Please read these directions in their entirety and complete the application as thoroughly as possible.

OVERVIEW:

The purpose of the Dawes County Grant Program is to provide funding that improves/creates and promotes visitor attractions to Dawes County. The funds are available on a grant basis and provided from lodging tax revenue funds. Lodging tax funds are collected based on Nebraska Visitors Development Act Statute 81-3701 through 81-3730. These funds are for promotion, capital improvements to attractions or recreational facilities to attract visitors to and within Dawes County that are owned by the public or any nonprofit organization.

Grant funding is available in two different categories:

1. **Improvement Fund**: Used for expanding and improving facilities at any existing visitor attraction, acquiring or expanding exhibits at existing visitor attractions, constructing, expanding, or improving visitor attractions. Improvement grant requests are available in two categories: Minor Grants under $5,000 and Major Grants of $5,000 and over.

2. **Promotion Fund**: Used generally to promote, encourage, and attract visitors to Dawes County and use the travel and tourism facilities within the county.

This is a reimbursement grant program. Funds will be available after event completion or project is substantially completed (as determined by the DCTB). Copies of paid receipts, advertisings, mailings and completed final project report must be submitted to Discover Northwest, P.O. Box 746, Chadron, NE 69337, hand delivered to 706 W. 3rd St., Chadron, NE 69337, or emailed to director@discovernwnebraska.com.

Grants are valid for one year from date of approval. An extension may be requested and may be approved on a case-by-case basis, or multi-year agreements may be reached.

CRITERIA FOR ASSISTANCE:

Both Grant Types

1. Grants are available only to public, non-profit or not-for-profit organizations; see each category of grant for specifics. Proof of non-profit status may be requested.
    - **Exception:** One category of Promotion Grants is not limited to public or non-profit organizations. See Promotion Grant Guidelines.
2. The grant candidate is responsible for obtaining any required local and state licenses and permits.
3. The **complete project cost and a budget worksheet** must be included in the grant

application along with contractor bids, if necessary, as determined by the Travel Board.

4. Grants are discretionary, based on available funds, anticipated uses, appropriateness, and anticipated effectiveness of proposed use. Higher consideration may be given to new events or projects over repeat projects.
5. If lodging information is sent out, all lodging facilities in Dawes County must be listed. A complete listing of lodging facilities is available at the Chadron Visitors Center or www.discovernwnebraska.com/lodging-3.
6. Final project report must be submitted to the Northwest Nebraska Tourism Director no later than 30 days after the event or completion of the project. The report form must be thoroughly complete and should outline if project objectives were met. If objectives were not met, explain the circumstances. The report will also include copies of all paid receipts. No money will be released until the final report or the annual progress report is presented and approved. No money will be released beyond those expenses documented by **paid receipts**.
7. All grants must recognize the Dawes County Travel Board.
8. Any organization with a grant application before the Dawes County Travel Board is required to have a representative attend the grant meeting, either in person or via electronic means provided by the Travel Board.

ALL PROMOTION GRANTS

1. Starting July 1, 2026, promotion grants will only be considered quarterly at the January, April, July and October meetings. Applications are due the Wednesday prior to the travel board meeting. In general, applicants should follow the schedule below for submitting applications, though early applications can be made.
    - January Meeting – For events occurring in April, May and June (due at the end of December)
    - April Meeting – For events occurring in July, August, and September (due at the end of August)
    - July Meeting – For events occurring in October, November and December (due at the end of June)
    - October Meeting – For events occurring in January, February and March (due at the end of September)
2. The Dawes County Travel Board will recommend disapproval of all late applications.
3. All print material, radio advertising, websites, posters, and other forms of advertisements must use the credit line, “Produced in part by a grant from the Dawes County Travel Board.” Failure to comply with this guideline will result in partial or complete withdrawal of funding. It is strongly encouraged that design concepts for printed materials or posters be included with application.
4. Promotion grants should focus on bringing people into the Dawes County area for multiple days. Higher consideration will be given to grants that use innovative outreach and advertising to accomplish that goal. **ALL** grant dollars for advertising campaigns are subject to the following

requirement: no more than 50% of the grant for advertising can be spent with local media outlets (Crawford Clipper, Panhandle Post, Chadrad) or on social media targeting Dawes County.

PROMOTION GRANT CONSIDERATIONS (EVENT ADVERTISING) The Dawes County Travel Board will consider the following items when reviewing applications for promotion funding to advertise events. Complete your application with these things in mind:

- Length of event
- Total cost of the event: How much is the organization investing in the entire project?
- Reach of the event: How far will visitors come from to attend? Is this a local, community event? A county-wide draw? A regional event bringing in visitors from 100+ miles? How will you determine where visitors came from? Zip codes for purchases of tickets, merchandise, license plates documented at the event, sign-in/registrations, etc.
- What is the anticipated attendance? How will you track and report this? Head counts, ticket sales, crowd estimates, etc.
- How many lodging rooms do you estimate being booked in relation to the event? How will you confirm this?
- What is your marketing plan? What are your target market/demographics? How will you reach those individuals/households? What media outlets will you advertise in and what will your total ad buy be with each of those outlets? Are you including niche publications or social media/digital advertising strategies? Are you advertising locally, regionally, statewide, nationally?
- Compliance with the process spelled out by the Dawes County Travel Board.
- Age of the event? How long has the event been in existence?
- Timing of the event? Does your event take place during peak season (May-September) or off-season (October-April)?
- Strategic Plan Alignment: Does the project align with the current Northwest Nebraska strategic plan for tourism? Does it focus on Adventure, Historical or Cultural Tourism? Or is it another type of infrastructure?
- Public, non-profit or not-for-profit status required.

