

Application for Swansboro Tourism Promotion Fund Assistance

The Swansboro Tourism Development Authority (STDA) is interested in assisting new events that bring revenue and overnight stays to strengthen and build Swansboro as a destination. While the STDA will carefully review every grant application each year, we strongly recommend that each applicant's goal should be to becoming self-sustaining.

Section 1. Applicant Information & Summary

Full Legal Name of Applicant Organization: *

Town of Swansboro

Name of Event, Activity or Project to be Funded*

Visitor Center Revitalization

Is Applicant a 501c3? *

Yes

No

Is Applicant Tax Exempt? *

Yes

No

Application Contact Person*

Jonathan Barlow

Title*

Town Manager

601 W Corbett Avenue

Mailing Address

City

Swansboro

State *

NC

Zip Code

28584

Primary Phone

910-326-4428

Alternate Phone

Email Address

Tnmgr@ci.swansboro.nc.us

Date or Dates of Activity or Project *

2026 — 2026

Amount Requested *

\$21,000.00

Notes

Organization refers to the applicant or operating entity and the terms may be interchangeably used.

Activity is used to reflect a program, project, activity, festival, or event for which funding is being sought. The applicant may use any word that adequately describes their activity.

Dates: Because this application covers a time longer than one year, if your event occurs during July-August, please note whether it is schedule to occur twice and if so, please list the dates for both if available.

An attachment may be provided in lieu of using the space provided in the application. The **attachment must reference the specific section** being referenced, be in order behind the signature page and the section being answered in the attachment should be marked to indicate an attachment has been provided.

Only this application and approved attachments should be included in the submission.

Section 2. Organization Information

What is the purpose of the Organization?

See attachment

Please limit to 3 lines of text

Number of years organization has been in business

243

Number of years organization has operated as IRS tax exempt

Does the Organization have a Board of Directors?

Board of Commissioners

Describe the leadership of the Organization and how it relates to the activity. If a nonprofit such as a 501(c)3, describe the makeup of the Board of Directors and how the activity is administered. If another type of organization, describe the leadership of the activity and what if any, oversight others may have over that leadership.*

The Town of Swansboro is governed by a Mayor and five elected Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners provide policy direction and oversight for the Visitor Center revitalization project, while Town staff administer daily operations and project activities under their authority.

Please limit to 4 lines

Section 3. Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

Are any of the Board Members, employees, or staff of the organization that will be carrying out this activity, or members of their immediate families or their business associates:

Employees of the Town of Swansboro or related to an employee of the Town of Swansboro *

Yes

No

Members or related to members of Swansboro Tourism Development Authority? *

Yes

No

Potential beneficiaries of the activity for which funds are requested? *

Yes

No

Paid providers of goods or services to the activity or having other financial interest in the activity? *

Yes

No

Section 4. Organization Administrators

Chief Executive Officer

Jonathan Barlow , Town Manager

Phone

910-326-4428

Email

Tnmgr@ci.swansboro.nc.us

Note if any

Chief Financial Officer

Sonia Johnson, Finance Director

Phone

910-326-4428

Email

Sjohnson@ci.swansboro.nc.us

Note if any

Other Administrator

Title

Phone

Email

Note if any

Section 5. Activity Administrators, if different

Primary Responsible Person

Phone

Alternate Phone

Email

Note if any

Chief Financial Contact for matters related to this activity

[Empty text box]

Phone

[Empty text box]

Email

[Empty text box]

Note if any

[Empty text box]

Any Other Administrator responsible for this activity

[Empty text box]

Title

[Empty text box]

Phone

[Empty text box]

Email

[Empty text box]

Note if any

[Empty text box]

Section 6. Nature of the Activity

What is the purpose of the activity?

See attachment

Is this a fundraiser for the organization? *

Yes

No

This does not disqualify the activity for funding

Is admission or a fee charged? *

Yes

No

What is the target audience for the event?

Tourism infrastructure, economic vitality, and long-term waterfront development.

