

Meet in Missouri Program Guidelines

Revised 01/2024



Missouri Department of
Economic Development

Purpose

The Meet in Missouri Act provides an incentive for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to attract major out-of-state conventions to the State of Missouri. The Meet in Missouri Act was passed in May 2016 by the Missouri General Assembly, became effective August 28, 2016, and was renewed by legislation in 2022.

Authorization

Section 620.1620, RSMo

Note: Grant amounts will be dispersed from the Major Economic Convention Event in Missouri Fund when appropriations are available.

Eligible Applicants

- A regional convention and visitors commission created under section 67.601, RSMo.
- An official DMO for a Missouri county, which is designated as the single representative organization for the county to solicit and service tourism, as designated by the Missouri Division of Tourism. This is referred to as a Certified DMO.

Eligible Conventions

- Any major convention event where more than 50% of the attendees travel to the convention from outside of Missouri and require overnight hotel accommodations. A presumption is made that out-of-state attendees require overnight hotel accommodations.
- The convention start and end dates are no later than five years from the date of the application.
- The commission/DMO must be competing for the event against non-Missouri cities.
- Without the grant, the convention would not be reasonably anticipated to occur in Missouri. Some factors that may not support this include:
 - A convention that has occurred in Missouri within the past several years may be considered an event that is reasonably anticipated to occur in Missouri and does not generally meet this qualification.
 - A convention that has been awarded does not generally meet this qualification.
 - A convention that rotates on a scheduled basis, with Missouri included in the scheduled rotation, does not generally meet this qualification.
 - The positive net fiscal impact to the general revenue of the state through any and all Missouri taxes attributed to the convention exceeds the amount of the major convention grant.
 - The positive net fiscal impact will be determined using the Destination Marketing (DI) Event Impact Calculator. This DI calculator is considered the industry standard and will supply all anticipated Missouri tax revenue for the Meet in Missouri Act application.

Funding Limits

The program has an overall cap of \$3 million for each state fiscal year and is subject to appropriation.

The individual grant amount shall not exceed the lesser of:

- The amount of estimated total sales taxes to be received by the state generated by sleeping rooms paid by guests of hotels and motels reasonably believed to be occupied due to the convention,
- 50% of the cost of hosting (DMO costs) the major convention event,
- The positive net fiscal impact to the state's general revenue, or
- \$1 million.

Eligible Major Convention Event Costs

- All operational costs of the venue are eligible costs. This includes, but is not limited to: security, venue utilities, cleaning, production of the event, installation and dismantling, facility rental charges, personnel, construction to prepare the venue, and other temporary facility construction.
- Administrative costs and non-venue costs are not generally considered eligible costs. This includes, but is not limited to: speaker fees, food and beverage charges, registration fees, and entertainment.

Application

The commission/DMO must submit a written major convention plan (Meet in Missouri Application) to the Missouri DED. The major convention plan shall include, but is not limited to:

- The start and end dates of the major convention event.
- An identification of the organization planning the event.
- The location of the event.
- Projected total and out-of-state attendance, based on previously held or similar events.
- Projected hotel room nights, based on previously held or similar events.
- Projected costs and revenues anticipated to be received by the eligible commission/DMO in connection with the event.
- Evidence of the following:
 - The projected start and end dates of the planned major convention event and the requested date of disbursement of the grant are no later than five years from the date of the application.
 - The actual number of contracted advance hotel reservations or projected out-of-state attendance numbers and actual hotel room usage from comparable past events.
 - A request for proposal or similar documentation demonstrating the commission/DMO is competing for the event against non-Missouri cities.

- Without the grant, the major convention would not be reasonably anticipated to occur in Missouri. This is usually documented with a letter from the commission or DMO's CEO/President.
- The positive net fiscal impact to general revenue of the state through any and all taxes attributable to the major convention event exceeds the amount of the grant.
 - Calculating the positive net fiscal impact to the general revenue of the state will be completed with the DI Event Impact Calculator.

Approval Procedure

- Applications and all required attachments will only be accepted via email.
- Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received. The date of receipt will be determined by the application (and all relevant information) being received at Megan.Rogers@ded.mo.gov. The commission/DMO will receive an email acknowledging receipt of the application.
- The application will be reviewed for completion and accuracy. If the application is incomplete, DED will provide the eligible commission with a list of incomplete items. When the application is complete, it will be moved forward for DED Director approval.
- After the application has received an approval by the DED Director or his or her designee, it will be moved to the queue. The application will remain in the queue until the DMO has won or lost the RFP.
- In the event that the director denies the application, a Denial Letter will be sent to the commission/DMO. The letter will address the reason(s) for the denial.

Multi-Year Events

- For requests for proposals where the convention contract is awarded for multiple years, a separate application will be filed for each year. However, all of the applications can be submitted at the same time as long as the final year of the contract is within 5 years of the application.
- DED will consider each year of a multiple year contract as a separate grant. Each separate grant requires a separate report and funding will be dispersed separately.

