

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX USE GUIDELINES UNDER TEXAS STATE LAW AND FUNDING APPLICATION FORM

State Law: By law of the State of Texas, the City of Gonzales collects a Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) from hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts and inns. Under state law, the revenue from the HOT may be used only to directly promote tourism and the hotel and convention hotel industry. **Chapter 351 of the Tax Code states that the use of HOT funds is limited to:**

- a. **Convention Centers and Visitor Information Centers:** the acquisition of sites for and the construction, improvement, enlarging, equipping, repairing operation and maintenance of convention facilities or visitor information centers, or both;
- b. **Registration of Convention Delegates:** the furnishing of facilities, personnel, and materials for the registration of convention delegates or registrants;
- c. **Advertising, Solicitations and Promotions that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry:** advertising and conducting solicitations and promotional programs to attract tourists and convention delegates or registrants to the municipality or its vicinity;
- d. **Promotions of the Arts that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry:** the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts that can be shown to have some direct impact on tourism and the hotel/convention industry. The impact may be that the art facility or event can show hotel nights that are booked due to their events or that guests at hotels attend the arts event. Eligible forms of art include instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, motion picture, radio, television, tape and sound recording, and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms.
- e. **Historical Restoration and Preservation Activities that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry:** historical restoration and preservation projects or activities or advertising and conducting solicitation and promotional programs to encourage tourists and convention delegates to visit preserved historic sites or museums.
- f. **Sporting Event Expenses that Substantially Increase Economic Activity at Hotels:** Expenses including promotional expenses directly related to a sporting event in which the majority of participants are tourists who substantially increase economic activity at hotels and motels within the city or its vicinity.
- g. **Funding transportation systems for transporting tourists from hotels to and near the city to any of the following destinations:**
 - 1. the commercial center of the city;
 - 2. a convention center in the city;
 - 3. other hotels in or near the city; or
 - 4. tourist attractions in or near the city.The law specifically prohibits the use of the local hotel tax to cover the costs for general city transit costs to transport the general public.
- h. **Signage directing tourists to sights and attractions that are visited frequently by hotel guests in the municipality.**

Mission Statement of Gonzales Convention and Visitors Bureau: The Gonzales CVB seeks to increase hotel/motel occupancy by promoting the City of Gonzales, all of its tourism assets and supporting local events.

City Policy: To provide a unified understanding of the funding criteria between the applicant, GCVB, and City Council, the following guidelines will apply:

- a. Preference will be given to those requests which will be able to increase hotel occupancy.
- b. The City of Gonzales accepts applications from groups and businesses whose program fits into one or more of the above categories.
- c. The intent of the program is to provide funding for an event to help advertise and promote events increasing hotel occupancy.
- d. Continued funding in subsequent years of an event or tourism asset may be considered but should be in an amount commensurate with the anticipated return to the city in the form of HOT funds.
- e. Continued funding for annual events which have not demonstrated a progression of financial stability or a significant contribution to hotel occupancy may not be given preference.
- f. All requests for funds should be submitted in writing accompanied by the official application two weeks prior to the GCVB Meeting which is held on the second Thursday of the month.
- g. The application will be reviewed by the Gonzales GCVB Advisory Board at the earliest possible regularly scheduled meeting.
- h. The applicant may be asked to be present at the meeting to answer any questions regarding the application.
- i. Applicants will be notified one week prior to the meeting of the time and place for the review.
- j. GCVB Board will have discretion with approving requests up to \$5000.
- k. City Council will have final approval for any application requesting over \$5,000.00 on which GCVB will make a recommendation to the City Council. The applicant will be notified when City Council will address your request. Attendance is encouraged.

Eligibility and Priority for Hotel Tax Funds: Priority will be given to those events and entities based on their ability to generate overnight visitors to Gonzales. If an event will not generate any meaningful hotel night activity, it is not eligible for receipt of hotel occupancy tax funds. Events can prove 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) **current information on the size of a room block that has been reserved at area hotels to accommodate anticipated overnight guests attending the event requesting hotel tax funds;**
- c) **historical information on the number of guests at hotel or other lodging facilities that attended the funded event; and/or**
- d) **examples of marketing of the programs and activities that are likely to generate encourage overnight visitors to local lodging properties.**

Use of Local Vendors: The GCVB encourages all event organizers to patronize Gonzales businesses for food, supplies, materials, printing, etc. when feasibly possible as this increases sales tax and overall economic well being of the City.

Priority will be given to those applicants who support the local businesses.

