

Rural Visitor Grant Scheme

Guidance Notes

Details of Scheme

Funded by the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) through the Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LSEP), the principal objectives of the Rural Visitor Grant Scheme are to help businesses raise the quality and accessibility of their tourism product, and improve the visitor experience throughout Leicestershire. There are four grant schemes under the Rural Visitor initiative:

Development Grant

The principal aim of the Tourism Grant is to provide businesses with financial support so that services and facilities can be developed and upgraded in order to offer enhanced quality visitor experience.

Tourism Marketing Grant

The Tourism Marketing Grant has been developed to assist tourism-related businesses to raise their profile and attract new visitors through effective marketing and promotion.

Tourism Training Grant

The Training Grant provides financial assistance to businesses in order that employees and proprietors may develop the necessary skills to succeed in the tourism industry.

Accommodation & Attraction Inspection Grant

The Accommodation & Attraction Inspection Grant offers financial assistance to establishments wishing to acquire quality assured recognition by participating in the Accommodation Quality Assurance Scheme or the Visitors Attractions Quality Assurance Service.

Criteria

Applications are invited from tourism related businesses and organisations based in Leicestershire. Organisations must:

- Employ less than the full time equivalent of 50 people.
- Be paying council tax or business rates in Leicestershire.
- Be involved in the development and operation of tourist related facilities and services.
- Accommodation establishments wishing to apply for a development grant must be inspected, or committed to being inspected, under the Accommodation Quality Assurance Scheme.

Businesses might be involved in a variety of sectors, including for example:

- Attractions (farm parks and historic buildings).
- Leisure (horse-riding, cycling and water sport).
- Culture (large scale events, galleries and visitor centres).
- Food (restaurants, cafes and pubs).
- Retail (garden centres and craft shops).
- Accommodation (hotels & B& B's).

Priority areas

Priority will be given to applications from businesses whose project aims to:

- raise the quality and accessibility of their tourism product,
- enhance the overall visitor experience throughout the designated areas.

Eligible Activities

Development Grant

- Developing and upgrading accommodation facilities (e.g. en suites).
- Improving access and facilities for disabled visitors.
- Installing interpretation panels to educate visitors.
- Development of leisure facilities (e.g. cycle hire).
- Product development (e.g. creating a visitor tour).

Tourism Marketing Grant

- Provision of signage for tourist attractions.
- Production of promotional literature (e.g. leaflets).
- Setting up a business website.
- Promoting a business in one region wide tourist publication.

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Tourism Training Grant

- Range of eligible training courses, including “basic accountancy”, “winning windows”, “shelves that sell”, “motivational marketing”, “welcome all” and understanding the Disability Discrimination Act.
- If you are interested in sending your management and staff on training and development courses, please contact Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd, the Sub Regional Destination Management Organisation.

Accommodation & Attraction Inspection Grant

- Inspection for the Accommodation Quality Assurance Scheme or the Visitors Attractions Quality Assurance.
- Inspection under the National Accessible Scheme.

A condition of grant aid given to accommodation providers to assist accreditation will be to remain accredited for a minimum of 2 years, after the year the grant was awarded. Documentation from the inspecting body must be provided throughout the three years. If through non-payment of fees, not meeting quality standards or for any other reason the accommodation is no longer accredited during this time period, then the total amount of the grant must be repaid.

Non Eligible Activities

The eligibility of activities will be at the discretion of the project officer.

Funding Levels & Grant Payment Details

Businesses are eligible to apply for a grant of up to 50% of project costs. The award of a grant is discretionary and any offer may be at a lower level than applied for.

Additional Support Agencies

- Business Link Leicestershire Tel: 0845 070 0086
- Leicester Shire Promotions Tel: 0116 225 4072

Information required in the Application Form

(The General Guidance notes provide details on completing the application form, however the following specific information is required to apply for a Rural Visitor Grant).

1. Your business

If you are an accommodation provider, please outline in the brief description of business what sort of accommodation you provide, the number of rooms you have, and facilities available.

3. Your Project

If you are applying for an Accommodation Inspection Grant, please outline:

- Which inspection scheme/s you are applying for.
- The changes you have had to make, or will have to make, to your services and facilities in order to achieve the rating you want.
- Remember to attach a copy of the paid receipt from the chosen inspection body to your completed application form.

Contact Details (for queries and completed applications to be sent to:)

For further information or to return a completed form and relevant details please contact:

Judith Billington

Regeneration Team,

Community Services Department,

Leicestershire County Council

County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire, LE3 8TE

Tel: 0116 265 7031 Fax: 0116 265 7176 Email: regeneration@leics.gov.uk