



Explore Ridgeland Event Sponsorship Guidelines

Fiscal Year 2027

October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027

About the Ridgeland Event Sponsorship Program

The objectives of the sponsorship program are to:

- Fund the promotion of special events and festivals primarily to increase overnight stays in hotels and secondarily to:
 - Encourage the development of innovative tourism products.
 - Elevate Ridgeland's brand as a premier destination in Mississippi.
 - Promote collaboration within and across sectors of the tourism industry.
 - Reach important travel segments such as arts & culture and sports & outdoors.

Funding Eligibility

Eligible recipients include festivals, performances, sporting events/tournaments or exhibits that occur in Ridgeland which are designed to attract a diverse group of participants. Consideration is granted to events held outside of Ridgeland provided they bring a substantial number of hotel room nights to the city. The event must be held between October 1, 2026, and September 30, 2027. Funding must be used during this time period.

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 Information

- Applications for FY27 must be submitted no later than July 1, 2026, to be considered within the budget allocations of Ridgeland Tourism's fiscal year. This ensures a greater opportunity for your application to be approved. Applications submitted after the July 1st deadline will be considered as funds are available.
- Funding will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis with limited available funds for the year. The program is subject to change without notice.
- Funding may be used for advertising, promotion, and production expenses only. The Ridgeland Tourism Commission prohibits the use of our sponsorship funding for facilities and administrative costs.
- Upon approval by RTC Event Partnerships Committee, funding will be distributed at 50% with invoices from event organization with the remaining 50% funding distributed after submission of all event follow up reporting (see Final Report Requirements) to Ridgeland Tourism Commission. Final reports must be submitted no later than 30 days after the event.
 - Organizations hosting multiple events as part of a series may receive 1 payment in full before for each event, however, funding for subsequent events will be contingent upon the timely submission and review of reports from previous events in the series.

- All events funded must include the Explore Ridgeland logo which can be found on our website at <https://www.explorridgeland.com/media/>. Logo should be placed on all promotional materials prior to the event, during event, and post event communication.
 - Any usage of the Explore Ridgeland logo/branding must be proofed and approved by Explore Ridgeland (advertisements, posters, flyers, brochures, event programs, web pages, video, etc.)
- Event website and/or promotional materials should include a link to Explore Ridgeland's hotels webpage (<https://www.explorridgeland.com/stay/>) or link to reservations landing page created by Ridgeland Tourism Commission, if applicable.
- If the event is ticketed, RTC asks if at least four tickets be provided to attend the event.
- In the event of cancellation of event for any reason other than weather-related cancellations, funds will be returned to Ridgeland Tourism Commission within 30 days.
- 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 the 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.

Decision Criteria

The following will be considered when reviewing applications:

- Overall ROI for the destination and to hotel properties.
- Demonstration of strong revenue sources in addition to this sponsorship.
- Events that occur during the low/off-peak travel season.
- The opportunity to foster NEW demand-generating events and services from concept to actualization with the potential to establish a recurring marquee status for the destination.
- Projected incremental hotel room nights.
- Applicants who can quantify past successes.
- Premier events that elicit prestige and enhance the reputation of Ridgeland as a premier destination.
- Events that align with Ridgeland's key experience pillars: arts/entertainment, culinary, outdoors and sports, sustainability, and wellness.



EVENT SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION

October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027

Applicant Information

Date of Application: _____

Name of Event: _____

Name of Organization/Applicant: _____

Address: _____

Contact Name: _____

Title: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Federal Tax ID #: _____

Target Audience: _____ Estimated Attendance: _____

Organization Website: _____ Facebook: _____

Instagram: _____ TikTok: _____

Amount of Sponsorship Request:

\$ _____

Total Event Budgeted Expenses:

\$ _____

Event Description (use additional pages if necessary)

Event Date: _____ **Is this date firm?** _____

Event Location: (address required; be specific)

Please provide a comprehensive description of your event: *(purpose of event, intended results of event, what would you like the impact of this event to be?)*

Describe the timeline of events and activities (itinerary) for the event:

Projected number of out-of-town visitors: _____

Projected number of hotel room nights generated: _____

Which Ridgeland hotels will be utilized for the event?

If guests will be using other accommodations, please list those:

Describe the estimated media coverage of the event:

Experience with Event

Has the event taken place before in Ridgeland? If so, how many times has it taken place?

Describe the event history, successes, changes for this year's event over prior events:

Event Budget/Financials

Describe other funding sources and amounts including committed funds and potential matching funds:

Describe how sponsorship funds would be used:

Organization/Applicant Background

This organization/applicant is a: *(check one)*

Non-profit For profit Individual Other: _____

Years in Business: _____ Number of Employees: _____ Number of Volunteers: _____

List any other organizations, agencies, or businesses partnered on the application:

Marketing Requirement

Explain how the Ridgeland brand identity would be featured in advertising and/or at the event:

Acceptance of Sponsorship Funding

Recipients must accept sponsorship funds by submitting the following:

- Invoice for initial 50% sponsorship.
- Completed and signed W-9 for organization.

Final Report Requirements

Approved funds will be distributed to organizations prior to their event (50%) with a 30-day requirement to file a Final Report after the event (remaining 50%).

The **Final Report** should include: (**reference the Event Sponsorship Program Final Reporting Form**)

- Final itinerary and itemized budget for the event w/Explore Ridgeland funding support breakdown
- Invoice for final 50% sponsor
- Attendance figures, feedback/economic impact survey (provided by RTC), and hotel room nights tracked.
- Samples of all marketing materials 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 sent to:
 - Ridgeland Tourism Commission
 - Attn: Event Sponsorship Program
 - 1000 Highland Colony Parkway, Suite 3002
 - Ridgeland, MS 39157

Or email to: Crystal Pham crystal@exploreridgeland.com or Krystal Watson krystal@exploreridgeland.com

- **Please Note:** Two helpful resources are provided to support your application process and reporting:
 - **Economic Impact Survey Template** – Use this to gather information from attendees during your event or as a guide when completing your final report.
 - **Itemized Budget Template** – Fill this out when applying and again after your event to show how funds were used.

These tools help us better understand the event's impact and ensure accurate reporting.

- Failure to submit the final report will disqualify the organization from future funding consideration for three years.

The applicant acknowledges and agrees to adhere to the reporting requirements described above.

_____ I acknowledge reporting requirements (*initial*)



Certification

I, the undersigned, do hereby attest that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that if funds are awarded, all requirements will be met, including completing all required sponsorship reporting.

Authorized Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Submittal Information

To submit your application, email application and attachments to Crystal Pham at crystal@exploreridgeland.com or Krystal Watson at krystal@exploreridgeland.com with the subject:

FY26 Event Sponsorship Application and the name of your organization/event.

Ridgeland Tourism Commission/Explore Ridgeland will keep applicants informed of progress during consideration. If you have questions about the application, please contact us at 601-605-5252.