



## **GRANT GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FOR IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT 2023-2024**

### **1. PURPOSE OF FUNDS**

The purpose of the Knox County Visitor's Committee IMPROVEMENT FUND grant is to provide funding that improves existing or creates new visitor attractions and facilities in Knox County. The funds available through this program are provided from the lodging tax revenue funds. The funds are to be used for capital improvements for area attractions or recreational facilities, attracting visitors to and within Knox County, Nebraska Visitors Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 et seq. (as amended from time to time) provides.

### **2. USE OF FUNDS**

IMPROVEMENT FUND grants shall be used to improve the visitor attraction and facilities owned by the public or any nonprofit organization in the county, except that no proceeds shall be used to improve a facility in which pari-mutuel wagering is conducted. Nothing in the Improvement Fund grant guidelines excludes funding for multi-year projects.

### **3. EXCLUSIONS**

No part of the grant funds may be used for:

- General operating expenses
- For additional or current personnel salaries
- For supplies and equipment
- For items not included in the approved grant application
- General Maintenance of an existing facility
- In any manner that would violate the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §et seq. (as amended from time to time). All grants are discretionary, based upon available funds, other anticipated uses, and appropriateness and anticipated effectiveness of proposed use.

### **4. MATCHING FUNDS**

The grantee acknowledges that this is a 25/75 matching grant up to the approved amount. The Grantee will be reimbursed up to 75 percent of the cost of the project (Up to but not exceeding the total grant award, while the other 25 percent of the projects must come from the Grantee, and can consist of half in-kind and half cash. For example, for a total project cost of \$25,000.00, the grant application can be for \$18,750.00 and the match will be \$6250.00.

## **5. APPLICATION PROCESS**

For each grant application, you must include the completed cover sheet, a project description, a budget page, letters of support, contractor bids, and proof of nonprofit status. For projects that improve or expand publicly owned facilities, a letter of understanding from the government entity must be included with the application. Failure to complete the entire application may result in the rejection of your fund request.

## **6. DEADLINES**

Guidelines and applications for the Improvement Fund grant shall be made available prior to May 1<sup>st</sup> the year the grant is open to the communities. The deadline for returning completed applications to the Knox County Visitor's Committee is the final business day of May. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** The Knox County Visitor's Committee will meet within 30 days of the deadline to consider the applications for the Improvement Fund grants.

Upon approval or modification by the Knox County Board of Supervisors, considering the Knox County Visitor's Committee recommendation, notification will be made to the successful applicants.

Projects funded through the Improvement Fund must be completed within 18 months of the date of application approval unless written authorization for a deadline extension is received from the Knox County Visitor's Committee Board. For projects not completed within an 18-month time frame without the written authorization of extension, the grant will immediately be terminated, and funds will not be distributed.

## **7. CREDITING REQUIREMENTS**

At the conclusion of projects funded through the Improvement Fund, acknowledgment of support by the Knox County Visitor's Committee will be made through the appropriate placement of a plaque or sign stating such or an appropriate form of electronic recognition.

## **8. CONTRACT**

All awards are subject to Knox County Visitor's Committee (Grantor) and awarded applicant (Grantee) entering a contract detailing each party's obligations. If the parties are unable to enter into a mutually agreeable contract, then the awarded grant will be disallowed. The Grantee will obtain all necessary local and state permits.

## **9. REPORTING, ACCOUNTING, AND PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

### **a. REPORTING**

**Thirty days** after the completion of the project, or the end of the calendar year. For multi-year projects, a report will be submitted to the KCVC giving results or progress toward results. The report must outline if the objectives of the project were met, if not, what circumstances led to the lack of progress. The report will also include copies of all paid receipts. No money will be released until the final report, or the end-of-year progress report is presented and approved. Furthermore, no money will be released beyond the paid receipts submitted by the awarded applicant.

**b. ACCOUNTING**

Accounting will follow all Knox County by-laws and audit procedures for Knox County funds based on the recording requirements disbursements and reporting of the award applicant per 9a herein.

**c. PAYMENT**

1. Upon receipt and acceptance of the final project report or the end-of-year progress report, the KCVC will request a warrant from the Knox County Clerk for the final or annual payment of grant funds, depending upon the availability of funds. This warrant will be sent by the Clerk directly to the grantee.
  
