

Spring 2025 Jackson County Visitor Center Developmental Grants

Overview:

The Jackson County Visitor Center policy for developmental grants has been established to offer **1:1 funding match** assistance to not-for-profit groups; a city, county or public organization; tourism related business; or an organizational combination thereof for new projects or enhancements designed to have a direct impact on Jackson County and tourism.

Eligible applicants are qualified organizations which are registered and in good standing with the Indiana Secretary of State and have a proven track record for sustainability. Successful projects will provide recreational, cultural, entertainment and/or educational attractions or events which enhance the quality of life in Jackson County and tourism offerings for residents, visitors and groups.

Projects shall be completed within a year from the notification date of grant approval and open to the general public for public use. Projects which are nearing completion or have been completed within six months of award notification and final approval from the Jackson County Visitor Center will be considered.

The Developmental Grant budget for Spring 2025 has been set at \$20,000. Business or event project funding requests which attracts out-of-county visitors, increase visitations and overnight stays in Jackson County accommodation properties, and/or brings new money into Jackson County will be given higher consideration. Visitor Center funding may not constitute more than 50% of the total project costs. Not more than 25% of local match may be in the form of in-kind or non-financial contributions, which may include but are not limited to, the value of labor, services or land acquisition. Applicants must show a need for Visitor Center funding after other financial resources have been committed for the proposed project.

The Jackson County Visitor Center board has the discretion to review and reserves the right to reduce amounts and deny funding. There is no guarantee projects with recurring expenses will be funded annually.

Eligible Projects:

Developmental Grant funding is intended to be used for such projects, **but are not limited to:**

1. Cultural, historical or scenic site development in Jackson County which can be shown to increase regional tourism.
2. Jackson County attraction or destination development including recreational or entertainment facilities that have a regional appeal to tourists.
3. Technical assistance for such things as feasibility studies, master plans, site planning and architectural plans.
4. Capital projects, such as, land acquisition, building construction or renovation, utility infrastructure, and site development for tourism related projects. Money will not be awarded on speculation. Examples may include: museums, theme parks, ice skating rink, cultural and recreational centers, recreational trails and heritage attractions.
5. Way finding signage which direct tourists off of interstates and highways.
6. Bid fees for sporting events.

Developmental Grant Funding may NOT be used for:

1. The production costs of items to be sold, such as, souvenir plates, mugs, T-shirts, etc. or for promotional items such as bags, tickets, prize money, certificates, plaques, buttons, etc.
2. Operating costs, consultant fees, staff salaries, mileage or travel expenses, rent, utilities, fireworks displays, food and drink.
3. Programs designed to be fundraisers.
4. Cannot be used for expenses already incurred or board development.
5. Attraction signage that will be installed within the city/town limits or near the attraction.
6. Bonds.

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Application Process:

1. Application deadlines for the Spring cycle are due **April 1**, with awards presented in **June**.
2. Applying organizations may submit no more than one request per grant cycle and may be limited to receiving assistance from the program once a year. Previously funded projects must show enhancements and/or changes from prior years.
3. Five copies of the application and/or an electronically submitted file including letters of support and drawings, if applicable, must be received by JCVC offices by the deadlines stated.
4. Applications may be submitted in person, by mail or delivery by the deadline date. Applications will be reviewed in numerical order as received by the Jackson County Visitor Center.
5. A representative of the applying organization may be asked to appear before the review committee to present the proposal in a 15 minute presentation.
6. Applying entities will be promptly notified in writing of the final decision regarding their request within 45 days after the application deadline.

Criteria:

1. Evaluation of the project by the grant committee may include, but is not limited to the quality and sustainability of the project, the distribution and market to be reached, the evidence of need for funding by the applying organization and any previous funding history.
2. All projects must be completed within one year of the date of notification.
3. The project or event must be located in Jackson County.
4. A minimum of three letters of support are required to be submitted with the application. The Visitor Center is not eligible to supply a letter of support. No petitions are allowed.
5. The project must demonstrate appeal and benefit to those living outside of Jackson County.
6. The project must ultimately have a public component i.e. have hours opened to the public, offer service to the public, etc.
7. The project must demonstrate the ability to increase the number of out-of-town visitors.
8. The project must complement the existing tourism related product and improve the look and feel of the community.
9. For applications for grants in excess of \$5,000
 - i) Vendor estimates are required within the budget report unless there is a general contractor or architectural or engineering budget provided
 - ii) Evidence of community support for the project, both practical and financial, is required and can be shown through cash donations or in-kind matches. In-kind matches totaling no more than 25% of the projected cost can include but are not limited to expenditures such as professional fees, services, labor or land acquisition. Fair market determination will be considered.

