



Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area Request for 2015 Funding General Instructions

Purpose and Scope of Grants Program

The mission of the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area is to promote understanding of and to conserve and enhance the heritage resources of the six counties of the Mississippi Gulf Coast by telling the area's nationally significant story to residents and visitors through activities and partnerships that celebrate the area's unique history, people, traditions, and landscapes.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area is a partnership of communities, businesses, governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and individuals who value the region's rich cultural and environmental diversity, history, natural beauty, and traditions. This partnership presents the Mississippi Gulf Coast's distinctive story in terms of its national significance. Visitors experience the Heritage Area through a set of integrated themes that forefronts the Coast's unique qualities and emphasizes the important role the region has played in the history of the United States.

The Heritage Area enhances conserves, promotes, and provides connectivity among the Mississippi Gulf Coast's many heritage resources. These resources serve as a source of pride and identity for residents who are stakeholders in this conservation effort. These resources provide heritage tourists with authentic experiences reflective of the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. The residents benefit from increased awareness and appreciation of their environment, history, culture, traditions, and lifestyles. The economic effects of heritage tourism benefit the entire region, and support the long-term enhancement and conservation of those qualities that make the Mississippi Gulf Coast unique.

Funds for the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area's matching grants program are provided by the federal government through the National Park Service.

What Types of Applicants Are Eligible to Apply

To help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area Management Plan is offering matching grants to provide and leverage funding for innovative projects across the region that preserve, interpret, and develop heritage resources within these thematic areas and that expand economic opportunity.

The following six (6) counties of the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area region are eligible to apply for a grant and are as followed:

- Pearl River
- Stone
- George
- Hancock
- Harrison
- Jackson

The following types of organizations serving in the six (6) county Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area region are eligible to apply for a grant:

- Units of state and local government
- Federally-recognized Indian tribes
- Academic institutions
- Non-profit Organizations with a 501©3 or 501©6 tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area does not provide grants to individuals.

Grant Amounts

The maximum grant award is \$50,000

The minimum grant award is \$500-5,000

Grant Categories

a. Strengthen the sense of heritage identity

Strategies:

- Develop an Interpretative Plan
 - Themes: Waterways, multi-ethnic nature, natural areas, history and arts.
 - Documented Resources: Living Heritage, Archaeological and Historical Heritage
- Disseminate Information
 - Printed Materials
 - Website
 - Educational Programs and Partnerships

b. Conserve the area's heritage resources

Strategies:

- Educate residents and visitors about the heritage resources identified in the interpretive plan.
- Enhance existing partnerships to conserve heritage resources.

c. Develop, promote and market the heritage area

Strategies:

- Develop informational materials, including regional and local maps and guides, a system of interpretive signs and directional signs, and a logo/branding policy and procedures.
- Develop themed tours that focus on cultural, historical, natural and scenic resources.
- Establish visitor corridors, including travel corridors, specialized heritage trails, hiking, biking, and water trails. Investigate the possibility of scenic byways designations, as appropriate.
- Establish heritage clusters, linkages between these clusters and funding sources for heritage enterprises.
- Establish interpretive and information centers for the heritage area.
- Promote and market the heritage area, themed tours, and heritage clusters.

Evaluation Criteria

Grant applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Public benefit:** This includes the project's economic impact as well as social impacts, community impacts, and quality-of-life impacts. Also included is the project's potential to promote public understanding and appreciation of the heritage resource(s).
- **Significance of the heritage resource(s)** to be preserved, interpreted, developed, or marketed.
- **Geographic scope of project.** Greater consideration will be given to projects that are regional or multi-county in nature.
- **Partnerships.** Greater consideration will be given to projects that involve active partnerships between organizations.
- **Leveraging.** Greater consideration will be given to projects with matches that exceed the grant request and/or which consist primarily of cash contributions.
- **Quality of plans for implementing and evaluating the project.**

- **Capability.** Evidence of sufficient management and financial ability to complete the project.
- **Local support.** Evidence that the project has support within the local or regional community.
- **Consultation.** Evidence that folklorists or historians have been consulted if the project interprets historical or cultural facts.
- **Sustainability.** For projects that are intended to continue beyond the life of the grant, greater consideration will be given to those that show a strong potential for sustainability.
- **Use of local contractors.** Applicants are encouraged to use contractors from the region wherever possible.
- **Environmentally responsible use of resources.** Applicants are encouraged to incorporate environmentally friendly principles, practices, and messages in the design and implementation of their projects wherever possible.

