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**VISIT CENTRAL OREGON NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE CENTRAL OREGON FUTURE FUND, WHICH OFFERS \$450,000 IN GRANT FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECTS**  
**Now in its second year, the highly successful grant program is designed to support tourism-related projects that benefit both residents and visitors**

(SUNRIVER, Ore.) — Visit Central Oregon has begun accepting applications for the [Central Oregon Future Fund](#), a second-year grant program aimed at supporting tourism-related projects that will benefit both residents and visitors. The application window will be open through Friday, Feb. 16.

The Central Oregon Future Fund will award \$450,000 in grants, funded entirely by revenue generated from the region's Transient Room Tax collected by both Deschutes County and Travel Oregon. The Fund is designed to support tourism-related projects with the potential to leave a lasting positive impact on the region.

"Visit Central Oregon remains committed to not only promote tourism in this region but to allocate revenue generated by the success of this region into projects that offer a lasting benefit to those who live and work in the community," said Julia Theisen, CEO of Visit Central Oregon. "The Central Oregon Future Fund is a key component to Visit Central Oregon's sustainable tourism model, and in its first year we funded an impressive array of projects

devoted to this vision. Ultimately, tourism needs to work for the entire community, and this is one way Visit Central Oregon can ensure that we continue to find ways to mitigate the impacts of the growth in tourism.”

Project applications must be aligned with the following program pillars:

**Sustainability:** Ideal projects will mitigate the impacts of tourism in Central Oregon, including infrastructure restoration, development of regenerative products and services, research on the impacts of visitation in high-use areas, and/or the use of responsible tourism value messaging.

**Cultural Tourism:** Projects that expand Central Oregon’s capacity for arts and culture programs, indigenous tourism, historic preservation, agritourism, or special events with a particular priority to those projects that focus on off-season tourism.

**Access Adventure:** Projects that expand access to both visitors and the community, educational and training programs, and/or improved tourism-related accessibility infrastructure expansion.

Prospective applicants can watch Visit Central Oregon’s informational webinar regarding the 2023-24 Future Fund at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0wmuVv0koU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0wmuVv0koU).

Last year, the Central Oregon Future Fund awarded nearly \$840,000 in grants to 12 projects throughout Central Oregon, including \$100,000 to Bend Parks and Recreation District for its project to improve river access and \$95,000 to the Deschutes Soil and Water Conservation District’s “Got Stars Central Oregon” project. For more on 2023 Fund recipients visit: [visitcentraloregon.com/industry/future-fund/](https://visitcentraloregon.com/industry/future-fund/).

In addition to the Central Oregon Future Fund, Visit Central Oregon has invested more than \$1 million in grants and other strategic investments over the past five years through a partnership with Travel Oregon to manage the Regional Collaborative Tourism Program. The funding has

benefited a wide range of projects, from arts and culture offerings to special events and stewardship programs. The list of beneficiaries includes Discover Your Forest, Deschutes Trails Coalition, Central Oregon Trail Alliance, Warm Springs Community Action Team, Museum at Warm Springs, In a Landscape, Sunriver Nature Center, and The High Desert Museum, among others.

“Visit Central Oregon has a responsibility to reinvest in this community, and we will continue to look for innovative ways to do that very thing,” Theisen said. “Central Oregon is a wonderful place, and we want to make sure that we leave it in a better place than we found it. Not just for visitors, but for all those who call Central Oregon home.”

Visit Central Oregon also encourages community members to take [Travel Oregon’s resident sentiment survey on tourism](#) by Feb. 1, 2024. The anonymous feedback you provide will be used to help encourage responsible travel practices and shape the future of tourism in Central Oregon. All completed surveys will be entered to win either a \$1,000, \$500, or one of five \$100 Amazon gift cards.

Grant recipients will be announced on Friday, April 8. To learn more or to apply for the Central Oregon Future Fund, visit [visitcentraloregon.com/Future-Fund](https://visitcentraloregon.com/Future-Fund).

#### **ABOUT VISIT CENTRAL OREGON:**

Visit Central Oregon is a 501c6 that serves as the regional destination marketing organization. We drive overnight visitation to the region to support a thriving tourism economy. We inspire travel to the region through an integrated marketing campaign that celebrates our unique culture, people, and landscapes. As the Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) appointed by the Oregon Tourism Commission, we manage the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP) which is leveraged by the Deschutes County budget to optimize the economic impact of tourism to the region. We collaborate with industry partners towards a shared healthy vision of tourism for the region.

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