the Morton Pumpkin Festival.	\$94,150.32
Mt. Carroll, Timber Lake Playhouse	Support for the Timber Lake Playhouse facilities remodeling project.	\$194,796.26
Mt. Vernon, John R. and Eleanor R. Mitchell Foundation	Support for capital improvements at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts, including ADA upgrades, sculpture preservation, and building renovations.	\$182,000.00
Wheaton, DuPage Convention & Visitor's Bureau	Support for Los Alebrijes, an art exhibit that celebrates cultural diversity through art at Cantigny Park.	\$60,110.00
Oak Brook, Oak Brook Park District	Support for Oak Brook's Central Park Sports & Activity Hub.	\$480,000.00
Paris, City of Paris	Support to help update the sound system at the Paris Center of Fine Arts.	\$152,995.98
Rockford, Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden Inc.	Support for the Entry Pond and Ornamental Water Feature Project at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden.	\$75,000.00
Rockford, City of Rockford	Support for the Coronado Performing Arts Center restoration and stabilization project.	\$500,000.00

Rockford, Discovery Center Museum of Rockford Inc	Support for the custom designed exhibit: Interactive Kinetic Ball.	\$50,000.00
Sesser, City of Sesser	Support for Sesser Opera House renovations.	\$148,925.00
Skokie, Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, Inc.	Support for the implementation and fabrication of "Ghost Army: The Combat Con Artists of World War II" special exhibition.	\$42,632.00
Springfield, Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project, Inc.	Support for the Illinois State Fairgrounds Route 66 Experience.	\$500,000.00
Washington, Nate Heinold LLC	Support for two disc golf tournaments: The Ledgestone Insurance Open in Greater Peoria, and the 2022 Combined Professional Disc Golf Association World Championship.	\$40,000.00

For regular updates on funding opportunities and resources available for businesses and communities, please visit the [DCEO website](#) and follow DCEO on social media [@IllinoisDCEO](#).