Section 7. Organizational Capacity

Briefly describe the competency of the organization and staff to perform this activity and to provide responsible management. Has this organization or staff members been in direct leadership of this event or similar events before? If this activity has occurred in the last two years, please briefly summarize any organizational leadership changes as well as lessons learned/challenges from the event in those years and what the organization and/or staff intends to do differently to improve the activity in previous years.

See attachment

Section 8. Activity Information

Simply and clearly explain and describe the activity in sufficient detail so that the Authority knows what is to occur. Attach additional sheets, if necessary, but a concise narrative is highly desired. Report any contingency plans if the activity is weather dependent. Please attach and label as "Activity Information" and this section number.

See attachment

Section 9. Activity Timeline Detail

Provide a Detailed timeline for the activity. Provide information on any organizational meetings, planning meetings or key milestones. Give specific information about when sponsor solicitation would occur, when promotion would begin, when funding might be needed from the Authority if approved and any contingency plans if the activity is weather dependent. If this event has occurred last year and was funded by the STDA please attached the actual detailed timeline from that activity The Authority is interested in evaluating when expenditures would need to be made, the time needed for lead-up expenditures to the event, and whether marketing is a blast type activity or something more institutional.

See attachment

Section 10. Promotional & Marketing Activity

If the Activity has occurred in the past, describe the promotional or marketing activity that has been used. If the Activity has not yet occurred, describe the promotional activity that the organization seeks to have for the Activity.

See attachment

Section 11. Summary of sources and amounts of funding for the activity for the past five years
 If your activity does not have a past history, then only include the budget numbers for current FY. See attachment

What constitutes your fiscal year?

–

State 5 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	State 4 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	State 3 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	State 2 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual
State 1-year previous <input type="text"/> Estimated	State Current <input type="text"/> Budget		

County 5 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	County 4 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	County 3 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	County 2 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual
County 1-year previous <input type="text"/> Estimated	County Current <input type="text"/> Budget		

Authority 5 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Authority 4 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Authority 3 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Authority 2 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual
Authority 1-year previous <input type="text"/> Estimated	Authority Current <input type="text"/> Budget		

Other 5 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Other 4 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Other 3 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Other 2 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual
Other 1 year previous <input type="text"/> Estimated	Other Current <input type="text"/> Budget		

Activity 5 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Activity 4 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Activity 3 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Activity 2 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual
Activity 1-year previous <input type="text"/> Estimated	Activity Current <input type="text"/> Budget		

Total 5 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Total 4 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Total 3 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual	Total 2 years previous <input type="text"/> Actual
--	--	--	--

Total 1-year previous

Estimated

Total Current

Budget

Narrative

See attachment

Describe any other funding being sought for current year from other entities including whether an application is being made to Onslow County Tourism:

See attachment

Section 12. Summary of expenditures for the activity for the past five years. [see attachment](#)

If your activity does not have a past history, then only include the budget numbers for current FY. These are broad categories and rounded estimates of expenditures can be used for each of the categories.

What constitutes your fiscal year?

