



THE OUACHITA EXPERIENCE FUND

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### General Program Information

- 1. What is the 50K for 50 - The Ouachita Experience Fund Program?**  
The 50K for 50 - The Ouachita Experience Fund Program is a competitive funding opportunity administered by Discover Monroe-West Monroe to support new ideas and an innovative way for tourism-related projects that enhance the visitor experience and generate economic impact in Ouachita Parish.
- 2. What is the purpose of the fund?**  
The purpose of the fund is to encourage innovative ideas, experiences, attractions, and improvements that attract visitors, increase overnight stays, and strengthen the tourism economy of Ouachita Parish.
- 3. How much funding is available?**  
A total of \$50,000 is available for distribution. Multiple projects may be funded depending on the number and quality of applications received. Once the application is approved you will have 12 months to finish project.
- 4. Is there a minimum or maximum fund request amount?**  
Applicants may request funding based on project needs. Discover Monroe-West Monroe reserves the right to award full or partial funding.

### Eligibility

- 1. Who can apply?**  
Eligible applicants may include:
  - Nonprofit organizations
  - For-profit businesses
  - Government entities
  - Educational institutions
  - Community organizations
  - Tourism-related attractions
- 2. Must the project be in Ouachita Parish?**  
Yes. All funded projects must be located within Ouachita Parish and provide a direct benefit to tourism in the parish.

**3. Can a new organization or business apply?**

Yes. New organizations and businesses are encouraged to apply; however, applicants should demonstrate the ability to successfully complete the proposed project.

**4. Can previous fund recipients apply?**

Yes. Previous recipients may apply, provided all previous fund requirements and reporting obligations have been met.

## **Eligible Expenses**

**1. What types of projects are eligible?**

Examples include:

- New visitor experiences
- Attraction improvements
- Public art installations
- Tourism technology enhancements
- Cultural and heritage projects
- Outdoor recreation amenities
- Event enhancements
- Visitor engagement initiatives
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage

**2. What expenses may be funded?**

Eligible expenses may include:

- Equipment
- Signage
- Marketing and promotion
- Design and consulting services
- Event enhancements
- Technology improvements
- Visitor experience enhancements

**3. What expenses are not eligible?**

Generally, funds may not be used for:

- Debt repayment
- Political activities
- Religious activities
- Salaries and routine operating expenses
- Projects completed prior to fund approval
- Alcohol purchases
- Fundraising activities unrelated to tourism

## Application Process

### 1. How do I apply?

Applicants must complete and submit the official application along with all required supporting documentation by the stated deadline.

### 2. What documents should be included?

Required documents may include:

- Project description
- Budget
- Timeline
- Supporting renderings or plans
- Proof of nonprofit status (if applicable)
- Business documentation (if applicable)

### 3. Can I submit more than one application?

No. You may only have one fund open at a time.

### 4. What happens if my application is incomplete?

Incomplete applications may be deemed ineligible and may not advance for consideration.

## Selection Process

### 1. How will applications be evaluated?

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Tourism impact
- Visitor attraction potential
- Community benefit
- Economic impact
- Innovation
- Feasibility
- Sustainability
- Project readiness

### 2. Who reviews applications?

Applications are reviewed by a committee and/or evaluation panel designated by Discover Monroe-West Monroe.

### 3. Is funding guaranteed if I apply?

No. Funding is competitive, and not all applications will receive awards.

## Funding & Reimbursement

### 1. How are funds distributed?

Funding may be distributed through reimbursement, direct payment, milestone-based funding, or another method determined by Discover Monroe-West Monroe.

### 2. Will matching funds be required?

Matching funds are encouraged but may not be required. Projects demonstrating additional investment may receive favorable consideration.

### 3. What if my project costs more than anticipated?

Applicants are responsible for any expenses exceeding the approved fund award amount.

## Reporting Requirements

### 1. What reporting is required?

Recipients may be required to submit:

- Project updates
- Financial documentation
- Receipts and invoices
- Final project report
- Visitor impact information
- Photos and promotional materials

### 2. Will I need to acknowledge Discover Monroe-West Monroe?

Yes. Fund recipients will be required to recognize Discover Monroe-West Monroe in project-related signage, marketing and promotional materials.

### 3. What happens if I do not complete my project?

Failure to complete the project or comply with fund requirements may result in repayment of funds and affect eligibility for future funding opportunities.

## Tourism Impact

### 1. What makes a project competitive?

Projects that typically score higher during evaluation:

- Attract out-of-parish visitors outside of a 90-mile radius
- Encourage overnight stays
- Creating unique experiences
- Fill a tourism gap
- Generating economic impact
- Enhance community pride
- Have long-term sustainability

**2. What does “The Ouachita Experience” mean?**

The Ouachita Experience reflects the unique culture, history, outdoor recreation, culinary offerings, events, and hospitality that make Ouachita Parish a destination worth visiting and experiencing.

**3. Who can I contact with questions?**

Required documents may include:

- Project description
- Budget
- Timeline
- Supporting renderings or plans
- Proof of nonprofit status (if applicable)
- Business documentation (if applicable)

**4. Can I submit more than one application?**

Questions regarding the fund program should be directed to Krystle Ivey at [Kivey@monroe-westmonroe.org](mailto:Kivey@monroe-westmonroe.org) prior to the application deadline.

## Final Question

**1. Why is Discover Monroe-West Monroe investing in this program?**

Tourism creates jobs, supports local businesses, generates tax revenue, and enhances quality of life. The 50K for 50 - The Ouachita Experience Fund Program is designed to inspire new ideas and investments that help grow tourism while showcasing the best of Ouachita Parish for residents and visitors alike.

