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2026 Cultural Arts Regional Marketing (CARM) Program and Guidelines

for Salina Area Cultural Arts Organizations and Cultural Programmers

Section I: Overview

Purpose: The Cultural Arts Regional Marketing (CARM) program aims to:

- Increase the economic impact from overnight stays at Salina hotels/motels.
- Measure the impact of visitors attending cultural arts venues and events.
- Enhance regional marketing efforts using a portion of the transient guest tax.
- Encourage partnerships among cultural venues, hotels, restaurants, and retailers.

About the Program:

Authorized by Charter Ordinance No. 35 and Resolution No. 14-7151, the transient guest tax (TGT) in Salina is set at 7.75%.

A portion of TGT is allocated to the CARM Regional Marketing Program for large organizations with regional marketing budgets of $5,000+ and for single projects with marketing expenditures beyond a 50-mile radius of Salina. The CARM funding also provides resources to streamline data collection on visitor spending and overnight stays generated by patrons of the cultural arts venue and/or event (applicant).

Visit Salina, a division of the Salina Area Chamber, administers the CARM program which includes publishing the guidelines and distributing grants to qualifying applicants.

Applications are reviewed by Visit Salina and a cultural arts committee, including staff representation from the Salina Arts and Humanities (SAH) receiving feedback and final approval by the Salina Area Chamber Board.

Components, Practices & Definitions: Cultural arts organizations: Not-for-profits as recognized by the Kansas Secretary of State, covering fields like art, literature, music, etc., or other non-profit organizations who are producing a cultural event.

Cultural arts organizations apply for CARM reimbursement grants

- Regional marketing: Efforts targeting audiences likely to stay overnight in Salina, specifically beyond a 50-mile radius.
- TGT funds are collected by local lodging properties, submitted to KDOR, and returned to the City, minus a 2% fee.
- The city distributes quarterly funds to the Salina Area Chamber by contract to support the Visit Salina program which includes CARM program grants.
- CARM Grant Fund allocations and reimbursements are made in December of the application year
- City departments/agencies are ineligible, but their associated not-for-profit groups may apply under certain conditions.
- Funded projects must realistically aim to attract a regional audience.
- Media placements are funded according to their market share's focus on targeted regions. (Media audience outside of a 50-mile radius of Salina.)
- Uniform tracking/reporting is required, with potential audits.
- **Recipients of funds are required to do the following:**
    - **Populate the www.DiscoverSalina.org/events calendar with VISITOR centric events, performances, etc. in a TIMELY manner.**
    - **Purchase and complete a listing in the annual Kansas Travel Guide.**
    - **Have a FREE listing on TravelKS.com.**
    - **Include Visit Salina and City of Salina logos on funded materials where possible.**

Section II: Regional Marketing Comprehensive Grants

Purpose: Work with cultural arts organizations in regional marketing, enhancing exposure by matching investments with TGT funds.

Participant Eligibility, Requirements & Funding:

Up to 75% of CARM allocation is reserved for large cultural arts organizations that have regional annual marketing budgets in excess of $5,000. Participants provide a 1:1 match, capped at a maximum of 25% of anticipated annual funding for any single organization.

(Example: The 2026 CARM allocation based on TGT performance is $150,000 x 75% = $112,500 reserved for large organizations with $5,000+ regional marketing budgets. $112,500 x .25% = $28,125 is the maximum available to large organizations. The funding pool may fluctuate depending on the total number of large organizations in the pool and the amount of their requests.)

CARM Applicants are only eligible for Comprehensive marketing reimbursement (Section II) or Single Project marketing reimbursement (section III), not both.

CARM Grants support regional marketing, not event production or other operational expenses. Administration Fees for management/staff may NOT be included.

Projects must promote overnight stays, with collaborations/partnerships prioritized. Sponsors are not considered collaborative sponsorships.

Funds are reimbursed in December of the application year, and after project completion.

Section III: Regional Marketing Grants for Single Projects

Purpose: Increase economic impact via regional marketing for events by organizations with limited budgets, including support for personnel/software to track impact.

