**VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program**

**This Word Document contains the questions and information within the online application for the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program. This document allows you to see the entire series of questions in the application. You may want to enter your answers in the Word Document, then copy and paste into the online application. This document also contains additional “Helpful Tips” that can assist with answering the questions to strengthen your application.**

**NOTE: ONLY ONLINE APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

**Overview**

The Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is pleased to announce that applications are now open for the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Recovery Marketing Leverage Program.

The coronavirus had a devastating impact on the tourism and hospitality industries in Virginia. As the Commonwealth reopens for business, Virginia Tourism is offering these grant funds to spur economic activity and travel across the Commonwealth.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This application cycle for the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program differs from past VTC Marketing Leverage Program applications. Below is a quick overview of the changes:

* Different online application process than in the past.
* One funding level with a maximum award of $20,000.
* No requirement for a cash match; however, **a dollar-for-dollar in-kind marketing match value is required.**
* Partner Requirement – You will need to identify two other partners who you can work with to leverage your marketing dollars. These partners are not required to enter information on your application, but you must contact those partners to discuss your application.
* State / Federal agencies are not eligible to apply for this funding.
* DMO approval is not required for this application; however, applicant should reach out to their local DMO to let them know you are submitting this application.
* **Bonus Points if you incorporate a VTC Brand campaign into your marketing plan.**
* **Competition for this grant program will be STRONG**. The more complete your application, the better you will score. Please follow ALL directions and answer as completely as possible.
* Fall 2020 awardees of the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program CAN reapply in this funding cycle. However, marketing plans and programs must be for NEW initiatives and not a repeat of the past marketing plan.
* Due to the anticipated number of applications, and to expedite application approval, a draft review of applications will not be possible.
* Only online applications will be accepted.
* Do **NOT** send – via email or regular mail – any attachments or supplemental materials. These materials will NOT be reviewed. Only submit the requested and required information via this online application!

**Application Instructions**

Read the [VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program Summer 2021 Terms & Conditions.](https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/VTCRecoveryMLPSummer2021TermsandConditions.pdf)  The Terms & Conditions contain information on eligible expenses under the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program.

Download the [VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program Summer 2021 Application Word Document](https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/VTCRecoveryMLPSummer2021ApplicationWordDocument.docx) (this document) to see the questions you will answer in the application, as well as Helpful Tips. Refer to the HELPFUL TIPS for pointers on what the VTC Grant Review Team will look for in a competitive application.

You may want to complete the narrative sections, and then cut and paste into the online application.

**You will complete the following sections in your application:**

* Contact Information
* Anticipated Date of Your Program Completion
* Amount Requested
* Partner Hub & Spoke
* Feeder Markets and Research
* In-kind Marketing Match
* Marketing Plan
* Program Performance Measures
* BONUS SECTION: Virginia is for Lovers Brand Campaign Tie-in
* **NOTE:** In the fields of the application, a “plus sign” indicates that you can click on the “plus sign” to allow you to enter additional items for that section.

**VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program Application**

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Your application information is saved on our server as you enter it. If you need to leave the application, scroll to the bottom of the application and click “Save and Continue Later”. You will receive a unique URL that will allow you to go back into the application to make edits. **BE SURE TO COPY THIS URL SO THAT YOU CAN GO BACK TO EDIT YOUR APPLICATION!** You also can enter your email address and have the link sent to you. **You will need to follow this procedure each time you leave the application in order to save your work.**

Once you are ready to submit the **Final Version**, you will acknowledge the Acceptance of Terms. A SUBMIT button will appear. At that point you may submit your application. **Please note** that once you submit, you will NOT be able to make any revisions to your application.

**DEADLINE INFORMATION**

* Applications are due by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, June 22, 2021.
* NO extensions to this deadline will be possible.
* Award announcements should be made by July 30, 2021.

