



ARPA/SLFRF TRANCHE 3 GRANT – MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Name of Organization: City of Harlan Tourist and Convention Commission

Director's Name: Brandon Pennington

Phone Number: 606-573-4495 **Email:** brandon@harlantourism.com

List the total amount of funding you have spent or in the process of spending as of June 30, 2026: \$ 33,360

List all completed projects or those that started as of June 30, 2025. When describing projects, include information such as:

1. Markets used to advertise - Indianapolis, Chicago, St Louis, Columbus, Nashville, Atlanta, etc. Indicate if this was a new market for your organization. If not, how was the advertising enhanced to attract new visitors? List if you used digital marketing (location), publications (list a sample of publications), TV, radio, or billboards, and dates of advertising.
2. New or upgraded websites that include new content, photos, and tools to assist the visitor in navigating the site. List how the site is being promoted by the organization.
3. New brochure that includes new content and photos. List how the brochures are being distributed.
4. List any photography or video projects that will entice the visitor to seek further information.
5. New events or meetings brought to your community.
6. Research projects.
7. Way-finding signage and how you have utilized the signage to move visitors around your county. List how many signs you have developed and installed.
8. List project cost and the ROI (return on investment) from higher room occupancy, attraction ticket sales, restaurant receipts, campground stays, website visits, requests for brochures, Google analytics, or compare to pre-COVID numbers (2019).

Project	Updated Interior and Exterior photos of the Harlan Center through Bobby Cornett Photography
Description	Professional interior and exterior photography of the Harlan Center was completed to update the facility's marketing assets and better showcase the convention and meeting space to potential visitors, meeting planners, event organizers, and groups. The project produced updated, high-quality images of the facility for use in digital and print advertising, the Harlan Center website, social media, meeting and convention marketing materials, publications, and other promotional efforts. The new photography replaced and supplemented older imagery to more accurately represent the facility and strengthen efforts to attract meetings, events, and overnight visitation to Harlan.
Date of Project	05/11/2026
Cost of Project	\$2000
ROI (Return on Investment)	Updated professional photography created a reusable library of marketing assets that can be utilized across multiple advertising channels without requiring new photography for each campaign. The images enhance the Harlan Center's website, digital advertising, social media, print publications, and meeting/convention sales materials and provide potential meeting planners and visitors with a more accurate representation of the facility. ROI will continue to be realized through increased exposure of the Harlan Center, website and digital engagement, meeting and event inquiries, facility bookings, and the resulting visitor spending and overnight stays associated with events held at the facility.

Project	Small Market Meetings 2-Page Ad
Description	A two-page print advertising campaign was placed in <i>Small Market Meetings</i> magazine to promote the Harlan Center as a destination for meetings, conferences, group events, and small-market conventions. The campaign began with the July/August issue and continued with placements in the August and October issues. <i>Small Market Meetings</i> specifically reaches meeting planners and professionals seeking meeting and event destinations in smaller communities, allowing the Harlan Center to market directly to an audience with the potential to generate group travel and overnight stays. The campaign expanded the Harlan Center's reach beyond its traditional local and regional marketing efforts by positioning Harlan as a meeting destination to planners in outside markets.
Date of Project	July/August 2026 August 2026 October 2026
Cost of Project	\$17,160
ROI (Return on Investment)	The campaign provided targeted exposure for the Harlan Center to professional meeting planners and group-travel decision makers outside the immediate Harlan County market. Unlike general consumer advertising, the placement was designed to reach individuals capable of generating multiple-room hotel stays, facility rentals, restaurant spending, attraction visits, and other visitor expenditures through meetings and group events. ROI can be measured through meeting and event inquiries, Harlan Center bookings, associated room nights, website traffic and referral activity during and following the campaign. The advertising also provides longer-term value by increasing awareness of Harlan as a viable small-market meeting destination among planners who may book events months or years after initial exposure.

Project	Harlan Center ABC Lex Promotion
Description	Ongoing television advertising campaign with ABC Lexington promoting the Harlan Center as a meeting and convention destination while highlighting the amenities and visitor experiences available to attendees. Two commercials are being utilized. The first combines approximately 15–20 seconds featuring the Harlan Center with 10–15 seconds showcasing Downtown Harlan, including nearby dining, shopping, and visitor amenities for using the Convention Center services. The second follows a similar format while expanding the destination component to feature attractions and experiences throughout Harlan County. The campaign targets the Lexington/Central Kentucky television market and is designed to position the Harlan Center as part of a complete meeting destination, encouraging attendees to explore the community and generate additional visitor spending beyond the convention facility.
Date of Project	2026-Ongoing
Cost of Project	\$4200 YTD Anticipated about \$10000
ROI (Return on Investment)	As an ongoing campaign, final ROI is not yet available. Initial return will be evaluated through television reach and impressions in the Lexington/Central Kentucky market, Harlan Center website traffic, meeting and event inquiries, facility bookings, and associated overnight visitation. The campaign is also designed to generate broader economic impact by introducing potential meeting attendees to Downtown Harlan and countywide dining, shopping, attractions, and visitor experiences. The professionally produced commercials will remain reusable marketing assets for digital advertising, social media, meeting-planner outreach, and future promotional campaigns, extending their value beyond the initial television placement.