2. The Knox County Board of Supervisors and the Knox County Visitor's Committee can only use proceeds from the Knox County Visitor's Improvement Funds to fund any project herein and shall not obligate itself to use any funds outside the Knox County Visitor's Improvement Fund to fund any project herein. Furthermore, the Knox County Board of Supervisors and the Knox County Visitor's Committee shall not give multi-year grant(s) (taking into consideration all other grants) that obligates Knox County over and above amounts accruing in the Improvement Fund through the collection of a 2 percent Lodging Tax through the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §81-3724, et seq.

**10. REVIEW PROCESS**

Grants are discretionary, based upon available funds, other anticipated uses, and appropriateness and anticipated effectiveness of the accepted project. Furthermore, the said project must continue to comply with the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 through §81-3724, et seq. (as amended from time to time).



THIS FORM CAN BE TYPED IN – JUST CLICK ON THE TEXT BOX

Name of Organization			
Contact Person		Title	
Address	City	State	Zip
Telephone	Fax	E-mail	
Project Name			
Amount Requested		Estimated project cost. (Attach a detailed budget worksheet)	
Please provide a brief description of the project:			
<p>Signature of applicant (I signify that, if awarded, grant funds will only be used for improvements to visitor attractions owned by the public or any nonprofit organization, as the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3724, et seq. (as amended from time to time) provides, and as outlined in this application)</p> <p>Signature: _____ Date: _____</p>			

For each grant application you must include this completed cover sheet, a project description, a budget page, letters of support contractor bids and PROOF OF NONPROFIT STATUS.

**Return to:**  
**Knox County Economic Development**  
**C/O: Knox County Visitor's Committee**  
**PO Box 165**  
**Center, NE 68724**  
**402.288.5619**

How will this project increase visitation to or encourage visitors to stay longer in Knox County?

What other agencies or groups are co-sponsoring the project?

How will this improvement benefit Knox County?

If this project is not awarded the entire requested amount, will you continue with the project?

A project budget and proof of nonprofit status or public ownership must be attached.

## Budget Worksheet

(Include contractor bids if applicable)

Activity	Grant Amount Requested	Match (Cash)	Match (In-Kind)	Source & Brief Description of Match	Total Funds to be Spent of this Grant Project Per Activity
Example: Construction of ABC	20,000	2,500	2,500	Organization budget / volunteer labor	25,000
				/	
<b>Totals:</b>					

(Total of first three columns must equal the fifth column total.)

Knox County Visitor's Committee Improvement Fund Grant Agreement

In consideration of a grant of \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ from the Knox County Visitor's Committee,

\_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned Grantee, agrees:

To use the grant only for the purpose expressed in the Approved Improvement Grant Application:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Grantee agrees to maintain records of expenditures and receipts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Grantee agrees to present a final report with a full accounting on the way the funds are spent, and copies of all paid receipts will be provided to the Knox County Visitor's Committee office within 30 days of the conclusion of the project. Failure to submit paid receipts will result in a potential loss by Grantee of funds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Grantee agrees to periodically update the Knox County Visitor's Committee on the progress of the project including timeline and projected date of completion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. To credit the Knox County Visitor's Committee as a sponsor of this project. For multi-year improvement projects and temporary signage acknowledging the support of the Knox County Visitor's Committee will be placed in a prominent location. At the conclusion of projects funded through the Improvement Fund, acknowledgment of support by the Knox County Visitor's Committee will be made through the appropriate placement of a permanent plaque or sign stating such.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Not to use any of the grant funds:
  - a. General operating expenses
  - b. For additional or current personnel salaries
  - c. For supplies and equipment
  - d. For items not included in the approved grant application
  - e. In any manner that would violate the Nebraska Development Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-3701 - §81-3724, et seq. (as amended from time to time).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Grantees acknowledge that this is a 25/75 matching grant up to the approved amount, and the grantee will provide at least 25% of the project funds which can be half in-kind and half cash.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Grantee agrees to complete the funded project within 18 months of executing this agreement, unless the written authorization of deadline extension is received from the Knox County Visitor's Committee. For projects not completed within an 18-month time frame without written authorization of extension, the grant will immediately be terminated, and funds will not be distributed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The individual signing this Grant Agreement hereby represents that he or she is duly authorized to exercise such agreement in the capacity in which he or she is executing the same.

