

Program Guidelines

New York State

Meet In New York Grant Program



State of New York
Kathy Hochul, Governor
Empire State Development

Table of Contents

I. <u>Overview</u>	<u>3</u>
II. <u>Definitions.....</u>	<u>3</u>
III. <u>Eligible Applicant Qualifications.....</u>	<u>3-4</u>
IV. <u>Eligible Use of Grant Funds</u>	<u>4</u>
V. <u>Ineligible Uses of Funds.....</u>	<u>4</u>
VI. <u>Documentation Requirements</u>	<u>5</u>
VII. <u>Grant Amounts.....</u>	<u>6</u>
VIII. <u>Additional Information.....</u>	<u>7</u>

I. Overview

The New York State Meet In New York Grant Program (the “Program”) was created to incentivize the return of conferences, meetings and trade shows that generate significant tourism economic activity (e.g., overnight stays, dining and other tourism activities) by covering a portion of the cost of event-based discounts at conference spaces and partnering hotels.

II. Definitions

Conference Space Discount: The difference between the official/regular rental rate charged by the venue and the amount offered to the event producer in connection with the qualifying event.

Rack Rate: The official or promoted price of a hotel room, from which a discount is usually determined.

III. Eligible Applicant Qualifications

All Eligible Applicants must:

- Be in operation in New York State as of the date of application;
- Be incorporated in New York State or licensed or registered to do business in New York State;
- Have experienced economic harm resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by a year-to-year decrease of at least 15% of gross receipts and/or gross wages between 2019 and 2020;
- Be in substantial compliance with any public health or other emergency orders or regulations related to the business’ sector or other laws and regulations as determined by ESD;
- If a not-for-profit organization, be prequalified in Grants Gateway prior to disbursement;
- Not owe past due federal, state or local taxes unless making payments pursuant to and complying with an approved binding agreement with the appropriate taxing authority; and
- Be in substantial compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, codes and requirements, including tax, labor and environmental laws within New York State.

In addition to the above, all Eligible Applicants seeking a grant for discounts on event space must further

- Have a minimum capacity of 250 people.

IV. Eligible Use of Grant Funds

Grantees will be permitted to use grant funds to offset a portion of the discount offered for:

- Meeting space used in connection with meetings, conferences, exhibitions and other events that:
 - Take place over the course of at least two consecutive days;
 - Have at least 35% of their attendees come from at least 50 miles away, or at least 35% of event participants staying overnight in licensed lodging facilities;
 - Occur after the acceptance of applications under the Program and prior to December 31, 2024; and
 - Have not been held in New York State in the last four (4) years (i.e., any time since 1/1/18).
- Discounts on room rates that:
 - Are offered as a room block of at least 10 overnight rooms per night in connection with eligible events as defined in these guidelines.

V. Ineligible Use of Grant Funds

The following events are **ineligible** for grants:

- Any “repeat” event that has been held in New York State in the last four (4) years (i.e., any time since 1/1/18)
- Events held for any of the following ineligible purposes:
 - Performing arts, sports or other non-participatory events put on primarily for the enjoyment of spectators;
 - Religious worship, instruction or proselytizing;
 - Personal events put on for friends/family, such as weddings, reunions, etc.;
 - Locally oriented events that do not draw visitors from over 50 miles away; and
 - Political activities of any kind or nature.

Grants awarded under the Program may not be used for payments to a firm, company, association, corporation or organization in which a member of the grantee has any ownership, control or financial interest (i.e. self-dealing).

VI. Documentation Requirements

ESD will make available a preliminary application to determine a business's Program eligibility. The following documents will be required for applications:

- Proof of at least 15% Gross Receipts loss or 15% Gross Wages loss: 2019 and 2020 Business Income Tax returns:
- Items needed to show 25% Gross Receipts loss:
 - For corporations and LLCs – include IRS Form 1120
 - For partnerships – include IRS Form 1065 and Schedule K-1
 - For sole proprietors – include IRS Form 1040 Schedule C
 - For non-profits – include IRS Form 990 – Line 12
- Completed IRS Form 4506-T
- Description of the type of event, along with an executed contract, demonstrating event was contracted and/or rooms were booked after the Program start date and a down payment received from the event producer dated after the beginning of the Program's application period and before December 31, 2022 (hotels do not necessarily need a deposit from the event producer);
- Verification of hotel "standard" and "discounted" booking rates (e.g., calculation of average effective hotel/space rental fee rates during a given period);
- Evidence that this a new event that has not been held in New York State in the last four (4) years;
- Evidence that this event has at least 35% of their attendees come from at least 50 miles away, or at least 35% of event participants staying overnight in licensed lodging facilities;
- Attestation that the Applicant is in substantial compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, codes and requirements; and
- Attestation that the Applicant does not owe any federal, state, or local taxes prior to July 15, 2020, or have an approved repayment, deferral plan, or in agreement with appropriate federal, state, and local taxing authorities.

ESD reserves the right to request evidence and additional information that ESD, in its sole discretion, deems to be necessary to prove any of these requirements are being met.

The application process will allow for a cure period. Applicants that meet the eligibility criteria, cure any application defects in a timely manner (five business days), pass all due diligence screens, and meet final submission deadlines will retain their initial place in line. Applicants that are late in curing applications or fail to submit final documentation by the due dates will lose their place in line. ESD will also establish separate documentation that will need to be submitted in order for a business to be reimbursed after the conclusion of the event.

VII. Grant Amounts

ESD plans to allocate awards on a first-come, first-served model. Award letters will be provided once all requirements have met and confirmed. At this point a maximum award amount will be determined and ESD will reserve that amount to avoid oversubscription. Disbursement will take place following the completion of the event.

Calculation:

- Conference Space Discount: will be reimbursed up to 75% of the discount granted for qualifying event space rental fees.
- Hotel Room Rate Discount: will be reimbursed at 50% of the discount granted for room blocks, capped at \$300 or 70% of the average regular room daily rate (“rack rate”) for the duration of the event, whichever is less.
- Grants may cover multiple events, with the grant size varying based on event size, discounts and award caps.

Award Range:

- Minimum of \$10,000 per grantee per event
- Maximum of \$2,000,000 total grants per grantee (which may include multiple events)

VIII. Additional Information

Eligible Applicant must provide evidence, acceptable to ESD, that the Eligible Applicant is operational and that the Eligible Applicant is not restricted by any state, local or other agency mandate.

ESD reserves the right to request evidence and additional information it, in its sole discretion, deems necessary to prove that any of these requirements are being met.