Participant Eligibility & Funding:

Apply for up to $4,999.99 with a 1:1 match, one application per project.

(Example: Project marketing expense = $6,000. $3,000 available to organization funding special project.)

CARM Applicants are only eligible for Comprehensive marketing reimbursement (Section II) or Single Project marketing reimbursement (section III), not both.

CARM Grants support regional marketing, not event production or other operational expenses.

Projects must promote overnight stays, with collaborations/partnerships prioritized.

Grant funds are reimbursed in December of the application year, and only after project completion.

Section IV: Application Procedure

Application Process:

Guidelines are published by Visit Salina (VS).

Organizations must notify VS of their intent to apply by completing the **CARM Grant Intent to Apply Form** no later than **October 14** of the application year.

The **CARM Grant Intent to Apply Form** confirms interest, reviews collaborative planning, and provides an estimated annual budget for the applicant.

Applicants must complete and submit the **CARM Grant Final Application** by **December 15** of the application year.

The **CARM Grant Final Application** includes the following information about their organization:

- Marketing budget
- Regional marketing plan
- Regional marketing expenses
- Specific media used
- Specific media outlets used
- Specific marketing vendors used
- Tracking mechanisms (ticket/admission systems)
- Annual Results Report to include Ticket/Admission Sales from patrons beyond a 50-mile radius of Salina through September of the application year.
- Ticket/Admission price range
- Written analysis of how their research and data compare to a report ran via a Digital Tracking System. Visit Salina will provide reporting specifications to each applicant in the CARM Grant Application.
- Explanation in brief of the organization's collaborative regional promotional strategies with area partners (theatres, museums, hotels, restaurants, retail or other businesses).
    - The following are some examples:
        - Offering a discounted admission or package deal in partnership with another Salina attraction (a museum offering $2 off admission with proof of purchase from a nearby theatre or restaurant).
        - Coordinating with a local hotel to provide discounted room rates or attraction tickets for guests attending a cultural event or festival.
        - Collaborating with multiple local attractions on themed itineraries or passport programs that encourage multi-venue visits and offer rewards after visiting multiple locations.
    - Sponsors providing financial or in-kind support are NOT considered collaborative partners.
- Confirmation that the applicant will do the following:
    - Populate the www.DiscoverSalina.org/events calendar with your VISITOR centric events, performances, etc. on time.
    - Purchase and complete a listing in the annual Kansas Travel Guide.
    - Have a FREE listing on TravelKS.com.
    - Include Visit Salina and City of Salina logos on funded materials.

Project Management & Completion:

- The applicant is responsible for securing competitive marketing costs. Funds may not be transferred from the granted project to another event without written permission.

- Written notification is required to Visit Salina for funds that are not intended to be used due to cancellation or other circumstances.
- If marketing costs are not yet invoiced or required data are unavailable because the project/event occurs in the last quarter of the application year, applicants may submit an addendum once this information is available, but no later than March 15 of the following year. The application should include the best estimated costs and data analysis to allow for consideration.
- Liability for project activities lies with the recipient.

Administration & Tracking:

- The Fund Advisory Committee administers a portion of CARM funding to track patron and economic impact data. These tools will be made available to applicants to aid in patron tracking. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this data to assist in making marketing decisions.

All applications can be submitted by:

scan or PDF by email to

tbenien@salinakansas.org,

or

by hard copy to:

Visit Salina/Salina Area Chamber
Attn: **Cultural Arts Committee**
120 W. Ash
Salina, KS 67401

CARM Grant Program Timeline (For Office Use, and may be amended by Visit Salina as needed for program completion)

- **September** – Visit Salina shares Intent to Apply form and related documents with past recipients and posts them on VisitSalina.org
- **Oct 1** – Completed Intent to Apply form due from applicants
- **Dec 14 by noon** – Completed Final Application Form due from applicants
- Dec 15-31
    - Applications sent to CARM Review Committee for review
    - Committee submits funding recommendations to Salina Area Chamber Board
    - Board reviews and makes final funding decisions
- Dec 31 – Reimbursements made to approved applicants. If addendums are required, payment may be made in the following year pending submission.

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