PROMOTION GRANT CONSIDERATIONS (ATTRACTION AD CAMPAIGNS): The Dawes County Travel Board will consider the following items when reviewing applications for promotion funding to establish a cohesive general ad campaign for a specific organization. Complete your application with these things in mind:

- Must be an attraction/venue/organization that provides lodging.
- Ad campaign must be designed to increase lodging nights in Dawes County. How many lodging rooms do you estimate being booked as a result of the campaign? How will you track this?
- Marketing Plan: Grant committee reviews items such as media outlets/placements, reach, demographic, social media/digital components. How long will the campaign run?

How frequently? What are the projected readership, impressions, listenership numbers from the ad campaign?

- Ad Copy/Design: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit ad copy/design elements.
- What is the plan to incorporate self-sustainable long-term advertising into the annual budget?
- Strategic Plan Alignment: Does the project align with the current Northwest Nebraska strategic plan for tourism? Does it focus on Adventure, Historical or Cultural Tourism? Or is it another type of infrastructure?
- Public, non-profit or not-for-profit status required.

PROMOTION GRANT CONSIDERATIONS (MERCHANDISING OR WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT): The Dawes County Travel Board will consider the following items when reviewing applications for promotion funding for merchandising or website development. Complete your application with these things in mind:

- Applications open to all business types serving the tourism industry: public, non-profit, not-for-profit, private.
- Must be an attraction, venue, organization or business that serves the tourism industry in some capacity.
- A limited number of these grants are available and grant requests are capped. Up to 5 grants of up to $1,000 will be approved per fiscal year, based on available funding. Grant applications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis in July, October, January and April.
- Only one grant per entity will be awarded in each subcategory (merchandise & website) during the entity's lifetime. A change in ownership constitutes a new entity.
- Grant funds can be requested in two sub-categories: Merchandise Development or Website Development.
    - **Merchandise Development:** This category encourages businesses and attractions to develop a merchandising strategy to promote the region through the sale of souvenir products, i.e., magnets, shirts, caps, coffee mugs, key chains, stickers.
        - Products must be in good taste and highlight the region in some way, not the individual business or attraction. Example: Products must say Chadron, Crawford, Whitney or Northwest Nebraska. The Northwest Nebraska logo **CANNOT** be used.
        - The entity applying must offer some weekend hours during peak tourism season from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
        - The grant application **MUST** include products and design for the Travel Board's review.
        - The completed grant report **MUST** include photos of the finished product.
    - **Website Development:** This category encourages businesses and attractions to develop an attractive, comprehensive website.
        - The grant funds are only available for website development. Ongoing

maintenance and hosting fees are ineligible for reimbursement.

PROMOTION GRANT CONSIDERATIONS (EVENT INCENTIVES): A limited number of these grants are available to incentivize "NEW" events, and grant requests are capped. Up to 5 grants of up to $2,000 will be approved per fiscal year, based on available funding. A single entity may only receive an incentive grant twice in five years. Grant applications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis in July, October, January and April.

"New" events are defined as those that have occurred in Northwest Nebraska no more than five times, or events that are expanding in such a way as to significantly impact lodging in the area in a new way. Incentive grants are available for the following expenses:

- Audio/visual equipment rentals
- Facility rentals
- Speaker fees
- Referee/officials fees
- Event bid fees
- Lodging for speakers, referees/officials

The Dawes County Travel Board will consider the following items when reviewing applications for promotion funding for event incentive funds to bring new events to the region. Complete your application with these things in mind:

- Length of event
- Total cost of the event: How much is the organization investing in the entire project?
- Reach of the event: How far will visitors come from to attend? Is this a local, community event? A county-wide draw? A regional event bringing in visitors from 100+ miles? How will you determine where visitors came from? Zip codes for purchases of tickets, merchandise, license plates documented at the event, sign-in/registrations, etc.
- What is the anticipated attendance? How will you track and report this? Head counts, ticket sales, crowd estimates, etc.
- How many lodging rooms do you estimate being booked in relation to the event? How will you confirm this?
- What is your marketing plan? What are your target market/demographics? How will you reach those individuals/households? What media outlets will you advertise in and what will your total ad buy be with each of those outlets? Are you including niche publications or social media/digital advertising strategies? Are you advertising locally, regionally, statewide, nationally?
- Compliance with the process spelled out by the Dawes County Travel Board.
- Age of the event? How long has the event been in existence?
- Timing of the event? Does your event take place during peak season (May-September) or off-season (October-April)?
- Strategic Plan Alignment: Does the project align with the current Northwest Nebraska strategic plan for tourism? Does it focus on Adventure, Historical or Cultural Tourism? Or

is it another type of infrastructure?
- Public, non-profit or not-for-profit status required.