Payment:

1. A one-time payment will be administered within 45 days after the award notification.
2. All advertising, printed materials, on-air promotions, presentations, etc. are required to recognize JCVC.
3. All projects must be completed within one year of the grant cycle application deadline. A follow up form and copies of original invoices must be submitted within 90 days of the finished project or the one year completion date whichever is sooner.

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Name of Project: _____

Amount of Funding Requested: _____

Amount of Maximum Matching Funds Available _____

Total Project Budget: _____

Lead Organization: _____

Authorizing Official: _____

Title: _____

PLEASE TYPE

Applicant Organization and Contact Information:

Lead Organization's address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Phone number _____ Fax number _____

Contact Person & Title _____

Organization website _____

Email Address _____

Organization Summary

Year founded or date of incorporation _____

Exempt Status _____ Federal Tax ID Number _____

Organization Mission: _____

Organizations Officers:

President: _____ Vice-President _____

Secretary _____ Treasurer _____

List any other organizations collaborating on this project:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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Project Narrative (PLEASE TYPE)

Overview:

- Describe the proposed project and the physical location of the project.
- Include amount of funds requested, matching funds available and a description of how the money will be spent.
- Include an estimated timeline for the project's completion, including the estimated beginning and end dates and dates for the major milestone completion.
- If the project is part of an on-going project, describe the status of the overall project and how this funding request fits into the project's completion.
- Share how you are working with other entities in the community is an important part of your effort.
- Describe the economic and intrinsic impact you think that this project will have on Jackson County.
- Describe how it might complement an existing tourism-related product, or coordinate with other tourism initiatives in the county, region or state.
- Describe the method that will be used to evaluate the success of the proposed project or event?

Tourism Impact

- An explanation of how this project will attract visitors living outside Jackson County and Indiana to the area.
- How many participants are expected to attend the event or utilize the project?
- Provide a summary of the project's short term and long term goals and how it will increase the number of out-of-area visitors to Jackson County.
- If applicable, describe your seasons' operating hours for 2025. Include the days of the week you are open or show months if you are a performance venue.
- Do you expect visitors to stay in Jackson County lodging facilities overnight? Is there a possibility of more than one night stays?

The following are mandatory for Developmental Grants in excess of \$5,000.

(Optional for requests less than \$5,000. The JCVC reserves the right to ask for this information for any grant request.)

Business Plan

Provide a thorough business plan as is possible at this point which clearly demonstrates a plan of action for the proposed project. Narrative should include:

- A general market analysis with a description of the target market and projected customer base for the project demographically and geographically.
- Estimated general financial projections for the next five years or for the proposed life of the project, if shorter. Information is needed to show sustainability of the plan.
- A list of key personnel or committee members who will be closely involved in the project and any outside consultants you currently know you will be involved. Does the organization have paid professional staff?
- A marketing overview that includes an overview of advertising and promotional activity that may be included to support this project, if applicable. Include advertising/PR plans. Marketing cannot be funded with this grant.
- List other business/organization partners and the responsibilities of each.
- Include letters of support for matching and/or in-kind contributions.

Economic impact

- Provide an overview of the economic impact that this project could generate and who will benefit most.
- A description of how this project might improve the community's image. Describe how it might improve the look and feel of the community in a significant way and make it more attractive to visitors.
- The potential for business growth/expansion created by this project.

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2025 Spring Developmental Grant Acknowledgement, Release of Information and Certification

On behalf of the organization named in this application, I have read and understood the Developmental guidelines and application. I do hereby certify that the submitted application meets all the eligibility requirements for the Developmental Grant of the Jackson County Visitor Center.

I understand that the grant fund provides a **1:1 match**.

I give permission to the Jackson County Visitor Center to perform due diligence, contact the organization's references, and undertake other activities reasonably necessary for evaluation of the application and proposal.

The completed project must adhere to the required guidelines as outlined in the Developmental Grant Fund instructions.

I certify that all representations, warranties or statements made in the application are true. I understand that funds will not be awarded and could be recovered if any information is found to be false, incorrect, misleading or misrepresented.

I also understand that the project must be completed within one calendar year from the date of notification.

Signature _____ Title _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

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Attachment Checklist:

If the document listed is not required for the grant you are requesting, please place N/A in the box.

- Cover page
- Federal id notification form/IRS letter of determination
- Original signed application and five copies with attachment and an electronic copy.
- Current list of board members and affiliations
- Estimate of expenses and income. The more accurate the budget, the more it will reflect on your readiness to proceed with the project.
- Vendor estimates.
- Most recent annual report and/or audited financial statement, if available.
- If applicable, a letter of participation agreement with the acting fiscal agent.
- Letters of support from participating organizations.
- You may include maps, photographs, samples of projects to use as models, etc. but they must be copied and included in your seven completed packets.
- Acknowledgment, Release of Information and Certification form
- Your entire application may not be over 25 pages in length including all attachments.