



**Ridgeland Event Sponsorship Program**  
**Fiscal Year 2024**  
**October 1, 2023- September 30, 2024**

Ridgeland Tourism Commission (RTC) allocates funds from its annual budget for an Events Sponsorship Program for groups and organizations that coordinate events in the city of Ridgeland with a demonstrated history and/or significant potential for attracting visitors to Ridgeland and encouraging the usage of Ridgeland hotel rooms and local restaurants.

**Goal of Program**

The goal of this program is to help fund the promotion of attractions, special events and festivals that attract visitors to Ridgeland to stay overnight in our hotels.

**Who is eligible to apply for funding?**

Eligible recipients include festivals, performances, sporting events/tournaments or exhibits that occur in Ridgeland which are designed to attract a diverse group of participants from outside Ridgeland and the state of Mississippi. The event must be held between the dates of October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024 and funding must be used during that time.

Recipients of the Event Sponsorship Program funding are **not eligible** for either of the Ridgeland Room Night Rebate Programs (Room Block and Non-Room Block).

**General Guidelines**

- Applications for FY24 must be postmarked by July 1, 2023 or delivered that day by 3:00 p.m. Applicants will be notified by August 17, 2023 of having been awarded sponsorship funds.
- Funding may be used for advertising, promotion, and production expenses. The Ridgeland Tourism Commission prohibits the use of our sponsorship funding for facilities and administrative costs. While the program is not limited to non-profits, no money will be granted for the direct profit of the applicant organization.
- Funding will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis with available funds for the year.
- Funding will be distributed at 50% upon approval from the Ridgeland Tourism Commission Event Committee and the remaining 50% funding will be distributed after submission of the event follow up report to Ridgeland Tourism Commission.
- All events funded by the Ridgeland Tourism Commission must include the RTC logo, provided by RTC, in an appropriate size in relation to event sponsor guidelines. The RTC logo should be placed on all promotional materials prior to event, during event and post event communication. Failure to comply with this requirement will disqualify the event organization from future funding assistance for three years.
- In case of cancellation of event for any reason other than weather-related cancellations, funds will be returned to Ridgeland Tourism Commission within 30 days.
- An itemized budget for the proposed event for which the funds are requested is required as part of the Sponsorship Application.

- A final report post event is required to account for the funds spent and a report on the event's outcome. The final report should be received from the grantees within 30 days of the conclusion of the event. The report needs to include attendance figures, estimated attendees from outside Ridgeland, and an overall evaluation of the event.
- Emphasis will be given to sponsorship applications that maximize the number of visitors who come to Ridgeland, especially if overnight accommodation is needed.
- The Ridgeland Tourism Commission seeks to represent the broadest possible constituency, including people from a range of backgrounds and points of view. RTC does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or status as a veteran. Ridgeland Tourism Commission provides funding to sovereign participating organization to help accomplish its mission. RTC expects all participating organizations to comply with applicable nondiscrimination laws while upholding an image of hospitality and visitor engagement.
- Applicants are encouraged to ensure they understand the guidelines of the sponsorship, specifically the requirements for the event sponsorship final report. Should the recipient have any questions, they are encouraged to meet with Ridgeland Tourism Commission no later than two weeks prior to submitting the application.

### **Evaluation**

This program provides funds for qualified applicants submitted by eligible organizations. All applications recommended for funding are subject to final approval by the Ridgeland Tourism Commission Event Committee.

If approved, the recipient will receive an acceptance letter from the RTC Sales & Event Partnerships department, stating the approved funding and the expected date of funds. In turn, the recipient must respond to the Ridgeland Tourism Commission within 30 days of receiving acceptance letter/email. If the event is ticketed, RTC asks that at least four tickets be provided to attend the event.

The Ridgeland Tourism Commission Event Committee's evaluation of proposals is confidential and as such, RTC is unable to respond to any questions and/or requests for information as to why an organization/event was not funded.

**Selection Criteria and Scoring** (100% maximum available) The Ridgeland Tourism Commission Event Committee will consider applications according to the following criteria:

- Commitment to Tourism in Ridgeland (25%) - Eligible recipients are those that target visitors from outside Ridgeland for the specific purpose of generating hotel room nights and sales among food and beverage businesses in Ridgeland.
- Regional Promotion (25%) – A detailed marketing plan designed to increase awareness of the event in regional media. The event's branding and promotion generates year-round value to Ridgeland and encourages visitors to visit outside the event dates as well. Packaging of hotels, dining, shopping, and attractions will also be evaluated.
- Soundness of Proposed Event (20%) – Clearly identified objectives, assigned responsibilities and accountability with a realistic timetable for implementation and additional funding sources.
- Stability and Management Capacity (15%) – A proven record of demonstrated capacity to develop resources, plan, organize and implement a planned event.
- Quality and ROI (15%) – Event has been planned with community partners to maximize the return on investment for a significant economic impact to Ridgeland with socio-economic diversity.

*\*\*Please note that this is a competitive sponsorship program. It is imperative that the above criteria be met to be considered for funding.*

**Ridgeland Event Sponsorship Program Application**

Name of Event:		Date of Application:	
Event Location: <i>(Address Required &amp; Be Specific)</i>			
Date(s) of Event:		Year Event Began:	
Name of Organization:			
Address:		City, State, Zip:	
Contact Name:		Title:	
Email:		Phone:	
Amount Requested:		Projected Total Expenses:	
Is Organization for profit or non-profit?		Projected Total Revenue:	
Estimated Attendance:		Source of Operating Funds:	
Target Audience:		Where are attendees from?	

Organization Website:	
Facebook:	
Twitter:	
Instagram:	
Other:	
Please describe the media schedule, if applicable, for the event or attach supporting document:	

**Event Summary**

<p>Please provide a comprehensive description of the event. Include purpose of the event, intended results of event, duration of event.</p>	
<p>Describe the timeline of events and activities (itinerary) for the requested funding event.</p>	
<p>What would you like the impact of this event to be?</p>	
<p>What will the funding be used for at the event?</p>	
<p>Has your event received funding from Ridgeland Tourism Commission in years past?</p> <p>If so, what years and amounts received? Please describe what has changed regarding the event from last year to this year?</p>	

<p>Anticipated number of hotel room nights generated.</p> <p>What hotels will be utilized for the event? If guests will be using other accommodations, please list those along with any steps</p>	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

taken in communicating with overnight venues for room accommodations.	
Are the attendees provided with a feedback survey for the event and what type of information is gathered (Provide sample survey if available that will be used.)	

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Distribution of Funds and Final Report**

Approved funds will be distributed to organizations prior to their event with a 30-day requirement to file a final report after the event.

The final report should include:

- Final itinerary and budget for event.
- Attendance figures, feedback survey, and hotel room nights tracked.
- Samples of all marketing materials to include ad tear sheets, website promotions, printed materials, video promotions or other collateral materials such as media schedule, if applicable.
- Methods of tracking success.
- Final report should be mailed to:  
Ridgeland Tourism Commission  
Attn: Event Sponsorship Program  
1000 Highland Colony Parkway, Suite 6006  
Ridgeland, MS 39157
- Failure to submit final report will disqualify the organization from future funding consideration for three years.

**Acceptance of Sponsorship**

Recipients must accept sponsorship funds by submitting the following:

- Letter of acceptance.
- Invoice for sponsorship.
- W-9 for organization.
- RTC will receive a sponsorship information packet appropriate to the amount of support.