



# Willamette Valley Strategic Investment Fund

## FY 2024 - 2025

### **About the Willamette Valley Visitors Association**

The Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) is a Regional Destination Management Organization focused on promoting responsible tourism and regional economic well-being that benefits residents and visitors alike. Our mission is to enhance the region's vitality by cultivating authentic experiences to support local communities, ensuring the Willamette Valley's long-term resilience. We are dedicated to fostering the prosperity of the Willamette Valley as a welcoming and inclusive year-round destination.

WVVA is funded through Oregon's Regional Cooperative Tourism Program, which requires Travel Oregon to fund 20% of the statewide lodging tax back to the regions where it is collected. As the manager of the Willamette Valley regional resources, WVVA is required to spend 10% of our annual RCTP budget through a Strategic Investment Fund.

### **What is the Willamette Valley region?**

WVVA represents the region from Wilsonville to Cottage Grove and the crest of the Coastal range to the crest of the Cascade mountains. Applicants must be in the following counties: SW Clackamas, Yamhill, Marion, Polk, Linn, Benton, and East Lane County.

### **Purpose**

The annual Strategic Investment Fund will be focused on direct investment with partners within the Willamette Valley to fuel community-driven work. For 2024-2025 fiscal year, WVVA will focus on work in the following areas:

#### **Marketing:**

- Familiarization trip hosting for social media influencers and travel-focused media creators
- Creation of promotional materials and promotional marketing for the shoulder and off-season, new niches or secondary visitor experiences and emerging markets

#### **Destination Development:**

- Workforce development funds to help support development in customer service, accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion trainings
- Trail stewardship investments—including but not limited to signage, accessibility improvements, and volunteer skill development

#### **Sports/Meeting/Event Tourism:**

- Bid fees to support the booking of new or expanded multi-day sports and meeting tourism events
- Funds to support implementation of accessibility improvements to upgrade venues—including (but not limited to) hearing loops, multi-lingual signage, and ADA improvements
- Multi-day sporting and meeting event execution sponsorships can be applied for ranging from \$1,000-3,000

*Note: that funds cannot be used for fundraising campaigns or app development.*



## **Funding**

The total strategic investment available this year (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025) is \$85,743. Projects can be applied for within the range of \$5,000 to \$50,000. Sponsorships for multi-day sports and meeting events can be applied for ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000. Funds are available on a rolling basis until the fund is expended. Allocated amounts are at the discretion of the Willamette Valley Visitors Association.

## **Eligibility**

- Non-profits and private businesses
- Federally Recognized Tribes
- Allocated funds must be spent and project(s) accomplished within the current calendar year by December 31, 2025.
- Multiple projects may be submitted by the same entity; only one project per entity will be awarded per fiscal year
- A link to, or copy of, an upheld Equity/Inclusion Policy or narrative of your organization's work in this space is preferred.
- DMOs may apply as a fiscal agent for coalitions/committees that might not have an official organization.

## **Ineligible projects:**

- Funds cannot be used for a fundraising campaign
- Funds cannot be used for App development

## **How to apply:**

Applicants must submit a project pitch form (available at [willamettevalley.org/sif](http://willamettevalley.org/sif)). The goal of the form is to fully understand the scope of the proposed project and how the Strategic Investment dollars will be spent. A grant budget is required for all projects except sponsorship projects. Applicants can submit their own budget or use WVVA's budget template.

- **Step 1:** Start by reviewing the Strategic Investment Fund guidelines for complete details and relevant information.
- **Step 2:** Complete the project pitch form to help WVVA understand the scope of the proposed project and how the Strategic Investment dollars will be spent.
  - Note: As part of the application, a grant budget is required—except for sponsorship projects. Applicants can submit their own budget or use WVVA's budget template.
- **Step 3:** WVVA will review the pitch, and a collaborative meeting with the applicant might be requested. Upon submission, the applicant should expect to hear from WVVA within three weeks.
- **Step 4:** If approved and selected to move forward, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be created for the project with reporting and budget tracking requirements.

## **Budget tracking requirements include:**

- Marketing and development will receive 90% of funds upon signing the the MOU
- Submission of a short final report (via google form), budget and receipts will be required for last 10% of funds
- Event Bid fees will be earmarked and awarded upon a successful event bid.
- The funding schedule will be discussed in the MOU process.
- Receipts will need to be collected and submitted a final project budget of actual spend

**Questions:** Email all questions to WVVA Executive Director Tori Middelstadt at [tori@willamettevalley.org](mailto:tori@willamettevalley.org).