

APPLICATION FOR FREMONT & DODGE COUNTY CVB VISITOR IMPROVEMENT FUND

TYPE OR PRINT ALL INFORMATION

1. APPLICANT IDENTIFICATION

Applicant Name: Fremont Ice Association

1558 Military Ave.

Fremont, Nebraska, 68025

402-753-0200

Contact Person

Amy Johnson, Board Secretary of Fremont Ice Association

2. PROJECT NAME AND LOCATION

Sidner Ice Arena Rink Funding - Fremont

3. SERVICE AREA

Fremont Nebraska Community

4. FUNDING SOURCES

CVB Funding Request \$50,000

Other Funding \$125,000

Matching Funds \$10,000

Other Funding Requests \$1,815,000

Total Project Funds \$2,000,000

5. Is your organization a nonprofit? Yes

Fremont Ice Association (FIA) is a 501c3

6. Give a brief narrative description of the project for which CVB funds are requested. Include project budget. Please attach additional documentation if needed.

In November 2023, the Fremont YMCA confirmed it would no longer support the Sidner Ice Arena due to facility needs outside of the ice rink and strategic decisions to put their operational focus on other areas. In 20 years the ice rink has been a home to thousand of players, kids, and families providing a safe and secure place to meet, cheer, learn, and play. With this understanding the FIA agreed to spearhead the fundraiser for \$2 million needed to keep the rink and make necessary overhaul to the facility. SETT LLC, a sperate operation and management group, stepped up and agreed to operate the facility for the foreseeable future if funds and renovations can be secured. The Fremont YMCA is in support of this arrangement as well.

The general scope of the project is a \$1 million removal and replacement of the ice surface. Due to the old and corroded piping and subfloor approximately \$500,000 will be used for dismantling of ice hockey boards, structures, pipe welding and removal, and subfloor removal. An additional \$500,000 in approximate costs will go to resetting new piping, flooring, and installing a more efficient concrete based ice floor. The additional \$1 million in fundraiser dollars will be put towards replacement of old and costly equipment such as the compressor refrigerant unit, ceiling related issues, dehumidification systems, and several other neglected items not upgraded since the original build 20 years ago.

With the upgrades complete and a new operating group in place the focus will be to run the ice arena efficiently and sustainably without the need for any additional funding. The Sidner Ice Arena will become self-sufficient operating above breakeven. Major tenants and support include agreements with Midland University Men's and Women's D1 hockey programs, FIA's youth hockey program, and continued utilization of ice rink specific endowments administered through the Fremont YMCA. Additionally, youth skating (often for free to the children), public skating, curling, and other programs will help support financial longevity. Furthermore, SETT will focus on putting all additional revenue back into the arena or putting funds aside in case of future unforeseen maintenance expenses.

7. How will this project increase visitation to or encourage visitors to stay longer in Dodge County?

The Sidner Ice Arena has multiple visitor generating aspects. The closest ice rink is approximately 40 miles away in Omaha, 60 miles to Lincoln, and 80 miles to Sioux City leaving a void filled by the Fremont facility. This creates a draw from the Omaha metropolitan area due to limited ice rinks and proximity as well as the large general draw area in all other directions. Hockey teams, public skating, curling and adult hockey leagues all bring in regular outside visitors throughout the week. During the hockey season Midland University and the

local high school team bring in roughly 6000 spectators and participants. An additional 6300 players and families attend youth hockey tournaments thought the year. University, high school, and youth tournaments all bring families and athletes to the area spending time in Dodge County utilizing hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and other retail businesses in the area. An average youth hockey tournament for children in the age range of 6-16 will host approximately 18 hockey teams/tournament, 20 athletes per team, and multiple family members for multiple nights. This equates to as much as a daily need for 400 hotel rooms, 3 meals eaten in local restaurants, general spending, as well as tournament fees going to the facility to help manage upkeep and general maintenance. Due to the unique nature of youth hockey compared to other youth sports, the majority of these teams are out of town. Fremont regularly hosts teams from the Midwest from as far as Chicago, but well beyond including Colorado, Tennessee, Texas, California, Las Vegas, and more. And the University also hosts collegiate teams and families from across the nation. The recreational outlet also gives Fremont something unique in the area for those choosing to work and live around the area instead of commuting or living outside of Dodge County.

8. What other sponsors do you currently have and what is the amount pledged?

Multiple conversations are on-going as we work through the fundraising process. Over \$160,000 has been committed through the initial efforts. An additional \$200,000+ has been committed through an individual wishing to remain anonymous. Local individuals as well as corporations are interested and will be receiving the promotional package during the holiday break.

