

Willamette Valley Visitors Association FY26-27 Strategic Investment Fund

Guidelines

About the Willamette Valley Visitors Association.

The Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) is a Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) focused on promoting responsible tourism and regional economic well-being that benefits residents and visitors alike.

Mission.

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.

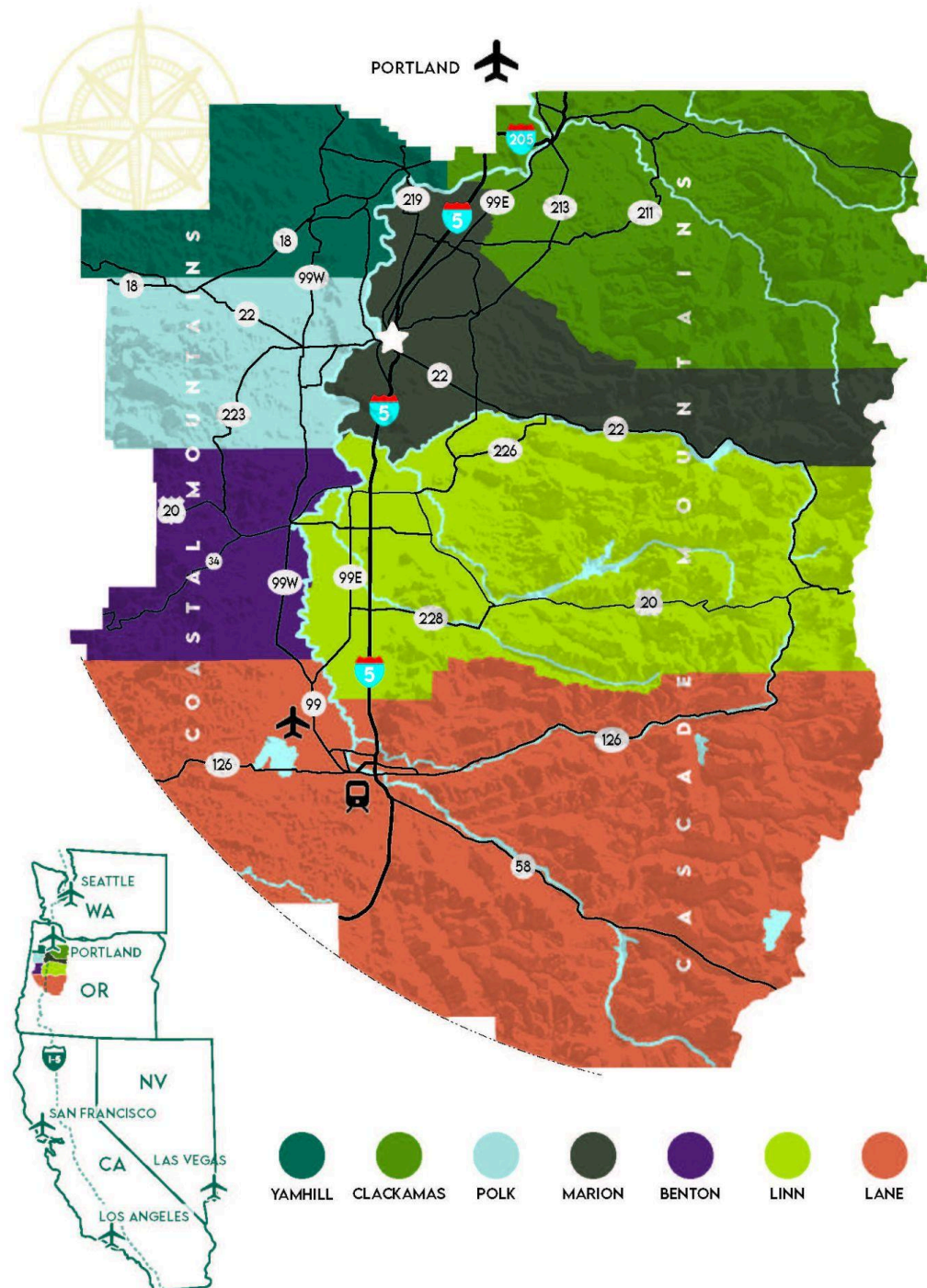
Funding.

Our funding comes from Oregon's [Regional Cooperative Tourism Program](#), which requires Travel Oregon to pay 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 via a Strategic Investment Fund.

Region.

WVVA represents the region from Wilsonville to Cottage Grove and the crest of the Coast range to the crest of the Cascade mountains. Our service area includes Southwest Clackamas, Yamhill, Marion, Polk, Linn, Benton, and East (non-coastal) Lane counties.