Supplemental Information Required with Application: Along with the application, please submit the following:

_____ Proposed Marketing Plan for Funded Event

_____ Schedule of Activities or Events Relating to the Funded Project

Submit to: City of Gonzales
Attention: GCVB
P. O. Box 547
Gonzales, Texas 78629
830-672-2815

For Questions Contact: Clinton Hille
Tourism Director
City of Gonzales
P. O. Box 547
Gonzales, Texas 78629
830-672-2815 Extn 1601

Gonzales Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Application for HOT Tax Funding

Date: _____

Organization Information

Name of Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Contact Name: _____ Contact Phone Number: _____

Web Site Address for Event or Sponsoring Entity _____

Non-Profit or For-Profit status: _____ Tax ID #: _____

Entity's Creation Date: _____

Purpose of your organization: _____

Event Information

Name of Event or Project: _____

Date of Event or Project: _____

Primary Location of Event or Project: _____

Amount Requested: \$_____

How will the funds be used: _____

Primary Purpose of Funded Activity/Facility:

Percentage of Hotel Tax Support of Related Costs

_____ Percentage of Total **Event Costs** Covered by Hotel Occupancy Tax

_____ Percentage of Total **Facility Costs** Covered by Hotel Occupancy Tax for the Funded Event

_____ Percentage of **Staff Costs** Covered by Hotel Occupancy Tax for the Funded Event

If staff costs are covered, estimate percentage of time staff spends annually on the funded event(s) compared to other activities _____%

Which Category or Categories Apply to Funding Request, and Amount Requested Under Each Category:

- ☐ **a) Convention Center or Visitor Information Center:** construction, improvement, equipping, repairing, operation, and maintenance of convention center facilities or visitor information centers, or both. Amount requested under this category: \$ _____
- ☐ **b) Registration of Convention Delegates:** furnishing of facilities, personnel, and materials for the registration of convention delegates or registrants. Amount requested under this category: \$ _____
- ☐ **c) Advertising, Solicitations, Promotional programs to attract tourists and convention delegates** or registrants to the municipality or its vicinity. Amount requested under this category: \$ _____
- ☐ **d) Promotion of the Arts that Directly Enhance Tourism and the Hotel & Convention Industry:** the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts that can be shown to have some direct impact on tourism and the hotel/convention industry. The impact may be that the art facility or event can show hotel nights that are booked due to their events or that guests at hotels attend the arts event. Eligible forms of art include instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture photography, graphic and craft arts, motion picture, radio, television, tape and sound recording,

and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms : \$ _____

- ☐ **e) Historical restoration and preservation projects or activities or advertising and conducting solicitation and promotional programs to encourage tourists and convention delegates to visit preserved historic sites or museums.** Amount requested under this category: \$ _____

- ☐ **f) Expenses including promotional expenses, directly related to a sporting event in which the majority of participants are tourists. The event must substantially increase economic activity at hotels within the city or its vicinity.** Amount requested under this category: \$ _____

How many individuals are expected to participate in the sporting related event? _____

How many of the participants at the sporting related event are expected to be from another city or county? _____

Quantify how the sporting related event will substantially increase economic activity at hotels within the city or its vicinity?

- ☐ **g) Funding transportation systems for transporting tourists from hotels to and near the city to any of the following destinations: 1) the commercial center of the city; 2) a convention center in the city; 3) other hotels in or near the city; and 4) tourist attractions in or near the city.** Amount requested under this category: \$ _____

What sites or attractions will tourists be taken to by this transportation? _____

Will members of the general public (non-tourists) be riding on this transportation? _____

What percentage of the ridership will be local citizens? _____

- ☐ **h) Signage directing tourists to sights and attractions that are visited frequently by hotel guests in the municipality.** Amount requested under this category: \$ _____

What tourist attractions will be the subject of the signs?

Questions for All Funding Request Categories:

1. How many years have you held this Event or Project: _____
2. Expected Attendance: _____
3. How many people attending the Event or Project will use _____ Gonzales hotels?

Number of the people many nights will they stay: _____

4. Do you reserve a room block for this event at an area hotel and if so, for how many rooms and at which hotels: _____

5. List other years (over the last three years) that you have hosted your Event or Project with amount of assistance given from HOT and the number of hotel rooms used:

Month/Year Held

Assistance Amount

Number of Hotel Rooms Used

6. How will you measure the impact of your event on area hotel activity (e.g.; room block usage information, survey of hoteliers, etc.)? _____

7. Please list other organization, government entities, and grants that have offered financial support to your project: _____

8. Will the event charge admission? Do you anticipate a net profit from the event? If there is a net profit, what is the anticipated amount and how will it be used?

9. Please list all promotion efforts your organization is coordinating and the amount financially committed to each media outlet:

Newspaper: \$ _____
Radio: \$ _____
TV: \$ _____
Other Paid Advertising: \$ _____

Number of Press Releases to Media _____
Number Direct Mailings to out-of-town recipients _____

Other Promotions _____

10. Will you include a link to the CVB or other source on your promotional handouts and in your website for booking hotel nights during this event? _____

11. Will you negotiate a special rate or hotel/event package to attract overnight stays?

12. What new marketing initiatives will you utilize to promote hotel and convention activity for this event?

13. What geographic areas does your advertising and promotion reach: _____

14. How many individuals will your proposed marketing reach who are located in another city or county? _____

15. If the funding requested is related to a permanent facility (e.g. museum, visitor center):

Expected Attendance Monthly/Annually: _____

Percentage of those in attendance that are staying at area hotels/lodging facilities: _____%

Please Submit no later than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting you wish the request to be considered to:

Clinton Hille
Tourism Director
820 Saint Joseph
PO Box 547
Gonzales, Texas 78629
(830) 672-2815 Extension 1601