**Contact Information**

**HELPFUL TIPS for Contact Information; Completion Date, and Requested Funds**

* Be sure to complete ALL sections of the Contact Information, including your Federal Employer Identification Number (FEI#)
* Indicate when you anticipate the completion of your marketing program. All programs should be completed within 18 months of award notification.
* Indicate the amount of funding you are requesting. This amount should equal the amount of your total Marketing Plan Budget, if you are requesting less than $20,000. Note that $20,000 is the maximum potential award for this grant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Business/Organization Name** |  |
| **FEI#** |  |
| **Name of Marketing Program** |  |
| **Contact First Name** |  |
| **Contact Last Name** |  |
| **Contact Title** |  |
| **Mailing Address** |  |
| **City** |  |
| **State** |  |
| **Zip Code** |  |
| **Phone** |  |
| **Email** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Anticipated Date of Program Completion** |  |

**REQUESTED FUNDS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What amount of VTC Recovery MLP Funding are you requesting?** |  |

NOTE: Funds will be available upon supplying documentation of **implementation** of your indicated marketing plan items and documentation of payments for those items. **Your request should equal the total of your Marketing Plan Budget. The amount entered here will be what your award will be based upon. Maximum amount of funding per application is $20,000.**

**DMO INFORMATION**

**HELPFUL TIPS for DMO Information**

* Your local DMO can assist with your business or organization marketing. The DMO is the principal organization that works to attract visitors to your area.
* You should engage with your DMO on a regular basis. For this grant application, please indicate by selecting from the drop-down list who is your local DMO.
* If you are a DMO applicant for this grant program, please select your office from the drop-down list.

Please indicate from the drop-down menu below, who is your local DMO. You are encouraged to engage your local DMO by informing them of your project and marketing plan. Your DMO can be a good resource for assisting with promoting your business or organization. For a list of recognized Virginia DMOs, please visit <https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DMOlist.pdf>.

**Partner Hub and Spoke (20 Points)**

**HELPFUL TIPS for Partner Hub and Spoke**

* For this section, you will describe through a Hub and Spoke method, what you will promote, with whom you can partner, and what supporting attractions or activities can make a visit to your area better.
* Avoid general statements such as downtown, shopping, concerts. Instead use specific examples of actual local businesses, events, etc.
* Use this approach to develop an itinerary for your destination. Telling the visitor the “story” as to why they should visit is an effective way to encourage visitation.
* Refer to the Hub and Spoke Graphic below.

The Hub and Spoke model is the perfect tool for planning out an itinerary. Use the template below to build a trip in your destination that highlights fun and unexpected experiences for visitors. Start by thinking about your destination and/or your business as the “Hub” and listing out different experiences for visitors to drive to or experience in the “Spokes”.

Partners should be included to make your trip even stronger. Think about ways to include other businesses, destinations or major attractions that could make a great partner for your campaign.

Think about some unexpected and “hidden gems” in your destination that travelers will enjoy as additional spokes.

Themed itineraries are a great way to highlight the best of what your destination has to offer. For example, if your destination is an outdoor-lovers haven, create a trip that will cater to the outdoor enthusiasts. You can use your themed itinerary as the basis of your Hub and Spoke.

**WHAT IS YOUR STRONGEST LURE – YOUR HUB? This can be your business, destination, or an attraction. This will be the center of a visit to your area.**

**HELPFUL TIPS for your HUB**

* For the **HUB**: This will be the strongest lure, or reason a visitor should come to your area. This can be your business, an attraction, event, etc.
* Most important is the explanation as to why this is your Hub.
* Briefly explain why this is your Hub. What makes this the center of a visit to your area?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **HUB** | **Explain why this is your Hub?** |
|  |  |

**WHAT ARE YOUR SIX SPOKES?**

**A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated**

**TWO of your spokes should be other businesses or organizations that you can partner with to help leverage your marketing. In the Description Field below, briefly explain those partners roles in your marketing program.**

**HELPFUL TIPS for your two PARTNER SPOKES**

* These two spokes should be two other businesses, attractions, events, etc. with which you can partner to encourage an increased length of stay in your community.
* You should reach out to those partners to confirm they will work with you.
* List the names of your two partners.
* These partners are not required to enter information on your application, but you must contact those partners to discuss your application.
* Describe what role they will play in your program and marketing and how they will work with you. Please be brief but specific in your description.
* Answer yes or no regarding your contact with these two partners.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Partners** | **Partner Name** | **Describe your partners’ roles in your marketing campaign** | **Have you contacted this partner?** |
| **Partner Spoke One** |  |  |  |
| **Partner Spoke Two** |  |  |  |

