

Dear Llano County Hotel Occupancy Tax Grant Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in promoting Llano County tourism. The County of Llano collects a 4% Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) from lodging properties located in the unincorporated areas of Llano County. Rules for how county HOT revenues may be expended are set by the Texas Legislature under Chapters 351 and 352 of the Texas Tax Code.

According to state law, the use of HOT revenue is limited to expenditures that meet the following criteria:

- 1) Every expenditure must directly enhance and promote tourism and the hotel industry in unincorporated areas of Llano County. In other words, the expenditure must attract visitors who will spend the night in a lodging property located in unincorporated Llano County ("unincorporated lodging properties"). If the expenditure is not reasonably likely to accomplish this result, it cannot be funded by Llano County HOT revenues.
- 2) Expenditures must clearly fit into one of seven statutory categories as follows:
 - a) Funding the establishment, improvement or maintenance of a convention center or visitor information center.
 - b) Paying the administrative cost of facilitating convention registration.
 - c) Paying for tourism related advertising and promotion to attract tourists to spend the night at unincorporated lodging properties in Llano County.
 - d) Funding programs that enhance the arts, provided the funded arts activity directly impacts economic activity at unincorporated lodging properties in Llano County.
 - e) Funding historical restoration or preservation programs provided the restored or preserved historical site or attraction is visited by guests of unincorporated lodging properties in Llano County.
 - f) Funding sporting events in which most of the participants are tourists and in which the sporting event generates substantial economic activity at unincorporated lodging properties in Llano County.
 - g) Wayfinding signage directing tourists to sites and attractions visited by hotel guests.

Additionally, Llano County has set forth rules governing how HOT revenue grants will be approved for funding, and reporting requirements for funded entities.

Other forms required for Llano County HOT grant consideration which include:

- 1) Llano County HOT Rules governing your application
- 2) Llano County Grant Application

Funding for all events and/or marketing plans are considered on a case-by-case basis by Llano County Commissioners Court. Please note that state law requires that grant awards will be based on tourism impact for Llano County and the amount of funds available during the grant period in which it is requested.

Llano County HOT Grants Rules & Information

Rules governing your application:

The Llano County Hotel Occupancy Tax is collected only from lodging properties located in the unincorporated areas of Llano County ("unincorporated lodging properties"). Therefore, Llano County hotel tax revenue grants must directly enhance and promote economic activity at unincorporated lodging properties. Hotel occupancy taxes for lodging properties located in the incorporated areas of the County are collected separately by the respective city in which the lodging property is located.

For this reason, applicants for Llano County hotel tax revenue funding must be aware of the following regulations:

- 1) The applicant must present reasonable evidence that the expenditure or event will enhance and promote economic activity at unincorporated lodging properties in Llano County.
- 2) For any applicant applying for HOT funds to advertise an event, it is required that these HOT funds focus on targeting visitors and guests staying at unincorporated lodging properties. Additionally, the applicant shall provide relevant event information to Llano County's designated tourism marketing entity, as directed by the Commissioners Court and County Treasurer.
- 3) Expenditure of HOT grant funds for unauthorized purposes may result in recapture of funding.

Llano County Grant Application Process:

The County of Llano accepts applications from organizations wishing to receive financial support through a grant process from the County Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenue in accordance with Texas statutes and Llano County rules. Llano County hotel tax revenue grants must directly enhance and promote economic activity at unincorporated lodging properties within Llano County.

To be considered for Llano County HOT grant funding applicants must complete a Llano County Grant Application and include the required attachments. If funds are to be paid directly to the applicant, a completed form W9 must be included.

The application must be delivered to the County Treasurer's office at least 45 days prior to the date of the HOT Application Meeting. Unless otherwise specified by the Commissioners Court, the HOT Application Meeting shall be on the day of the first Commissioners Court meeting in November of each year. Meeting information shall be posted on the County website.

At the HOT Application Meeting, a representative of the grant applicant will give a presentation to Commissioners Court regarding the application.

The County Treasurer will review the application for completeness and compliance, and then submit the to the Llano County Commissioners Court for consideration at the HOT Application Meeting. At the HOT Application Meeting or at a subsequent County Commissioners meeting, Commissioners will evaluate the merits of each application, and determine whether to fund applications and in what amount.

Priority may be given to those events and entities based on their ability to generate overnight visitors to Llano County. Applicants can show this potential to generate overnight visitors by:

- a) historic information on the number of room nights used during previous years of the same events;
- b) if applicable, current information on the size of a room block that has been reserved at area hotels to accommodate anticipated overnight guests attending the funded event;
- c) historical information on the number of guests at hotel or other lodging facilities that attended the funded event (through surveys, guest directories, or other sources; and/or
- d) examples of the planned marketing of the programs and activities that will likely generate overnight visitors to local lodging properties from this event.

Upon approval by the Commissioners Court, the County Treasurer will follow through with the distribution of funds as follows:

Within 60 days of the grant approval or specific event, the recipient will file a follow-up report along with an invoice requesting disbursement of approved funds. The follow-up report shall include statements and backup documentation as requested by the County Treasurer. The actual disbursement of funds will occur within 30 days of receipt of follow-up report and disbursement request.

At the discretion of the Commissioners Court, consideration may be given to entities with unusual circumstances requiring advance funds distribution.

The Commissioners court will establish an available funding level for the current fiscal year for HOT grants based on the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund balance as of October 31st of the previous fiscal year.

PLEASE CONTACT THE COUNTY TREASURER REGARDING ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT THE GRANT PROCESS.