

## **WILKESBORO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

The Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority (TDA) was created by an act of the NC State Legislature and the Wilkesboro Town Board of Commissioners in 2002. The Wilkesboro TDA is funded solely by an occupancy tax paid to Wilkesboro hotels by hotel guests (3% of room rate.)

The Wilkesboro TDA provides grants to tourism-related projects in Wilkes County. Our grants are primarily for projects which are targeted to bring tourists in from outside the local area, thus putting “heads in beds,” which infuses money into the local economy.

Funds are available for marketing and promotion of events (advertising, brochures, flyers, and other marketing efforts) as well as for capital projects.

The Wilkesboro TDA board meets on the third Tuesday of each month (except December) at 2PM in Wilkesboro Town Hall. The deadline for a grant application is two weeks prior to the TDA board meeting.

Please submit the application at least several months before your event – the board sometimes defers a decision until the next meeting. In addition, the board would want to make sure that there is plenty of time to market the event effectively.

If possible, a representative from your group should be present at the Wilkesboro TDA board meeting to give a brief (less than 5 minute) overview of your grant request and answer any questions the board may have.

Our average grants range from \$1000 - \$4000. The Wilkesboro TDA is restricted by our bylaws from giving any grant more than 10% of our annual budget. We are required to give significant preference to non-profit organizations.

We do give partial grants – when a grant is approved, it is sometimes approved for less than the requested amount.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Ask for a grant of no more than 10-25% of your projected budget.
- Make the grant request amount for a specific goal and state the plans to accomplish this in detail. The grant should not be just going “into the pot” to pay for operating expenses, but should be earmarked for specific tourism-generating activities.
- On your grant application, please include details relevant to your project or event, such as:
  - Projected attendance
  - Maximum capacity of venue
  - Planned marketing strategy

- How will you be marketing to people outside of a 100 mile radius
- How will you get heads in beds (packages in conjunction with the Wilkesboro hotels, etc.)
- Joint efforts with Wilkesboro/Wilkes County attractions museums, restaurants, or other venues to try to encourage people to spend more time and money in the area (thus maximizing the economic impact of each visitor.)
- Offer a “sponsorship” in return for the grant. In other words, state that if the grant is approved, the Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority will be a listed sponsor on all posters, T-Shirts, advertisements, and promotional materials created for the event (with the TDA logo and web site address.) This way the board could also see the grant as an advertising/promotional opportunity for the TDA.

Grant applications should be submitted by mail or email to:

Thomas Salley  
Director

Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority  
203 West Main Street  
Wilkesboro, NC 28697

[info@wilkescountytourism.com](mailto:info@wilkescountytourism.com)  
[www.wilkescountytourism.com](http://www.wilkescountytourism.com)

336.838.3951