

July 22, 2024

Mayor Buffaloe and City Council Members
City of Columbia
710 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO 65201

REF: Convention & Visitors Bureau Tourism Development Program Annual Update

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) Advisory Board, this letter serves as the annual update on the CVB's Tourism Development Program, which is funded through a portion of the Columbia Lodging Tax. Applications are submitted by for-profit and not-for-profit organizations that request funds to assist with developing and enhancing festivals, events and attractions that will generate overnight visitation in Columbia hotels and have a positive economic impact on the community.

There are five different application categories within the Tourism Development Program: Signature Series, Festivals & Events, Sports Development, Attraction Development and Community Sponsorships. During the FY2024 budget process, \$425,000 was appropriated for funding applications throughout the year. To date there have been 38 applications received with a total amount of \$280,420 awarded.

In FY24 there were five applications and a total of \$77,500 was awarded. Signature Series events are Columbia's most established festivals that generate national press coverage and have provided a significant economic impact in the community over the years. These events are the True/False Film Fest, We Always Swing Jazz Series, MU Concert Series, Show-Me STATE GAMES, and Art in the Park.

300 South Providence Road Columbia, MO 65203

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There were seven Sports Development applications this year with a total of \$127,500 awarded. This included the Missouri State High School Football, Cross Country, and Wrestling Championships, the State Music Festival, the Missouri Basketball Coaches Association and the 2024 Missouri Middle School Basketball Championships. The Columbia Sports Commission reviews all Sports Development applications and makes funding recommendations to the CVB Advisory Board. There is additional information in the Sports Commission report to Council.

Community Sponsorship events are targeted at residents and/or the community and provides a means to increase tourism or promote the City of Columbia as a family friendly and inclusive tourism destination. Funding levels are determined by the CVB Director and based on the event's tourism related impact. There have been 30 community sponsorship applications received to date and a total of \$75,420 has been awarded. Of that amount, \$38,670 has gone to sporting events and \$36,750 has been used to assist with arts & cultural events. Some of this year's events include Unbound Book Festival, Criterium at the Columns, Harvest Hootenanny, MO Jazz Festival, Wonder Woman Girl's Wrestling and the Popsicle Fest.

The Tourism Development Program started in 2000 and continues to be a very valuable asset to the Convention & Visitors Bureau as a way to continue support and promotion of Columbia's cultural & heritage tourism, all seasons sports marketing, and attraction & festival development and enhancement. We thank you for your time and service and for your support of Columbia's tourism and great hospitality.

Sincerely,

E-SIGNED by Richard Walls
on 2024-07-23 14:23:08 GMT

Richard Walls, Chair
Convention & Visitors Advisory Board

cc: De'Carlton Seewood, City Manager
Sheela Amin, City Clerk
Amy Schneider, CVB Director
CVB Advisory Board Members