Disbursement of Funds

- DED will not disburse approved funds until the commission/DMO has submitted evidence that they have been awarded the major convention. DED should receive this documentation at Megan.Rogers@ded.mo.gov.
- DED will not disburse approved funds until the commission/DMO has submitted evidence that they have a separate, segregated account set up to receive the electronic transfer of funds from the Major Economic Convention Event in Missouri Fund. DED should receive this documentation at Megan.Rogers@ded.mo.gov.
- Once the application has been approved by DED, the commission/DMO has been awarded the major convention event and the Missouri General Assembly has appropriated funds, DED will disburse the approved grant amount to the eligible commission/DMO.

- If the Missouri General Assembly does not appropriate funds to the Major Economic Convention Event in Missouri Fund, DED will not disburse funds.
- If the commission/DMO is not awarded the major convention event, DED will not disburse funds.
- If funds are not available, the application will stay in the queue until such time that DED can disburse funds.
- If DED awards more funds than what is appropriated by the Missouri General Assembly, the order that the RFP was awarded will determine which applications get a disbursement. Each application will get the full funding amount until funds run out. This may cause the last application funded to only receive partial funding. The next application in the queue will only receive funding if the Missouri General Assembly appropriates funds for the next fiscal year.
- If funds in the Major Economic Convention Event in Missouri Fund are not used in the same year they are appropriated, they will roll over to the next fiscal year. However, DED will then need to request the spending authority so those funds can be distributed – it is a request and not a guarantee.
- In order to receive funds, the eligible commission/DMO will be required to register as a vendor through the MissouriBUYS Statewide eProcurement System. The Major Economic Convention Event in Missouri funds must be separate and segregated from other funds; therefore, a separate account must be opened for this purpose. All funds will be transferred electronically.
- In order to receive funds, the eligible commission/DMO will be required to meet all federal E-Verify requirements.
- The transfer of funds to the eligible commission/DMO shall be deposited in a separate, segregated account.
- The eligible commission/DMO shall agree to hold the funds until the major convention event has occurred and not disburse the funds until the required report has been submitted and approved by DED. The commission/DMO will receive a notification letter from DED releasing the funds.
- DED will send a Release of Funds Letter to inform the eligible commission/DMO that the required report has been received and approved.
- Once the eligible commission/DMO receives the Release of Funds Letter, the eligible commission/DMO may disburse the funds and refund the Major Economic Convention Event in Missouri Fund if appropriate.

Reporting Requirements

Within 180 days of the major convention event, the eligible commission/DMO shall provide a written report to DED detailing the final amount of DMO costs incurred and actual attendance figures. The written report shall contain the following:

- Applicant Event Budget – Exhibit I (updated with ‘Actual’ numbers)
- Evidence that the Major Economic Event in Missouri Fund award was deposited into and remains in a separate, segregated account.
- Proof of eligible DMO costs in the form of invoice(s).

- The total number of attendees.
 - The planning organization will attest to the total actual number of attendees and/or provide reports (such as the attendee registration list) to confirm attendees.
- The total number of out-of-state attendees. A presumption is made that out-of-state attendees require overnight hotel accommodations.
 - The planning organization will attest to the total actual number of out-of-state attendees and/or provide information to confirm out-of-state attendee attendance.
- Information demonstrating the actual economic benefit to the State of Missouri (DI Event Impact Calculator report).

Refund Provisions

- The eligible commission/DMO agrees to refund 100% of funds if the reporting requirements are not met.
- The eligible commission/DMO agrees to refund 100% of funds if information provided in the application or in the report detailing the final amount of eligible major convention costs incurred and actual attendance figures is found to be misrepresented.
- The eligible commission/DMO agrees to refund 100% of funds if at the completion of the convention, the convention no longer meets the Major Economic Convention Event requirements or if the reporting requirements are not met.
- If the final amount of total eligible major convention event costs is less than the amount of the grant disbursed to the eligible commission/DMO, the commission shall refund the excess greater than 50% of the actual cost. This amount may exceed the excess of the grant that the commission/DMO did not spend and should be taken into account when applying for the grant.
- The eligible commission/DMO shall refund the following amounts to the state based on the actual attendance figures in relation to the projected total attendance for the event:
 - If the actual attendance is less than 25% of the projected total attendance, the commission/DMO shall refund an amount equal to the full amount of the grant;
 - If the actual attendance is equal to or less than 85% and greater than or equal to 25% of the projected total attendance, the commission/DMO shall keep a portion of the grant received equal to the proportion of the actual attendance figure to the projected attendance figure rounded to the nearest dollar and refund the remaining amount;
 - If the actual attendance is greater than 85% of the projected total attendance, the commission/DMO shall keep the entire grant amount received.
- The refund provisions will not apply where attendance at the convention is adversely affected by a man-made disaster or by a substantial inclement weather-related event.
- Amounts that are refunded from grants will be returned to the Major Economic Convention Event in Missouri Fund to be used for future grants.