

2025 Budget Goals

Staff's budget goals for 2025 focus on fostering a more proactive tourism marketing approach, positioning the Tourism Commission a resource for local event hosts, and building partnerships in the community to attract visitors and increase overnight stays.

Proactive Marketing

Getting ahead of the game in being able to promote area events with general tourism marketing.

- Ad spend of \$100 minimum per month via Events.com as it reaches Facebook, Google, Instagram, and many more platforms all at once. A test run in 2024 has shown that the strategy has kept all of the tourism website pages in the top 40 of all City website pages (830) with 2 consistently in the top 10. 2023's digital focus for advertising the Holiday Train yielded over 13,000 visitors to the tourism website along with a reach of over 1,250,000. The event had solid attendance of nearly 2,000 people on a Monday night.
- Develop our own tourism guide for publication and distribution around the State.
- Promote 3 or 4 of the biggest events (1 for each season) outside of general tourism marketing.

Available Resources

The Tourism Commission can be a valuable resource in not only the economic development, but a resource to area groups who want to showcase this community.

- Easier accessibility to apply for room tax funding along with as much marketing of the program as we're allowed to do.
- Allow local organizations to receive assistance in researching for tourism grants if available.
- Allocate funds towards specific events and venues with the premise of creating a destination of Columbus or generating overnight stays.

Partnerships

Partnerships will help for marketing specific events and venues in the Columbus area. We would emphasize the priority towards those who possibly generate overnight stays by out-of-town guests.

- Pursue Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) where we could either team up with other communities for a bigger grant or potentially local groups for events. We can try to actively look at other State grants for bringing out-of-state events to Columbus.
- Continue to partner with local organizations as event sponsors or assist with developing events or attractions to help generate overnight stays.
- Develop a tourism information display at the Amtrak Station.