**The OTHER FOUR SPOKES should be attractions, events, or other activities for visitors to your area to experience. In the description field, briefly explain how these spokes support the overall visitor experience to your area.**

**HELPFUL TIPS for your FOUR SUPPORTING SPOKES**

* The FOUR SUPPORTING SPOKES are businesses, events, attractions, etc. that complete a visit to your area.
* Think about what makes a great itinerary for your area and include the top four as your SUPPORTING SPOKES.
* Be specific with your spokes. Avoid broad items such as outdoor recreation. Instead, state a specific activity such as “Rent kayak at Acme Outfitters for a trip on New River.”
* Briefly describe how these SUPPORTING SPOKES compliment your marketing campaign.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Supporting Spokes** | **Spoke Name** | **Describe how these spokes compliment your marketing campaign.** |
| **Spoke Three** |  |  |
| **Spoke Four** |  |  |
| **Spoke Five** |  |  |
| **Spoke Six** |  |  |

**Top Three Feeder Markets and RESEARCH (15 Points)**

Who is most likely to visit your destination or business? Who would you like to visit? Tell us briefly who your campaign will reach by including your top three feeder markets and indicate how you know this is your feeder market (i.e., what research do you have that validates your market?).

**HELPFUL TIPS for your FEEDER MARKETS**

* You are, or should be, keeping track of who visits your area, and/or who are your customers.
* For this section, we are looking for the geographic area from where your visitors/customers originate.
* Please list a specific location for your top three FEEDER MARKETS. Avoid broad statements such as “Everyone on the East Coast,” or “History Lovers.”
* In order to validate your feeder marketing, indicate how you know this is your feeder market. This can be as simple as stating that you capture zip codes, you use visitor logs, sales reports, etc.
* For example
  + Market One Greensboro, NC We capture zip codes and this zip code is our top market
  + Market Two Knoxville, TN Source: Visitor logs at visitor center

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Feeder Market Location/Description** | **What research do you have to validate this as your feeder market?** |
| **Feeder Market One** |  |  |
| **Feeder Market Two** |  |  |
| **Feeder Market Three** |  |  |

**Your In-Kind MARKETING Match VALUE (20 points)**

For this round of the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program, you do NOT need a cash match (although you may use a cash match from your existing marketing budgets if applicable). However, we do require an in-kind marketing match value. Please briefly describe your in-kind marketing match for these funds. Your in-kind match can include the estimated value of your Owned and Earned Media, as well as the value of your Paid Media. **NOTE:** Non-marketing value, such as office space, CANNOT be used as in-kind value match. ONLY in-kind MARKETING values may be used for match.

**HELPFUL TIPS for YOUR IN-KIND MARKETING MATCH VALUE**

* You may use your existing, Paid Media marketing budget items as match value for this section.
  + For example, if you place a ¼ page ad in Blue Ridge Outdoors four times a year and the total cost is $5,200, you can list this as an in-kind match with a value of $5,200.
* You may also use the estimated value of your Owned and Earned media placements.
  + For example, if you received media coverage (an article) in Blue Ridge Outdoors you may use the Earned Media ad-equivalency value of that article as your estimated value of in-kind match.
* Be specific with your in-kind marketing match items, provide a brief description of each, and provided an estimated dollar amount of the value of each item.
* Prior awards from other VTC grant programs cannot be used as match.
* VTC allows a six month “lookback” period for your Paid Media match components. For example, if you placed an ad in Blue Ridge Country in April 2021, you could use that Paid Media value as part of your match AND also submit that expense for reimbursement upon successful award of funding through this program.
* The system will allow you to add additional items, and will total the Estimated Value of In-Kind Match
* **NOTE:** When entering the dollar value of your In-Kind Match, enter as a whole number, without the dollar sign, and without a comma. Example: 1535.19

**What is Owned, Earned and Paid Media?**

**Owned Media** is media you create and control. This could be your business blog, You Tube Channel, Instagram account, website, or Facebook page.