 -

5 years previous Salaries & Benefits

Actual

4 years previous Salaries & Benefits

Actual

3 years previous Salaries & Benefits

Actual

2 years previous Salaries & Benefits

Actual

1-year previous Salaries & Benefits

Estimated

Current Salaries & Benefits

Budget

5 years previous Promotion, Media, or Advertisements

Actual

4 years previous Promotion, Media, or Advertisements

Actual

3 years previous Promotion, Media, or Advertisements

Actual

2 years previous Promotion, Media, or Advertisements

Actual

1-year previous Promotion, Media or Advertisements

Estimated

Current Promotion, Media, or Advertisements

Budget

5 years previous Awards, Music, Performers, Art

Actual

4 years previous Awards, Music, Performers, Art

Actual

3 years previous Awards, Music, Performers, Art

Actual

2 years previous Awards, Music, Performers, Art

Actual

1-year previous Awards, Music, Performers, Art

Estimated

Current Awards, Music, Performers, Art

Budget

5 years previous Payments for lodging

Actual

4 years previous Payments for lodging

Actual

3 years previous Payments for lodging

Actual

2 years previous Payments for lodging

Actual

1 year previous Payments for lodging

Estimated

Current Payments for lodging

Budget

5 years previous Any Other Expenses

Actual

4 years previous Any Other Expenses

Actual

3 years previous Any Other Expenses

Actual

2 years previous Any Other Expenses

Actual

1 year previous Any Other Expenses

Estimated

Current Any Other Expenses

Budget

5 years previous Total

Actual

4 years previous Total

Actual

3 years previous Total

Actual

2 years previous Total

Actual

1-year previous Total

Estimated

Current Total

Budget

Narrative: Describe any other funding provided and give information that would help the Authority have a more complete understanding of this information.

Section 13. Activity Budget Detail

Provide a Detailed budget for the activity. Provide income, expenditures, and anticipated revenue (including how you would spend Authority Funds). For administrative grant provide total operating budget for the organization. An attachment such as a printout from a spreadsheet or the spreadsheet file is preferable.

See attachment

Please attach and label as "Detailed Budget" and this section number.

Section 14. Tourism Related Impacts

Please answer as completely as possible, but if you do not know, or it is undetermined, please state so. Unless otherwise stated, questions refer to the FY16 Activity as proposed.

Is the Activity an annual event or do you hope that it will be?

Annual (it has occurred twice)

Hoped to be Annual

One Time Activity

If checked, do you plan to become self-sustaining

Yes No

If this event has occurred in the last two years, list the actual numbers next to estimated numbers for the activity under the previous two fiscal years*.

*If funded by the TDA, this number should match your after-action report, or the report should be amended.

2 years previous Estimated Total Participants

Actual

1-year previous Estimated Total Participants

Actual

Current Estimated Total Participants

Estimated

2 years previous Estimated Participants who travel more than 100 miles

Actual

1-year previous Estimated Participants who travel more than 100 miles

Actual

Current Estimated Participants who travel more than 100 miles

Estimated

2 years previous Estimated Overnight Stays for this Activity

Actual

1-year previous Estimated Overnight Stays for this Activity

Actual

Current Estimated Overnight Stays for this Activity

Estimated

2 years previous Organizational Paid Employees assigned to this Activity

Actual

1-year previous Organizational Paid Employees assigned to this Activity

Actual

Current Organizational Paid Employees assigned to this Activity

Estimated

2 years previous Paid persons as a result of this Activity (Not ordinarily on payroll, hired only for this Activity)

Actual

1-year previous Paid persons as a result of this Activity (Not ordinarily on payroll, hired only for this Activity)

Actual

Current Paid persons as a result of this Activity (Not ordinarily on payroll, hired only for this Activity)

Estimated

2 years previous Estimated volunteers to be involved in this Activity

Actual

1-year previous Estimated volunteers to be involved in this Activity

Actual

Current Estimated volunteers to be involved in this Activity

Estimated

2 years previous Estimated Value of Overnight Stays from Previous Activity*

*If funded by the TDA, this number should match your after-action report, or the report should be amended.

Section 15. Tourism Development Plan

A. Describe how the Activity will encourage persons to stay overnight in Swansboro lodging facilities.

See attachment

B. Describe the other tourism related impacts of your activity to the Town of Swansboro.

See attachment

C. Have any partnerships been made or are planned with Swansboro lodging facilities?

See attachment

D. If you used a formula for any tourism related actual totals or estimates, describe the methodology used to derive the estimate.

Section 16. Volunteers

Does this Activity intend to use volunteers?

Yes

No

Section 17. Other Award Criteria Items

A. Does the Activity follow any of the goals adopted by Swansboro? This is not required but does add to the adopted criteria for consideration by the Authority. The goals are available by email or on the web.

B. Will the Activity be operated or performed in a manner that is consistent with standards for such activities?

C. Is there professional management or a demonstration of competence among the operators?

D. How does the involvement of the Authority or staff benefit this Activity?

This investment will strengthen visitor services, support downtown business, and enhance the overall tourism experience, contributing to increased hotel occupancy, dining, shopping, and sustained economic growth through Onslow County.

