



## MAKE IT HAPPEN Event Marketing Funds

### **Goal of Marketing Program:**

The goal of this program is to help fund the promotion of special events and festivals that attract visitors to Ruston and Lincoln Parish to stay overnight in our hotels. It may be used for marketing purposes only.

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

Any organization that is attempting to produce cultural programs, festivals or special events in Lincoln Parish. The event must be held between the dates of January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018.

### **How to request funds?**

Applications for funding should be sent in with completed funding form to

Experience Ruston CVB  
Make it Happen Funds Request  
P.O. Box 1383  
Ruston, LA 71273

### **Selection Criteria:**

Experience Ruston will consider applications according to the following criteria:

- Commitment to tourism in Ruston and Lincoln Parish – evidence that the project serves to attract out-of-town guests, generating restaurant and hotel traffic; marketed to the fullest extent possible in an effective and efficient manner; demonstrates a willingness to work with the tourism industry; commitment to develop other funding sources
- Regional promotion – a well thought out, detailed marketing plan that is designed to increase awareness of the event in regional media; packaging of hotels, attractions and shopping will also be evaluated
- Soundness of proposed project – clearly identified objectives, assigned responsibilities and accountability with a realistic timetable for implementation and additional funding sources
- Stability and management capacity – a proven record or demonstrated capability to develop resources, plan, organize and implement a planned project
- Quality and uniqueness of proposed project – extent to which the activity provides a program for tourists which is of significant merit and without such assistance, would not take place in Ruston
- Life Span of the event – the age of the event, opportunity for growth, and a multi-year commitment

### **What can funds be used for?**

- Bidding, including promotion, to bring a convention or tourism business to the area
- Advertising and promotion outside of 75-mile radius to expand the attendance at a new or existing tourism event
- Co-op advertising directed to out of state visitors
- Special projects deemed to be of a community wide tourism interest
- Brochure and/or website development assistance to a festival, attraction or other tourism entity

The money may not be used for event production expenses such as fencing, staging, entertainment, etc.

### **Matching Funds Requirement**

Organizations are required to pledge a 30% match of marketing dollars for the request for funding to be considered. The money funded by the CVB may not be more than 70% of the total marketing budget for the event.

Example: If the total marketing budget for your event is \$5,000, you can request 70% of that budget or \$3,500 from the CVB with a match of \$1,500 from your organization to complete the budget.

## **Cap on Funding**

The total amount of funding by the Experience Ruston CVB may be no more than \$10,000 per event.

## **Requirements of Matching Funds**

1. If you are awarded a Make it Happen Funds by the Experience Ruston CVB to help promote your event, you will be required to meet with staff of the CVB for a work session. The work session should be held as soon after award of the grant as possible and will include information on the follow-up report, as well as assistance in the production of the marketing plan. It is your responsibility to schedule this work session. If the work session is not completed in advance of the event, the funding will be withheld.
2. The following information should be included in all promotional materials:
  - All funded projects must display the Experience Ruston logo provided by Experience Ruston in an appropriate size as in relation to event sponsor guidelines
  - All verbal and visual marketing materials for any project must include experienceruston.com and the Experience Ruston Logo. This includes all fliers, banners, invitations, websites, email, t-shirts, and media advertisements and announcements
  - Experience Ruston CVB will receive a sponsorship package appropriate to the amount of support
3. Failure to comply with these requirements will disqualify the event organization from future funding assistance

## **Distribution of Funds and Final Report**

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

A final report should include:

- Attendance figures
- A copy of the executed marketing plan clearly stating where the granted money was spent
- Samples of all marketing materials to include ad tearsheets, website promotions, printed materials, video promotions or other collateral materials.

The final report should be submitted to:

Experience Ruston CVB  
Attn: Travis Napper, President  
P.O. Box, 1383  
Ruston, LA 71273.

Failure to comply will disqualify event organization from future funding consideration.

## **Event Cancellation**

In case of cancellation of event for any reason other than weather-related cancellations, funds will be returned to the Experience Ruston CVB immediately.

## **Additional Information**

Funds may be withdrawn for events which are substantially reduced, inaccurately portrayed in the application or which do not reasonably occur within the proposed dates.

Funding is awarded on a competitive basis and is not guaranteed. Applicants should be aware that they may not receive the full amount of funds requested.

Previous funding allocations do not set precedent for future years. All applicants will be subject to a fresh review each year.