**Earned Media** is when customers, the press, or the public share your content. This includes the ad-equivalent value of media coverage.

**Paid Media** is when you pay for marketing, such as advertising through media outlets.

You may have methods of determining the value of your Owned, Earned, and Paid Media. If so, then use those methods in estimating the value of your marketing media.

If not, there are several online resources to assist with marketing value calculations, such as Hootsuite’s Social ROI Calculator available at <https://www.hootsuite.com/tools/social-roi-calculator?fbVisits=100&conversionRate=10&closeRate=10&lifetimeValue=1300&adSpend=300&adCosts=0&labourCosts=50> .

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **In-Kind Marketing Match Item** | **Description of In-Kind Marketing Match** | **Estimated Value of In-Kind Marketing Match** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Value of In-Kind Marketing Match** |  | **$** |

**Marketing Plan, Calendar and Budget Amounts (25 points)**

Your marketing plan will help bring your idea to life. In this section, we want to hear how you will promote your campaign through strategic marketing efforts. Show us an integrated approach to promoting your campaign by thinking about the best places to amplify your message and reach your intended audiences. Please list specific media placements, date of placement (month/year) and cost. Be as detailed as possible.

**HELPFUL TIPS for your MARKETING PLAN, CALENDAR AND BUDGET ITEMS**

* In this section, you will tell us what your marketing plan is.
* For media placements, list the specific media placement, a brief description of the item, specific date(s) of the placement or activity, and your budget amount.
* For example:
  + Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine – ¼ page color ad – March 2022 - $1,300.00
  + Avoid general items such as “newspaper advertising.” Rather list the individual newspapers with specific dates and budget amounts.
* For non-media placements, such as brochure printing or web development, follow the same format as for media placements:
* For example:
  + My Town Outdoor Brochure – Printing of 5000 brochures – Feb 2022- $1,200.00
* You can continue to add items to your Marketing Plan as needed.
* The system will total your Budget Amount.
* **NOTE:** When entering the dollar amount of your budget items, enter as a whole number, without the dollar sign, and without a comma. Example: 1535.19
* The total Budget Amount should at least equal your Requested Funds. It is okay if your Total Budget Amount exceeds your Requested Amount, but the maximum award for this grant will be $20,000.
* VTC realizes that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, you may need to make changes to your marketing program in the future. Such changes are allowed upon sending a request to VTC, as detailed in the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program Terms & Conditions.
* **VTC Industry Advertising Co-Op Program**
  + You are encouraged to use the VTC Co-ops to further leverage your marketing dollars.
  + The **VTC Advertising Co-Op Program** offers simple, affordable, and flexible advertising opportunities so our industry partners can participate in impactful media campaigns.
  + We have streamlined the co-op program to provide a more substantial investment in the programs that are the most impactful and easy to use in order for our partners to enter the market as quickly and successfully as possible.
  + If you are unsure of how to start planning your Paid Media plan or have any questions, please contact [**Lindsey Norment**](mailto:lnorment@virginia.org) **(lnorment@virginia.org)**.
* More information on the VTC Co-Ops is available at <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/partneradvertising/>

NOTE: Do NOT send via email or regular mail any attachments including existing marketing plans or other materials. You MUST complete the marketing plan using the format below. Any email attachments or supplemental information sent via email or regular mail will NOT be reviewed.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Marketing Plan Item** | **Description of Marketing Plan Item** | **Date of Placement or Activity (Month/Year)** | **Budget Amount** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total Budget Amount** |  |  | **$** |

* You may continue to add items to your Marketing Plan, as needed.
* NOTE: Your total budget amount should at least equal the amount of your requested funds.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES (20 POINTS)**

In this section you will tell us how you will know if you are successful. Please state at least three ways you will measure the success of your program, where those numbers are today, and where those numbers should be in one year. This section will be used when you submit your final report at the end of your program. You may add applicable Performance Measures as needed.

