

**Schuyler County
2026 Tourism Assistance Program**

Overview

The Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (the Chamber), located at 214 N Franklin Street, Watkins Glen, Schuyler County, New York, is designated by the Schuyler County legislature as its Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA).

The Chamber's mission is to advance economic success and enhance quality of life through promoting the beauty of the Finger Lakes and supporting the Watkins Glen Area community through education, leadership, and collaborations. In so doing, the Chamber manages the administration of Schuyler County's **Tourism Assistance Program**, whose purpose is to encourage new entrepreneurial endeavors and groups that promote our destination to tourists and enhance the local economy. The source of funding is a portion of the County's Lodging receipts | bed tax collected on overnight stays within the County.

Application Process

Applicants for funding will be required to file an application submitted to the Chamber. Each project must meet the eligibility requirements to be considered for funding. Each applicant must provide matching resources of their own toward their request, demonstrating financial support and completion of the project in its entirety through funding from the Chamber.

The program will be open for applications during two separate application periods:

Round I:	December 15 – February 15, 2026	Decision date: April 15, 2026
Round II:	March 15 – May 15, 2026	Decision date: July 15, 2026

The Round I application process opens on December 15, 2025, and closes at 5:00 pm on February 15, 2026. Applications received after February 15, 2026, will be considered for funding during the next application round.

Funds are paid on a reimbursement basis. Organizations must first incur the expenses and then request reimbursement from the Chamber. Reimbursement checks for Round I will be issued between October 31, 2026 – December 31, 2026. Reimbursement checks for Round II will be issued between December 1 – December 31, 2026 or following the completion of the project.

All applications will be reviewed by the Chamber's Tourism Assistance Program Committee. The nine-person Committee will include the Chamber's Executive Director and Tourism Marketing Manager, the Chamber's Board Chair and two Board Directors, the Schuyler County Administrator, the Schuyler County Legislature Chairman, and two Schuyler County Legislators. Applicants may be asked to present an in-person, ten-minute presentation to the committee. Note that the total amount awarded may differ from the requested amount. Funding applications that are not completed in their entirety will not be considered for funding.

Application Eligibility Requirements may include covering expenses such as advertising, signage, website development, performances, event planning, and ways to take the idea/project to the next level and reach new audiences.

- Provide a specific grant request between \$1000 - \$10,000
- Eligibility includes non-profit and for-profit organizations
- Copy of New York State certificate of Non-Profit Incorporation and/or Federal 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) letter (if applicable)
- Must include potential for increased visitation, improved visitor experience or visitors increasing their length of stay
- Must demonstrate a direct impact on tourism promotion in Schuyler County, NY
- Must be in Schuyler County, NY, or directly service Schuyler County, NY
- Must not be in competition with the Chamber and its mission
- Must be a member in good standing with the Chamber
- Intention of program should increase tourism in Schuyler County
- Capital improvements are not eligible
- Fireworks are not eligible

Approved Tourism programs should:

- Be new or enhanced events that are non-duplicative, unique, and demonstrate appeal to visitors outside of Schuyler County
- Be new or enhanced marketing activities aimed at stimulating overnight visits to Schuyler County, preferably off-season
- Increase overnight stays at local lodging establishments
- Generate economic benefit through overnight lodging, sales of meals and goods
- Increase recognition of Schuyler County as a tourism destination
- Increase opportunities for tourism by developing new visitor activities

Accountability

- If awarded, organizations are required to submit a detailed progress report on the activities and marketing plan results to the Chamber.
 - The final report must include copies of invoices associated with each line item and copies of cleared checks showing proof of advance payment invoices.
 - Reports are due 30 days after the end of the activity leading up to the culmination of the project to process the tourism grant reimbursement.
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2026 Tourism Assistance Application

Period 1: December 15 – February 15

Submit this completed digital application to TourismGrantapplication@watkinsglenchamber.com. Applications may be mailed or delivered to the Chamber office at 214 N Franklin, Watkins Glen, NY.

Organization Name:

Project Lead:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Phone:

Email:

Type of Organization:

Number of Full-time Staff:

Number of Part-time Staff:

Number of Volunteers:

Year of Incorporation:

Number and Titles of Board of Directors:

Project Title:

Project Date(s):

Grant Funding Amount Request: \$

Project Summary:

Provide a one-paragraph summary of your proposed project and tourism promotion objectives.

Project Background:

Provide a brief history of the project and/or the organization.

Marketing Plan – Include a separate document, 3 pages maximum.

Provide an outline of your marketing plan. What is the intended economic impact of your project on Schuyler County? Who is the target audience? What is the anticipated event participation? What is the promotion plan? Social media strategy? Media outlets? Included project timeline.

Budget – Include a separate document or use the attached worksheet.

*Provide a detailed budget for your project. List the proposed revenue sources and expenditures. Separate in-kind donations from cash donations. You may include the Tourism Assistance Program funding request in your budget. **

Impact Metric | Return On Investment (ROI):

Metric:

Description:

Goal:

Comparison (if applicable):

Revenue:

**Receipts must correlate back to individual expenses and revenue categories.*

Expenditures:

Application Certification

I understand that the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce can place limitations on the use of Tourism Assistance Program funds and certify that the requested funds will be used only for the purpose described in this application or as approved by the Chamber. I have read and understood the criteria by which our application will be evaluated and understand that if our application is selected for funding, we must enter into a binding agreement with the Chamber to ensure completion of the project. I further, understand that any change(s) to the plan as presented in this application must be pre-approved in advance by the Tourism Assistance Program Committee and that not doing so could jeopardize my funding award.

Print Name

Organization Name

Signature

Date