ALL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

1. For improvement grants over $5,000, a permanent acknowledgement will be placed somewhere within the facility recognizing the **Dawes County Travel Board** for assisting with the project.
2. Multi-year projects must provide an annual progress report to the Dawes County Travel Board.
3. Improvement grant funding may be used as leverage to apply for larger grants and does qualify as the matching portion.

IMPROVEMENT GRANT CONSIDERATIONS: The Dawes County Travel Board will consider the following items when reviewing applications for improvement funding. Complete your application with these things in mind:

- Description: Are the application materials complete? Does it fit within the scope of the grant? Does the packet provide a complete description of the project?
- Timeline: Is the project shovel-ready? Will this be a multi-year fundraising effort? Will it be a multi-year construction effort?
- Financial Value: What is the return on investment for the county? Will lodging businesses see an increase in use? Will other existing businesses/attractions be impacted in a positive way? What other support does the project have?
- Will the project improve the social and cultural landscape of the county? Will it attract new visitors? New demographics? How many and from how far away will visitors come to view the attraction?
- How do you plan to market the project beyond Dawes County? Will it attract regional, statewide or national media attention? Will niche outlets be interested in the project?
- Strategic Plan Alignment: Does the project align with the current Northwest Nebraska strategic plan for tourism? Does it focus on Adventure, Historical or Cultural Tourism? Or is it another type of infrastructure?
- Plan for DCTB Recognition: Major Improvement grants ($5,000+) require a permanent acknowledgement of funding by the Dawes County Travel Board. What is the plan to accomplish this?

*****See attached chart for application guidelines and deadlines for Promotion & Improvement Grants.**

REVIEW PROCESS:

The Dawes County Travel Board will review all grant applications on a quarterly basis in January, April,

July and October. Meetings are generally held the first Tuesday of each month. Applicants (or a representative of the organization) are encouraged to attend the meeting and will be allotted time for their presentation. Applicants may be asked to provide the committee additional information.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will not be considered for review by Dawes County Travel Board.

Grant candidates must complete the application found at www.discovernwnebraska.com/dawes-county-grants/ and may attach letters of support from entities that will benefit from the event or project. The application form can be filled out and submitted online.

Once approved by the Travel Board, all grant applications must receive final approval from the Dawes County Board of Commissioners, typically at the meeting the week following the Travel Board's meeting.

PAYMENT

Upon receipt and acceptance of the final project report or the annual progress report, the Dawes County Travel Board will request a check from the Dawes County Clerk for the payment of grant funds. This check will be sent by the Clerk directly to the grantee or vendor based on the address on the organization's W-9.

DAWES COUNTY TRAVEL BOARD MISSION STATEMENT

The Dawes County Travel Board promotes Northwest Nebraska and seeks to improve visitor experiences while advising the Board of Commissioners in the administration of proceeds from tax revenue provided by the Nebraska Visitors Development Act.

Revised 2022

Dawes County Travel Board

GRANT FUNDING GUIDELINES

PO Box 746 | Chadron, NE 69337 *Revised 2025

Application forms are available at www.discovernwnebraska.com/dawes-county-grants/

	Suggested Use of Funds	Exclusions	Matching Funds	Application Deadline
Promotion Fund	-Event Advertising -Brochure & Website Creation -Brochure Rack & Display -Reasonable postage to mail promotional materials outside of the county only if such expenses are included in application.	General Operating Expenses (including food, travel, office equipment, dues, website hosting, mileage etc.) -Additional or current personnel salaries, grant admin fees -Used in any manner that would violate the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, NE St. 81-3701 through 81-3724	No percentage of match is required, but applicants are encouraged to have some investment in the marketing expenses.	*7 business days before scheduled meetings in July, October, January and April
Minor Improvement Grant Requests (under $5,000)	-Signage -Expansion of existing facilities -New Construction of Visitor Attractions -Improvement of Existing Attractions -Acquiring exhibits at Visitor Attractions	-General Operating Expenses (including food, travel, office equipment, dues, etc.) -Additional or current personnel salaries -Items not included in the grant request -Used in any manner that would violate the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, NE Stat 81-3701 through 81-3724 (as amended)	The board would like to see some investment for improvement grant.	*7 business days before scheduled meetings in July, October, January and April
Major Improvement Grant Request (5,000 and up)	-Signage -Expansion of existing facilities -New Construction of Visitor Attractions -Improvement of Existing Attractions -Acquiring exhibits at Visitor Attractions	-General Operating Expenses (including food, travel, office equipment, dues, etc.) -Additional or current personnel salaries -Items not included in the grant request -Used in any manner that would violate the Nebraska Visitors Development Act, NE Stat 81-3701 through 81-3724 (as amended)	The board would like to see some investment for improvement grant.	*7 business days before scheduled meetings in July, October, January and April

*DCTB meetings are typically held on the first Tuesday of each month.