Section 18. Certifications and Notices

Does the Organization agree to follow the financial guidelines of the Town of Swansboro, including no expenditures related to the grant before authorization? No payments will be made to the organization *

- Yes
- No

Does the Organization agree to adhere to other provisions and conditions described in the Instructions for this application? *

- Yes
- No

I certify that I am authorized to sign for the organization and that the information provided, including attachments, is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I further certify that the organization I am signing for has reviewed and will accept the terms of the provided instructions if funding is approved.

Authorized Signer for Organization

Jonathan Barlow

I accept the conditions *

- Yes

* Indicates a required field

NOTES TO APPLICANT

- Applications may be submitted to:
Sonia Johnson, Finance Director
Town of Swansboro
601 W. Corbett Ave.
Swansboro, NC 28584
- A representative of the applicant will be required to attend the Authority meeting at which the application is to be considered.
- For consideration, an applicant must submit an application at least 30 days prior to the next scheduled quarterly TDA meeting and grant awards will be awarded up to \$2,000 unless by special exception by the TDA. Applications received after 30 days prior to the next scheduled meeting will be considered the following quarter.
- Funding is normally provided on a reimbursement basis, based on submission of proper documentation of expenses incurred.
- The applicant hereby acknowledges receipt of the STDA Outside Organization Funding Policy and agrees to comply with all requirements of that policy, including those related to performance contracts, final reports, and accountability for funds use.

Proposal Narrative

Onslow County Tourism Assistance Grant

Visitors Center Revitalization

Introduction

Swansboro North Carolina is a quaint historical town located along the intracoastal waterway and the White Oak River. It is a water-oriented town for all seasons, and hosts historical activities, festivals, shops, dining, fishing, and overnight boating facilities that draw visitors to the area all year round.

The Town of Swansboro currently has three separate locations at which an individual traveling the local waterways or even Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway can access the Downtown Swansboro waterfront and beyond. The Town Dinghy Dock is in the heart of Swansboro's downtown at the end of Main Street. The dock is intended for smaller vessels. The Moore Street Dock is located at the foot of Moore Street and provides similar access to the Town's Dinghy dock.

The Church Street Dock is a dedicated transient docking facility offering 10 slips designed to accommodate vessels 26 feet or larger for both overnight and short-term stays. The dock is equipped with essential boater amenities including shore power, potable water access, and a pump-out station, ensuring convenience and comfort for visiting mariners. In addition to overnight mooring, the facility welcomes day dockers, providing accessible tie-up options for boaters looking to explore Downtown Swansboro's shops, dining, and historic waterfront. The dock also features a 100-foot face dock, allowing additional side-tie capacity for larger vessels and increased visitor flow.

Project History/Description

For years, the Town has fielded questions from visitors on when more amenities may be available for transient boaters. The Town has looked at the potential for additional services and feels the best location will be its Visitor's Center due to its proximity to the Church Street Dock, also located in the heart of the downtown Historic District.

The decision of what amenities to provide was based off conversations with patrons using the facility through the years and review of the East Carolina University/Sea Grant presentation entitled "Transient boaters potential for economic development of communities that are proximate the Atlantic ICW" by Hans Vogelsong. The presentation documents that boaters are most interested in amenities such as restrooms, showers, and/or laundry facilities as they travel the waterways.

Background from 2021 - The Town petitioned and was awarded \$20,000 from Onslow County to assist with improvements in FY 21/22. The original award was given for interior improvements. Shortly after the award and in discussion with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) it was discovered that before we could begin interior improvements, we needed to make exterior improvements to prevent the Town from being subject to FEMA Flood regulations regarding substantial improvements. SHPO recommended that we re-locate the entry stairs to their original orientation to return/preserve the historic contributing status of the structure. Omitting this step would limit the Town to only making improvements under 50% of the tax value of the structure per year.