9. If this grant is not awarded will the project still continue?

Yes, the hope would be that regardless of this grant the Fremont Ice Association will find a way to complete the raise for the funds needed and we will find a way to complete the project. However, the grant related funds are important in the overall ability to do things quickly and make the best of the construction and renovation for the longevity of the facility.

10. What is the project timeline?

The target date for the initial \$1 million of funding is mid-February. This will allow for the securing of contractors and materials for planned April construction. Fundraising will continue beyond this time to secure the full amount needed for items that do not have the urgency of the rink floor. From April to late July construction will be underway to completely remake the failing floor. An additional \$1 million of funds are less time sensitive (but still needed quickly to have their full impact). This additional funding will be allocated to the ice compressor, ceiling related issues, dehumidifying system, and other dates areas of the arena.

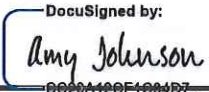
11. Additional comments.

This website has been built to provide a summary to the project and updates

<https://www.fundtherink.org/>

12. CERTIFYING OFFICIALS

To the best of my knowledge and belief, data and information in this application are true and correct, including any commitment of local or other resources.

DocuSigned by: 	Board Secretary	12/30/2023
Signature	Title	Date

Grant requests are reviewed quarterly and due to the FDCVB by January 1, April 1, July 1, & October 1. Requests will be reviewed by the FDCVB Grants Review committee and considered by the FDCVB Board the same month. Applicants are invited to the CVB Advisory Committee meeting for a brief presentation to not exceed 15 minutes.

SUBMIT THE ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES OF THE ENTIRE APPLICATION TO:
Fremont & Dodge County Convention & Visitors Bureau
152 E 6th Street, Suite 103, Fremont, NE 68025
(402) 753-6414 Fax (402) 721-1511

If application in not completed in entirety, we reserve the right to reject the application



VISITOR IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANT GUIDELINES

A. Eligible Applicants

The applicant must demonstrate that the project is, or will be, a tourism attraction in Dodge County, Nebraska. Tourism attractions are sites that are expected to annually draw 300 or more visits from origins of at least 50 miles away owned by the public or any non-profit organization. Tourism attractions are sites and facilities that draw visitors because of their cultural, educational, historical, artistic, and/or recreational attributes. Examples of eligible attractions are: historic restorations, museums and convention centers. Examples of ineligible businesses are those that more often serve as tourism-support facilities than attractions, such as eating and drinking establishments, commercial sleeping accommodations, gasoline service stations and gift shops. Funds will not be provided for capital projects or general organizational operating expenses.

B. Types of Activities

Funds are awarded for certain types of tourism attraction activities open to the public: historic restorations; scientific and interpretive educational sites and facilities such as museums; participatory sports facilities; convention centers; cultural and heritage recreational sites and facilities; and supporting activities that include removal of material and architectural barriers that restrict the mobility and accessibility to sites/facilities (for elderly and severely disabled persons) in support of eligible tourism attractions.

C. Maximum Size of Grants

No single project will be awarded more than \$50,000 in a single year. The minimum amount an applicant may apply for is \$1,500.

D. Application and Award Process

Grant requests are reviewed quarterly and due to the FDCVB by January 1, April 1, July 1, & October 1. Requests will be reviewed by the FDCVB Grants Review committee and considered by the FDCVB Board the same month. Funding is not guaranteed as funds are limited. All applications will be reviewed by the CVB Advisory Board on a competitive basis according to the selection criteria listed in section F. Applications recommended for approval through this process will be presented to the Dodge County Board of Supervisors for final approval. Within 30 days of the awards, grantees will be contacted to review regulations and to report requirements and payment procedures. Projects are expected to be completed by the grantees within 24 months following the award.

E. Matching requirements

The applicant must document a match equivalent in cash and/or in-kind contributions equal to at least 20% of the total project cost. At least 50% of this match must be cash. The applicant must not use grant funding for general administrative support for the organization. Funds are for either the physical development of new tourism attractions or physical improvements to existing tourism attractions.

F. Selection Criteria

All grant applications will be reviewed and scored based on the following selection criteria:

1. Financial Support – the level of financial support already committed to the project
2. Project Impact – the project's potential for long-term positive impacts on local economy
3. Sustainability – the project's potential for being a long-term operation
4. Benefit – how the project will benefit the tourism industry in Fremont and Dodge County
5. Readiness – The project's readiness to proceed, complete construction and open within two years of the project award date