Willamette Valley Visitors Association Region Map.



About the Strategic Investment Fund.

Purpose.

The annual Willamette Valley Visitors Association Strategic Investment Fund focuses on direct investment with partners within the Willamette Valley to fuel community-driven work in support of destination marketing and development.

Funding.

Applicants can request between \$5,000 and \$50,000 to support their project. Applicants may request an administration fee of up to 10 percent of the requested project amount. Total funds available to be awarded this cycle: \$95,176.

Funding Priorities.

Destination marketing.

- Marketing materials and campaigns for shoulder and off-season, niche and secondary visitor experiences, and emerging markets
- Marketing asset acquisition (photography, videography, user-generated content)

Destination development.

- Niche and secondary visitor experience development
- Venue accessibility improvements (hearing loops, multilingual signage, etc.)
- Trail stewardship investments (wayfinding, accessibility improvements, etc.)

Meetings, events, & sports.

- Bid fee support for new/expanded multi-day sports and meetings tourism events
- Scholarships for lodging partners to attend B2B conferences (Go West Summit, NTA, ABA, etc.)

How to apply.

Applicants must submit an application to describe the scope of the proposed project and how the Strategic Investment Fund dollars will be spent.

All projects must submit a grant budget. Applicants may use their own budget template or the sample template provided by WVVA.

Timeline.

October 1 to November 15, 2026.

WVVA SIF applications open.

November 15 to December 31, 2026.

Application review by SIF committee. WVVA may request a collaborative meeting with the applicant if needed.

January 2027

Award notifications and MOU process. WVVA will create an MOU for awarded projects, including reporting and budget tracking requirements. On completion of the MOU, WVVA will disburse the first 90% of funds. Event bid fees will be earmarked and awarded upon a successful bid.

December 31, 2027.

All awarded funds must be spent, projects completed, and final receipts, recaps, and deliverables submitted. Once complete, WVVA will disburse the remaining 10% of funds.

Eligibility.

- Non-profit organizations, for-profit visitor-facing businesses, federally recognized Tribes, and local governments serving or providing a visitor experience in the Willamette Valley.
- Applicants must serve the Willamette Valley and be located in the following counties: Southwest Clackamas, Yamhill, Marion, Polk, Linn, Benton, and East (non-coastal) Lane (see map on page 1).
- DMOs may apply as a fiscal agent for a project without an official organization sponsor, or apply for bid fee support, but are otherwise ineligible to apply. A DMO is an organization that receives lodging tax dollars, uses those funds for tourism marketing or development, and serves visitors from 50 miles or more away.
- Entities may submit multiple projects, but only one project per entity may be awarded each funding cycle.
- Ineligible projects include fundraising campaigns, staffing capacity, organizational operations and development, event sponsorships, and website / app development.

Required project criteria.

The application will ask about these criteria.

- Does the project attract visitors to your community from 50 miles away or more?
- Does the project align with WVVA priorities in destination marketing or development?

- Does the project clearly benefit the visitor industry in the Willamette Valley?
- Does the project introduce a new idea, enhance existing offerings, or fill a gap?
- Does the project support long-term regional economic sustainability?
- Can the awarded funds be spent and projects accomplished by Dec. 31, 2027?

Enhanced consideration.

These criteria can elevate your application but are not required.

- Does the project incorporate sustainable tourism practices?
- Does the project contribute to accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion in tourism?
- Does the project leverage partnerships and collaboration within the Willamette Valley?
- Does the project benefit more than one Willamette Valley community or county?

Willamette Valley Destination Priorities.

Marketing

- Promoting shoulder and off-season visitation.
- Promoting visitation to lesser-known destinations in the Willamette Valley.
- Promoting inclusive and accessible travel.
- Promoting sustainable visitation.
- Promoting visitation aligned with destination development priorities.

Development

- Outdoor recreation (hiking, cycling, paddling, wildlife viewing, etc.).
- Culinary & agritourism (sustainable agricultural experiences, Willamette Valley-grown products, restaurants and chefs serving Willamette Valley- and Oregon-grown products).
- Arts, culture, & heritage (visual arts and performing arts, history and cultural heritage, museums and attractions, mainstreet experience enhancement).
- Expansion or enhancement of current destination assets to be more inclusive, welcoming and/or accessible.

Meetings, Events, & Sports

- Multiday events that draw visitors from outside 50 miles.
- FAMs for meetings, event, and sports planners.
- B2B travel trade conferences to expand regional tourism product.

Questions?

Please contact Tori Middelstadt, Executive Director, at tori@willamettevalley.org.