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DUPAGE COUNTY HOTEL RELIEF PROGRAM SEEING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Hoteliers calling the program a needed boost as they gear up for 2023's forecasted rise in hotel demand amidst ongoing hurdles in returning to pre-pandemic operations.

OAK BROOK, IL — The DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau (DCVB) today announced that the [DuPage County Hotel Relief Program](#) is already seeing a return on investment, with hoteliers quickly investing their financial award to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program, approved in July 2022 by the DuPage County Board and administered by the DCVB, was created to infuse dollars directly to the properties at a critical time when travel had returned but hotels still faced significant headwinds. DCVB is calling this a celebratory milestone, helping hotels to stabilize operations as DuPage County prepares for a busier year in leisure and business travel.

"On behalf of the DCVB Board of Directors and our many partners, I want to thank the DuPage County Board, as distribution of these ARPA dollars to our hard-hit hotels would not have been possible without their support," said DCVB Executive Director Beth Marchetti, who has advocated for the industry throughout the pandemic. "This year, leisure visitation is expected to surpass pre-pandemic levels and business travel reach 90 percent of 2019 levels. Our hotel partners are now in a better position to capitalize on this business."

At DCVB's 2022 Annual Meeting on October 26, 2022, at Whirlyball Naperville, Marchetti discussed the state of the industry, noting areas of resilience, yet the significant need to support hotels as they rally to meet demand amidst a historic employment gap and host of other challenges caused by COVID-19. "As one of the largest suburban hotel markets in the United States, there is a direct correlation between the health of our hotels and the health of our economy," said Marchetti. "It is essential our hotels are on strong footing."

Different from federal programs that required repayment or a matching grant, the county's program was created as a one-time distribution of ARPA funds to be used for qualified expenses to assist in recovering transient, business, and group travel or guest experience. Many important needs expressed by hoteliers fell under qualified expenses, including audio/visual equipment costs; technology to deliver hybrid meetings; hosting and incentive fees to recover or rebook transient and group rooms; programs for guest transportation; reinstatement of amenities, and more.

"Hotels have had to make difficult financial decisions so what a great moment to receive our program award and immediately check several needs off our list," said General Manager Max Schultz, who oversees two hotels in Warrenville: Hyatt Place Chicago/Naperville/Warrenville and its sister property Hyatt House. "Now we can operate two shuttles, which means we can win corporate business and weekend wedding business — both of which require the shuttling of guests. Our meeting spaces are being updated to provide new table dimensions, state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment, and catering and reception supplies. These are just two examples out of five immediate investments already making a difference at our two properties."

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ABOUT THE DUPAGE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau (DCVB) is the official destination marketing organization for DuPage County, Illinois' second largest County comprised of 38 communities. The DCVB works in partnership with community business and civic leaders to maximize travel and tourism opportunities which ultimately contribute to the economic vitality of the County and its residents. For more information, visit www.DiscoverDuPage.com.

The Hotel Relief Program was funded through the Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). The DuPage County Board allocated up to two million dollars to ensure aid for every DuPage hotel that could meet [eligibility requirements](#). The payment was based on total number of hotel rooms, at \$112 per room for each eligible hotel. A total of 85 hotels applied with nearly \$1.5 million appropriated.

The Hotel Relief Program is one of three components of DCVB's relief plan focused on revitalizing the area's hospitality community which relies on meetings, events, and leisure visitors. \$750,000 is allocated for a joint business attraction and marketing program through DCVB and Choose DuPage, and \$50,000 for a seven-county regional tourism program.

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