

# Questions

## **1. What is the total amount of lodging taxes available to apply for?**

Answer: The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) makes a formal recommendation to City Council about the amounts and recipients for lodging tax dollars and is expected to make this recommendation in November or December of this year. Until a formal recommendation is made, the amount being made available will be unknown. Staff advises applicants to request the amount their organization needs for the project proposed. The LTAC may ask further follow-up questions to applicants to tailor the lodging tax funds awarded to the budget available.

## **2. When requesting funds and proposing a project similar to that completed in previous years, does a new project budget need to be submitted with the application or will a budget from previous year's event/activity/project suffice?**

Answer: Yes, the LTAC will need a new budget proposed for your activity/event/project for calendar year 2015. Previous years project budgets may be very similar, but will need to be updated to for year 2015.

## **3. Is advertising within City limits an eligible expense for lodging tax funds?**

The goal for the use of lodging tax funds is to attract visitors from out of town and from a radius of 50 miles or greater who are likely to stay in Oak Harbor hotels/motels and spend money at Oak Harbor businesses and restaurants. Lodging tax funds cannot be spent on projects/activities/events which do not meet the definition of "tourism promotion" in RCW 67.28.080. Because in-town advertising won't likely draw tourists to Oak Harbor lodging and other establishments, in town advertising would not likely be an eligible expense.

## **4. Can lodging tax funds be spent on logo gear for events (mugs, t-shirts, etc.?)**

Answer: The LTAC makes recommendations on how lodging tax dollars can be spent with final decision authority being the City Council's. Please note that the definition for tourism promotion includes "operation and expenditures designed to increase tourism, including but not limited to advertising, publicizing, or otherwise distributing information for the purposes of attracting and welcoming tourists."

## **5. Who serves on the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee?**

The LTAC has 7 members, 3 of which represent lodging facilities and 3 of which represent recipients. The lodging representatives are Dana Beckman, General Manager at the Coachman Inn; Pete Franssen co-owner of Auld Holland Inn; Bob Lundstrom, Candlewood Suites. The recipient representatives are: Ron Apgar, Paint Your World; Lee Ann Mozes, Oak Harbor Chamber; Michelle Curry, Hydro Races. The chairperson for the committee is Jim Campbell, City Councilmember.

## **6. Do you have to be a 501(c)3, non-profit to apply for lodging tax funds?**

The Municipal Research Services center of Washington indicates that money can be used by municipalities, convention and visitors bureaus, destination marketing organizations, or non-profits.