



616 Bradford St. • Seward, NE 68434 • 402-643-4189

## Improvement (Brick & Mortar) Fund Grant Guidelines

### OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this committee and grant is to provide funding that promotes, encourages and attracts visitors to the travel and tourism facilities and attractions within Seward County. The funds available through this program are provided from the lodging tax revenue collected via the improvement fund. The funds are to be used for capital improvements to existing attractions or recreational facilities that are open to the public and are of educational, cultural, historical, artistic or recreational significance, and that promote and/or stimulate the Seward County economy by encouraging overnight stays in hotels, motels, and campgrounds.

### CRITERIA FOR ASSISTANCE:

- Grants from SCVC Improvement Funds shall be available for any visitor attraction in Seward County owned by the public or any nonprofit organization.
- Grant applications are due 60 days prior to the start of the project.
- Grants are discretionary, based on available funds, other anticipated uses, appropriateness and anticipated effectiveness of proposed use.
- Grant funds must be used for projects that will attract tourists (principally those resulting in overnight stays) to Seward County that would not otherwise come to Seward County.
- Grant funds must only be used for seed money to help get projects that the SCVC determines to be worthy started. Grant funds must be viewed only as assistance for a project, and never to be considered as full funding for any project.
- Grants will not normally be given in any amount over 25% of a project. In the case of a project that the SCVC deems to be very exceptional, funding may be granted up to, but not exceeding 50% of a project. All funding will be at the sole discretion of the SCVC.
- Grant funds may not be used for on-going operational expenses such as, but not limited to: taxes, utilities, wages, maintenance, etc.
- Applicants must present a detailed business plan that shows projections for all construction operational expenses. Business plans must show promotional plans for keeping the project occupied and utilized.
- Grant applications must show realistic projections for the number of overnight stays to be expected by the creation of the project, and how the projections were determined.
- Funding for a project will take place only if and when the SCVC is assured that the project will follow through on its projections. The grant applicant must demonstrate to the SCVC

that the balance of the required funds for construction, are in place, as well as demonstrating that the on-going operational, maintenance and promotional plans are viable.

- SCVC must be reasonably certain that the proposed project will not become a tax liability to Seward County.
- The proceeds of the SCVC Fund shall be used to IMPROVE EXISTING visitor attractions and facilities in Seward County, except that no proceeds shall be used to improve a facility in which pari-mutuel wagering is conducted.
- The grantee will obtain all necessary local and state permits.
- Grant applicants must complete the attached grant application and letters of support from three or more entities that will benefit from the project.
- 90 days after the project completion, a report must be submitted to the SCVC, along with all receipts, giving the final results.
- Permanent, visible acknowledgment will be placed within any facility receiving SCVC Improvement Funds.
- Projects must provide matching funds for this grant.
- Grant funds shall be used to assist with facility improvements.
- Improvement fund grant awards are capped at \$2,500.

## **NOTE:**

Applications for grant funding from the VISITOR IMPROVEMENT FUND will be accepted by the SCVC beginning January 2016 and are due no later than January 3<sup>rd</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup> or October 1<sup>st</sup>. The SCVC will review the applications at their February, May, August and November meetings to consider grant requests.

The SCVC divides tax receipts 50/50 between the VISITOR IMPROVEMENT FUND for capital improvement grants, and the VISITOR'S PROMOTION FUND for advertising/marketing promotion. The SCVC maintains separate monthly financial sheets to distinguish between the funds. Requests from the VISITOR IMPROVEMENT FUND should not include expenses related to advertising or marketing.

Applications for grants are available at the Seward Area Chamber of Commerce offices. Those applying for grants will need to discuss their project with the Chamber Executive Director to receive the official application form. After completing the application, applicant should return to the Seward County Visitors Committee, in care of the Seward Chamber Executive Director, agent for the SCVC for placement on the agenda for consideration by to the SCVC Board of Directors. A representative of the entity submitting an application for Visitor Improvement Funds will be requested to make a personal presentation the SCVC Board of Directors upon submission of their application.



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## IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT APPLICATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Entity applying for the grant: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Entity applying for the grant is a 501 (c) 3: Yes or No?

If No, what type of non-profit is the grantee? \_\_\_\_\_

Name, date and location of the improvement:

(PLEASE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.)

Describe the improvement:

Total amount of money requested: \_\_\_\_\_ Total estimated costs: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a detailed overall budget and business plan of the improvement project with this application.

Describe the current facility, location, expansion and improvement plans, significance to tourism and estimated date of completion.

Who is the target market for this project? What are your projections for attendance, especially overnight stays to be generated by this project? How did you arrive at these figures?

What other agencies or groups are co-sponsoring this project? What amounts are they contributing and when?

PLEASE RETURN GRANT APPLICATIONS TO:

SEWARD COUNTY VISITORS COMMITTEE

616 BRADFORD STREET

SEWARD NE 68434

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL: 402-643-4189