



Visit Carlsbad Event Grant Guidelines

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

About the Visit Carlsbad Event Grant Program

The objectives of the grant program are to:

- Fund programs or events that are going to primarily increase overnight stays in hotels and secondarily to:
 - Encourage the development of innovative tourism products
 - Elevate Carlsbad's brand as a premier destination
 - Promote collaboration within and across sectors of the tourism industry
 - Reach important travel segments such as multicultural, family, and senior markets

Types of Events Supported

- Placemaking Events (up to \$5,000/event)
- Brand Positioning Events (up to \$50,000/event)
- Room Night Driving Events (up to \$100,000/event)

All events must be accessible for public attendance. Grant applicants may be a service provider, event organizer, hotel property, other event consultant, or a combination of applicants.

Placemaking Events

Grant Amount: Up to \$5,000

- Events that add to tourism, culture, or atmosphere of Carlsbad and enhance its position as a destination
- Room nights associated with the event are encouraged but not required
- Must promote or enhance tourism
- Carlsbad brand identity must be featured in advertising and/or at the event
- Grant funds can be spent on marketing and/or operational costs

Brand Positioning Events

Grant Amount: Up to \$50,000

- Event further positions Carlsbad as a destination in alignment with key experience pillars: wellness, beach, golf, arts/entertainment, outdoors, culinary, sustainability
- Event preferably falls during an off-peak period and may be considered if it enhances occupancy or average daily rate
- Event must be promoted outside of the City of Carlsbad at least three months prior to event
- Organizers must provide media schedule including media markets, dates, times, impressions/circulation, and audience demographics

- Event website must include “Travel” section featuring content about staying in Carlsbad and listing hotels or linking to Visit Carlsbad hotels webpage. Added weight will be given to events that include contracts/negotiated rates at Carlsbad hotels
- Carlsbad brand identity must be featured in advertising and/or at the event
- Grant may not make up more than 25% of the total event budgeted expenses (e.g., an event with budgeted expenses of \$100,000 may not apply for more than \$25,000 in grant funding).
- Grant funds can be spent on marketing and/or operational costs

Room Night Driving Events

Grant Amount: Up to \$100,000

- Event is promoted outside of San Diego County at least three months prior to event
- Organizers must provide media schedule including media markets, dates, times, impressions/circulation, and audience demographics
- Event website includes “Travel” section featuring content about staying in Carlsbad and listing hotels or linking to Visit Carlsbad hotels webpage. Added weight will be given to events that include contracts/negotiated rates at Carlsbad hotels
- Award eligibility based on projected room nights
 - 300 – 600 room nights - \$25,000
 - 601 – 900 room nights - \$45,000
 - 901 – 1,200 room nights - \$65,000
 - 1,201 – 1,500 room nights - \$85,000
 - More than 1,500 room nights - \$100,000
- Grant may not make up more than 25% of the total event budgeted expenses (e.g., an event with budgeted expenses of \$300,000 may not apply for more than \$75,000 in grant funding).
- Events may receive 50% of the total grant award up front. Any remaining grant funds will be paid at the conclusion of the event based on actualized room nights.
- Carlsbad brand identity must be featured in advertising and/or at the event
- Grant funds can be spent on marketing and/or operational costs

Decision Criteria

The following will be considered when reviewing applications (*Note: not all criteria are applicable to each grant category*):

- Overall ROI for the destination and to hotel properties
- Demonstration of strong revenue sources in addition to this grant
- Events that occur during the low/off-peak travel season
- The opportunity to foster NEW demand generating events and services from concept to actualization with the potential to establish a recurring marquee status for the destination
- Projected incremental hotel room nights
- Applicants who can quantify past successes
- Past compliance and success history
- Premier events that elicit prestige and enhance the reputation of Carlsbad as a premier destination
- Events that align with Carlsbad’s key experience pillars: wellness, beach, golf, arts/entertainment, outdoors, culinary, sustainability
- Events that generate national/international media coverage:
 - Media Coverage of the event:

- Network TV
- Cable Network
- Radio Broadcast
- Live Streaming
- Media promoting the event:
 - Network TV
 - Cable Network
 - Radio Broadcast
 - Print
 - Digital Channels
 - Social Platforms

In general, competitive applications will have clearly articulated projected room demand resulting from the proposed event. The specific benefit must be projected in the incremental delivery of hotel room night sales to assessed hotels. Incremental is defined as paid room nights in excess of what would be consumed without the proposed event. Successful applications will clearly describe the strategy and tactics for delivering incremental room night sales, as well as the estimated resulting number of room night sales and resulting gross room revenue.

Application Review Process

Visit Carlsbad Staff Review

Grant applications will be reviewed by Visit Carlsbad President/CEO and staff to present to the Visit Carlsbad Board for approval. Reviewers will consider:

- Thoroughness of application
- Sufficient time from potential Board approval date to event date
- Proposed event compliance
- Return on Investment
- Alignment of the proposed event with grant program objectives
- Feasibility of event, including ability to meet city requirements for licensing, permitting, and insurance coverage
- Current and past contractual performance/standing with the City of Carlsbad
- Evaluation of the applicant's assumptions, past performance, marketing plan, business plan and projections for hotel room sales (both in room nights and Average Daily Rate)
- Evaluation of the applicant's ability to execute on the projected event
- Past performance of the organization's events and data collected
- Seasonality and day of week
- Hotel performance data (past occupancy and average daily room rate) by date to evaluate factors such as need, the capacity for more room sales, etc.

Visit Carlsbad Board Review and Approval

Grants that meet all application requirements will be considered for approval by the Visit Carlsbad Board at a board meeting. These meetings are open to the public and applicants may be asked to present their application to the board.

Grant applications will be reviewed quarterly, with the deadline to apply three weeks prior to the Regular Board Meeting each quarter.

If a board meeting is cancelled or rescheduled, notice will be given to all active grant applicants and final consideration will be at the subsequent regular or special board meeting.

Distribution of Funds

Funds will be distributed upon final approval of the grant application pursuant to a mutually negotiated funding schedule. Visit Carlsbad reserves the right to hold a portion of awarded funds until after the event takes place and all reporting has been submitted.

If a grant-funded event fails to take place, or misses its target by more than 50%, the grant recipient may be required to return all or a portion of granted funds to Visit Carlsbad.

Other

- Event grants cannot be awarded to events that have already taken place
- Grant funds are limited
- The program is subject to change without notice

Contact

For any questions about the Visit Carlsbad grant program, please contact eventgrants@visitcarlsbad.com.