



Governor Pritzker Awards \$4.6 Million in Grant Funding to Local Tourism Organizations

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CHICAGO - Today, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) awarded \$4.6 million in grant funding to 20 local tourism organizations across the state. This funding was awarded through the Tourism Private Sector Grant Program as part of the state’s continued effort to boost tourism and welcome more visitors to Illinois.

“Here in Illinois, our tourism industry is booming, and we’re not letting up,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “Thanks to the Tourism Private Sector Grant Program, my administration will help 20 grantees attract new visitors statewide to our incredible array of festivals and events.”

“Illinois' tourism industry is about more than fun experiences, it's also about history, community and preserving the diverse stories that make Illinois so special,” **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton.** “When tourism is booming, our local economies and small businesses are booming. This additional grant funding will bolster that momentum while sharing the richness of Illinois with more and more visitors.”

The Tourism Private Sector Grant Program was created to attract, host and improve existing or develop new events, festivals and tourism-related projects across Illinois. This funding will support new, expanded, or enhanced events and festivals including advertising and marketing, transportation, building or equipment rental, receptions and banquets, registration, and entertainment.

Grantee	Region	Award Amount
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2024 Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) Annual Conference	Northeast \$149,500.00
2024 Grito Y Sabor Fest Chicago	Northeast \$450,000.00
2024 MCHS Living History Days Festival	Southwest\$23,500.00
2024 NASCAR Cup Series	Southwest\$450,000.00
Black Women's Expo	Northeast \$300,000.00
Chicago Gourmet 2024	Northeast \$338,550.00
ChicagoFest	Northeast \$450,000.00
Eerie Autumn Lights	Northern Stateline \$23,853.00
Great River Road F1 Power Boat Race and Musical Festival	Southwest\$100,000.00
Ledgestone Open	North Central \$80,000.00
Magnificent Mile Lights Festival	Northeast \$450,000.00
Naper Settlement's Summer Concert Series and Fall Events	Northeast \$311,229.00
New Year's Eve Celebration in Chicago Loop	Northeast \$450,000.00

Quad Cities Div III Womens College Wrestling, Major League Fishing Phoenix Bass Fishing League Regional Championship, The Group O Dia de los Muertos Parade and Festival	Northwest	\$25,360.00
Stroll on State	Northern Stateline	\$100,000.00
The Festival of Wood and Barrel Aged Beer	Northeast	\$99,940.00
The Fort De Chartre Colonial Market Fair, The Annual Fort De Chartre Rendezvous, Winter Rendezvous	Southwest	\$44,205.00
The Millennium Park 20th Anniversary Program	Northeast	\$450,000.00
The Viola Festival	Northeast	\$75,000.00
Veggie Fest & United States Bowling Congress	Northeast	\$316,020.50

“The Tourism Private Sector Grant Program was created to ensure Illinois continues to be the best place to live, work and do businesses,” **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards.** “This grant funding is critical to supporting events, festivals and attractions across the state to increase tourism, boosting our local economies and workforce.”

This funding was made available through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Eligible applicants included non-profits, government entities, for-profit institutions, and local promotional groups and as defined in state statute, matching funds must be provided by private sector entities, which is the origin of the program's name.

The State of Illinois continues to prioritize its tourism industry as millions of visitors spend billions of dollars annually across Illinois, boosting economic development and supporting jobs in the industry. Illinois reached its highest-ever hotel tax revenue figures in FY23 with \$308 million - surpassing the pre-pandemic record in FY19. Additionally, Illinois welcomed 111 million visitors who spent \$44 billion in 2022 - representing 14 million additional travelers spending \$12 billion more than calendar year 2021.

“Illinois’ world-renowned attractions, events and festivals are getting a much-deserved boost from the Tourism Private Sector Grant Program,” **said Rep. Janet Yang-Rohr (D-Naperville)**. “Through this grant funding program, the State of Illinois is promoting some of our greatest assets throughout the state to visitors from near and far.”

“The Tourism Private Sector Grant Program is essential to supporting the state's continued effort to attract visitors,” **said Sen. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago)**. “Illinois has a rich history and so many great experiences to offer and this funding will build on our current momentum, while simultaneously boosting our local economies.”

“This additional funding plays a critical role in our continued effort to boost tourism across Illinois,” **said Sen. Chris Belt (D-Swansea)**. “The Tourism Private Sector Grant Program will help showcase our great state while providing economic opportunities for our local workforce and small businesses.”

The success of Illinois' tourism sector is due to commitment to supporting the industry as well as the Illinois Office of Tourism's award-winning "[Middle of Everything](#)" campaign. Since it launched in 2022, the campaign has contributed to an additional 2 million trips equaling an additional \$1 billion spent in Illinois hotels, restaurants, small businesses, and attractions, according to data from Longwoods International. Additionally, every \$1 spent on the campaign equated to \$91 in visitor spending while generating \$10 in state and local tax revenue for every dollar spent - an enormous return on investment.

About the Illinois Office of Tourism:

The Illinois Office of Tourism leads tourism industry efforts to inspire visitation to, and within Illinois, resulting in significant economic impact and quality-of-life benefits for all Illinois residents. We are committed to making Illinois a model of inclusivity and celebration of diversity.

Illinois is a state that embodies innovation, craft, surprise, and creativity. Whether domestic and international visitors are traveling for business or leisure, the Illinois Office of Tourism is their trusted guide in crafting an unforgettable experience. To learn more, visit [EnjoyIllinois.com](#).