With permission from the County, the awarded funds assisted in the relocation of the exterior stairs and the re-instatement of the contributing status. (before and after photos below)

The Town received a Variance from its Flood Ordinance definition on “substantial improvements” and a Certificate of Appropriateness through the Historic Preservation Commission. All documentation was provided to SHPO Restoration Specialist John Wood for submittal back to the National Parks Service so the contributing status of the structure could be re-instated. Below are the improvements that were made to the exterior of the building in 2023.



2014 image of the structure as it sat further down Water St.



2022 image, several years after its re-location to 203 Church St.



2023 images after re-orientation of front entry steps as recommended by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Purpose

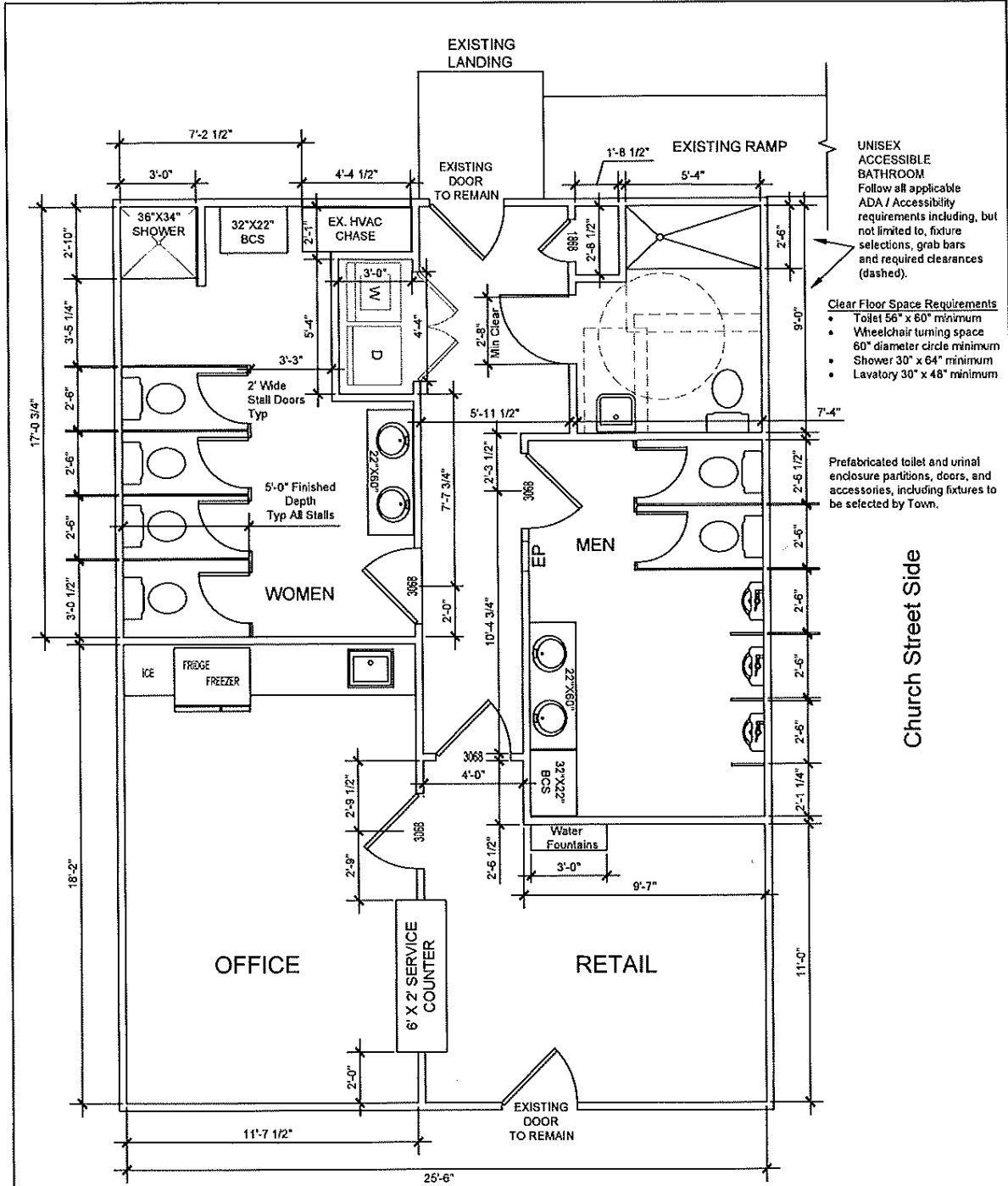
The Town of Swansboro previously received grant funding to initiate interior renovations at the Visitor’s Center. With that support, the Town successfully purchased key infrastructure components, including two commercial toilets and sinks, two shower units, and a washer and dryer. Building on this progress — and in response to both community needs and visitor demand — the Town now seeks to expand and enhance the original renovation plan.