Annual Funding Timeline

- Call for proposals: **Friday, July 10, 2015**
- Online proposals guidance will be posted on MGCNHA Website: **Month of July and through August 10, 2015**
- Grant Q&A Conference call: **Friday, July 24, 2015**
- Deadline for receiving proposals: **Monday, August 10, 2015**
- Advisory committee meeting to review proposals and develop prioritized list of proposals for commission consideration: **Monday, August 31, 2015**
- Approval of Project: **Tuesday, September 8, 2015**
- Applicants notified of funding decisions: **Tuesday, September 15, 2015**
- Project Start Date: **Thursday, October 1, 2015**

Selection Criteria and Scoring of Applications

The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area staff will review all submitted applications and provide comments to the Grants Advisory Committee. Incomplete applications will not be consider for funding.

Criteria will be developed by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Heritage Area staff and agreed upon by the Advisory Committee members prior to review of all applications.

The Grants Advisory Committee will be score all applications, based on objective criteria linked to Management Plan and Implementation Plan priorities for grant and make funding

recommendations to the Mississippi Gulf Coast Heritage Director and the MDMR Executive Director.

The Advisory Committee will determine any weighting of evaluation criteria. Grant application may be asked to provide clarification and additional information during review process. The 2015 grant cycle is expected to be competitive.

All applications must fall in to at least one of four focus categories. Additional scoring points will be given for projects that address more than one category.

All applications must serve at least one of the six (6) coastal counties of Mississippi. Additional scoring points will be given for projects that directly impact more than one county.

All applications must indicate at least 3:1 ratio match from non-federal sources. The match can include in-kind funding, including accounting for volunteer time based on the published national value for an average volunteer hour.

Grant awards will provide for equitable distribution of available funds to grants related to all counties that apply for funds in each year.

Grantee Reporting Requirements

Final report on annual use of funds, due to Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area to staff no later than: **Friday, September 30, 2016**

Mid-point report due either (six months before final report due date) or half way through projects that will take less than a year to complete.

Photographic evidence of the finished project and progress

Accurate acknowledgement on plaques, and/or signage.

Matching Contributions

To be eligible for a grant, the applicant must provide at least a 3:1 ratio match for the proposed project. All of the match must come from non-federal sources. The match may consist of real dollars or in-kind (non-cash) contributions of labor, services, materials, equipment, supplies, and/or travel expenses that are necessary and reasonable for the accomplishment of project objectives. Purchases of real property may not be counted as a match. Overhead and general administrative costs are not acceptable matches. Donated professional services and volunteer labor may be counted as matches, but volunteer labor must not exceed 20% of the total match. Real dollar matches are preferred over in-kind contributions. Matching contributions may begin to be made before the date of the grant award, but there must be a significant overlap between the time period of the matching contributions and the time period of the grant award.

All sources of matching contributions must be documented at the time of application. This must include a letter signed by the applicant organization's financial officer or authorized representative which documents the amount of matching funds being contributed to the project budget. Matching contributions that have been secured at the time of application are preferred. If

the match is pending (e.g., from another grant application), the application should note the date the match is expected to be confirmed.

Any project funded by a Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area grant will be required to provide verifiable documentation that matching funds have been spent and that matching in-kind contributions have been received.

Reimbursement

Grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis that is, grant funds are provided only after project costs are incurred and paid for by the grant recipient. To request a reimbursement, the grantee must submit a progress report and documentation of paid expenses and matches including receipts, paid invoices, and copies of checks. Documentation of in-kind contributions must be itemized to show the amount and value of contributed labor, services and materials.

If there is a compelling need for an advance funds to start the project, the applicant may request a partial advance payment in the grant application. The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis. Partial advance payments may not exceed 50% of the total grant award. Advance payments that are approved will be made upon signing of the grant agreement.

Grant Application Submittal

1. Please submit the following on 8 ½ by 11 inch paper with your application.
2. A completed Project Budget Form. You may provide a line-by-line narrative on a separate page for cost that may require further detail or explanation.
3. A letter that documents the amount and type of matching contributions for the project. The letter should be signed by organization's financial officer or authorized representative. Please include the letter with your application. If your match is pending (e.g., from another grant application), please indicate this and let us know when you expect the match to be confirmed.
4. Documentation of the qualifications of the project manager and any other key professional project personnel, including contractors (if known at the time of application) and consulting historians or folklorists. Resumes, lists of relevant project work, or comparable documentation will suffice. Submitting a sample of work may be advisable for documentary, photography, and video projects.
5. A copy of your organization's annual budget (nonprofit organizations only)
6. Letters providing evidence of local support for the project. Letters of support must come from at least three of the following types of entities: art councils or guilds, chambers of commerce, tourism authorities, historic preservation organizations, land conservancies, community colleges/colleges/universities/schools, and state government agencies, regional councils of governments, or local governments.

7. These letters of support may be included with the application (preferred) or mailed separately (must be posted marked by the application deadline). Please ensure that the letters reference your project with the Project Title you choose for the grant application. While there is no limit to the number of letters of support you may submit, we recommend no more than four.
8. A copy of the letter from the Internal Revenue Service confirming your organization's tax exempt status if you are claiming to be tax exempt,

Grantee Responsibilities-Federal Regulations

Grant awards from the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area are made with federal funds received from the National Park Service. Because the grant dollars are federal in origin, grant recipients must comply with applicable federal regulations regarding the use and administration of federal funds. These regulations set standards for such administrative activities as procurement and record retention and govern the use of copyrighted work.

Grantees must comply with US Department of Interior regulations set forth in the "Common Rule" 43 CFR Part 12: Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs, Subparts C, D, E, and F. Pertinent sections are available for download on the following website: <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov> (Title 43 –Public Lands: Interior, Part 12)

For non-profit organizations, the terms of the following Office of Management and Budget Circulars apply for any project activity funded by the grant:

- OMB Circular A-110: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations.
- OMB Circular A-122: Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations

For educational institutions, the terms of the following Office of Management and Budget Circulars apply for any project activity funded by the grant:

- OMB Circular A-110: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations
- OMB Circular A-21: Cost Principles for Educational Institutions

For state, local, and Indian tribal governments, the terms of the following Office of Management and Budget Circulars apply for any project activity funded by the grant:

- OMB Circular A-102: Grants and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments
- OMB Circular A-87: Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Government

These circulars can be downloaded from the White House website:
www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars

Grantees must also:

- Comply with all applicable federal laws including but not limited to Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act, Secretary of Interior Standards, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. More information can be found on the following webpages:

<http://www.achp.gov/106summary.html>

<http://www.nps.gov/nagpra/>

http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/fhpl_ntlenvirnpolcy.pdf

<http://www.ada.gov/>

- Have an audit performed that meets the requirements of OMB Circular A-133 whenever \$500,000 or more in federal funds is expended (cumulatively) during a fiscal year and provide a copy of the audit to the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area.
- Allow inspection of program records and project by the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area and authorized federal agencies during the project and for up to three years following project completion.

Additional Federal Regulations

Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Provides that: No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Section 601).

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: Provides that: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any programs or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975: Provides that: No otherwise qualified person in the United States shall, on the grounds of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Provides that: No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, or denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Fair Labor Standards Act: All personnel employed on projects or productions which are financed in whole or in part through federal financial assistance will be paid not less than the minimum compensation as determined by the Secretary of Labor in Parts 3, 5, 505 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. No part of any project shall be performed or engaged in underworking conditions that are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to the health and safety of the employees engaged in the project.

The Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988: Requires that employees of the grantee not engage in unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances in the grantee's workplace or work site.

Information and Assistance

If you have questions about the grants program, please contact:

**Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Office of Coastal Restoration and Resiliency
Rhonda Price
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, MS 39530
Rhonda.price@dmr.ms.gov
(228) 523-4150**