The updated project will transform the existing Visitor’s Center into a fully functional, multi-purpose facility designed to serve residents, visitors, and regional tourism efforts year-round. The expanded interior layout will include additional restrooms and showers to better support transient boaters, festival attendees, and daily visitors. Beyond restroom expansion, renovations will also establish a dedicated office area for staff operations, and an enhanced lobby area designed to function as a true tourism welcome center.

The Visitor's Center will also serve as a command hub for the Town's annual community festivals and waterfront events. This space will support event coordination, volunteer management, and onsite communication needs, strengthening the Town's ability to host high-quality, well-organized celebrations throughout the year.

As a comprehensive Visitor Information Center, the upgraded facility will provide brochures, visitors guides, maps, and other tourism resources showcasing Swansboro's historic waterfront, recreational offerings, shops, dining, and cultural attractions. These improvements will not only elevate the visitor experience but will also increase economic activity by encouraging longer stays and deeper engagement with local businesses.

Enclosed with this proposal is a rendering of the updated floor plan, illustrating the expanded restrooms, office space, and redesigned visitor lobby. Overall, this expanded project reflects the Town's commitment to improving visitor amenities, supporting local tourism, and creating a functional, modern space that enhances community events and strengthens Swansboro's role as a welcoming coastal destination.



EP = Electrical Panel
 W = Washing Machine
 D = Dryer
 BCS = Baby Changing Station

Water Street Side

- Field Verify Existing and Proposed Dimensions
- Dimensions are intended to & from Framing

Install wood fill / furring and drywall to interior wall framing where necessary to cover (finish) conflicting (existing) window openings. Window(s) exterior view per Town.

203 Church St Visitors Center
 Proposed Floor Plan Schematic
 Via Consultation w/
 Chief Building Inspector Paul Ingram
 for the
 Town of Swansboro
 601 W Corbett Ave.
 Swansboro, NC 28584



Crystal Coast Engineering, P.A.

Civil and Environmental Consulting Engineers
 David K. Newsom, PE
 John R. Freshwater, PE (252) 503-2440
 john.f@crystalcoastengineering.com
 205-3 WARD ROAD, SWANSBORO, N.C. 28584
 BUSINESS LICENSE #: C-2553

Scale 1/4" = 1'

PRELIMINARY
 DRAFT
 Not for Construction
 January XX, 2026
 Drawn by JF
 Sheet 1 of 1

Tourism Impact and Economic Benefits

Since opening, the Church Street Dock has driven sustained visitor traffic to downtown Swansboro and the adjacent Visitor's Center. Across the last ten completed fiscal years (FY2015–16 to FY2024–25), annual **reservations increased from 194 to 531 (174%), net revenue rose from \$5,786.75 to \$43,475.29 (651%), and used days expanded from 139 to 507 (265%)**—with record highs in **reservations (FY2022–23), revenue (FY2024–25), and used days (FY2023–24)**. These trends, together with consistent visitor feedback that **showers are the most requested amenity and laundry the second**, directly support expanding restroom and shower capacity and maintaining on-site laundry as part of the Visitor's Center upgrade and will strengthen the Town's tourism infrastructure and economic performance.

These trends clearly illustrate how critical the dock facilities have become to Swansboro's tourism economy; the impacts are outlined below.

1. Increased Visitor Spending

- Transient boaters are **high-value visitors**, spending significantly more than typical land-based tourists. [\[partnerwit...apayer.org\]](#)

2. Boost to Local Businesses

- Boaters who dock in a town commonly spend money at **restaurants, shops, service providers, and tourism attractions**. The Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program notes that improved dockage directly **increases revenue for local restaurants, shops, boating services, and tourism-related businesses**.
[\[nmma.org\]](#)

3. More Overnight Stays

- Safe, reliable transient dockage encourages boaters to stay **overnight or multiple nights**, driving spending on lodging, dining, and entertainment. BIG-funded facilities are specifically designed to attract overnight stays of up to 10–15 days, increasing local economic activity.
[\[marinebusi...sworld.com\]](#)

4. Attraction of New Visitors Who Otherwise Pass By

- Without accessible dockage, many boaters **skip towns entirely**, resulting in lost spending. Communities that add transient slips become viable stopping points for boaters traveling major waterways.
[\[dockshare.app\]](#)

5. Strengthening Tourism as a Whole

- Transient docks act like an **“anchor store” for tourism**, drawing visitors who create ripple effects across the economy—similar to how key tenants support foot traffic in shopping districts.
[\[partnerwit...apayer.org\]](#)

6. Support for Festivals & Events

- Transient boaters frequently plan trips around festivals, coastal events, and seasonal activities. Enhanced dock infrastructure supports increased **event attendance and spending**. The Town of Swansboro hosts five festivals a year in Downtown along the waterfront.

7. Added Revenue Through Marina Services

- Facilities such as fuel docks, pump-outs, electricity, laundry, and showers generate direct service revenue while making the town more attractive to boaters.
[\[nmma.org\]](http://nmma.org)

8. Long-Term Tourism Development

- By offering amenities sought by transient boaters—such as restrooms, showers, laundry, and safe slips—towns strengthen their **competitive position as a regional boating destination**. BIG documentation shows that towns with proper infrastructure experience sustained growth in boating tourism.
[\[marinebusi...sworld.com\]](http://marinebusi...sworld.com)

9. Low-Cost Expansion of Tourism Capacity

- By improving or adding transient docks, towns can expand tourism capacity **without the need for major new construction**, especially if leveraging grants or existing shoreline assets. Dockshare’s model demonstrates how even a few docking options can dramatically increase visitor traffic.
[\[dockshare.app\]](http://dockshare.app)

10. Catalyzing Waterfront Revitalization

- Investments in transient dockage often spark broader waterfront improvements, increasing property values and encouraging additional private investment in hospitality, retail, and recreation.

Funding Sources

Funding for the project will be provided through a combination of sources, including the Swansboro Board of Commissioners, \$26,586 in remaining funds that were previously allocated for the Visitors Center renovation, and the Swansboro Tourism Development Authority (TDA), which has already committed \$30,000. To complete the project, the Town is requesting an additional \$21,000 from the Onslow County TDA and will also seek an additional \$21,000 from Swansboro TDA.

Conclusion

The revitalization of the Swansboro Visitor's Center represents a strategic and high-impact investment in the Town's tourism infrastructure, economic vitality, and long-term waterfront development. With documented increases in visitor traffic, strong demand for modern amenities, and the facility's growing role in supporting festivals, events, and regional tourism operations, this project is both timely and essential.

The Town of Swansboro respectfully requests \$21,000 in funding to expanded interior renovations, including upgraded restrooms and showers, staff office space, a redesigned visitor lobby, and enhanced public amenities. This investment will strengthen visitor services, support downtown businesses, and enhance the overall tourism experience, contributing to increased hotel occupancy, dining, shopping, and sustained economic growth throughout Onslow County.

The Town is committed to maximizing the impact of this funding and ensuring the Visitor's Center continues to serve as a welcoming, functional, and vibrant asset for residents, visitors, and the broader coastal community.