**HELPFUL TIPS for your PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

* In order to know if you are successful, you need to establish ways to measure your success.
* The hope is that your marketing program will generate more visitation, occupancy and/or revenue.
* This can be as simple as identifying a few items to keep track (your metrics); identify what those numbers are today (your baselines), and where you hope to be in the future (your goals).
* In this section you will let us know how you will measure your success.
* A couple of examples are:
  + **Metric** **Baseline** **Goal**
  + Attraction Visitation 2,500 3,000
  + Gift Shop Sales $10,000 $17,500
  + Occupancy 30% 54%
* Complete the section below with your Performance Measures
* The system will allow you to add additional Performance Measures as needed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Measure Metric** | **Where are you today? Baseline** | **Where do you want to be in one year? Goal** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**BONUS POINTS (5 bonus points)**

**Virginia is for Lovers Brand Campaign Tie-In: WanderLove; Share What You Love, and Eat. Drink. Love.**

**HELPFUL TIPS to receive up to 5 BONUS POINTS**

* You can receive up to 5 Bonus Points added to your grant score by indicating below how you will integrate aspects of the Virginia is for Lovers campaigns into your marketing.
* **If you chose VTC Co-Ops as part of your marketing plan, then be sure to list those again in the section below.**
* **All campaigns offer opportunities for our partners to participate by providing partner toolkits, logo treatments, creative templates and sample messaging.**
* If you will integrate aspects of the **WanderLove** campaign into your marketing, list and briefly describe how you will do so below.
* If you plan to integrate aspects of the **Share What You Love** campaign in your future marketing, list and briefly describe how you will do so below.
* If you plan to integrate aspects of the **Eat. Drink. Love.** campaign in your future marketing, list and briefly describe how you will do so below.
* More information on the Virginia is for Lovers campaigns is available at <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/brandinitiatives/>, and below in the application.

**VTC Brand Campaigns**

VTC will implement the following campaigns over the next year. Based on your timing and marketing goals, you may choose which campaign(s) would be most beneficial for you to join our efforts. All campaigns offer opportunities for our partners to participate by providing partner toolkits, logo treatments, creative templates and sample messaging.

**Disclaimer:** *VTC will continue to monitor the current situation with COVID-19. VTC will notify partners and provide guidance on next steps should plans with the campaigns below change.*

**WanderLove** - Statewide Road Trips campaign

**WanderLove is calling – and adventure is the destination.**

Join us in leveraging Virginia’s many road-trip adventures to inspire travel throughout the state – highlighting outdoor recreation, hidden gems, small towns and LOVEworks along the way.

We invite you to join the WanderLove campaign by positioning your community as a Road Trip destination. VTC created customizable templates, logo treatments and messaging that you may use to encourage travelers to embrace their WanderLove and explore Virginia.

**Timing:**

(Launched) July 2020- December 2021

**Audience:**

In-State and Neighboring Drive Markets; Families, Couples and Unattached

**Goal:**

Drive immediate economic impact in Virginia communities by inspiring travel among in-state and drive market audiences.

**Partner Participation:**

If you want to join the WanderLove campaign, we encourage you to think of ways to position your community as a Road Trip destination. Creative templates and messaging are available at [vatc.org/wanderlove](https://www.vatc.org/coronavirus/brand-response-marketing/campaign-wanderlove/)

**Share What You Love -** 2021 Flagship campaign

**LOVE** is the catalyst for doing amazing things that make us feel human – and see the humanity in each other. It connects and reconnects us to the things that are real— ourselves, our relationships, our roots and our world.

Research indicates that **the top motivators for travel this year are disconnecting and taking a break from everyday life**. VTC’s brand strategy will highlight Virginia as a place to “disconnect to reconnect” on a trip in 2021.

Share What You Love is VTC’s spring/summer flagship campaign highlighting family experiences in Virginia, inviting them to “disconnect to reconnect” on a vacation. The fall strategy and creative will highlight couples’ getaways.

**Timing:**

Summer: May – August 2021

Fall: September – November 2021

**Markets and Audience:**

Families (spring/summer); Couples (fall)

NYC, Philadelphia, DC, Baltimore, Raleigh, Greensboro; *Extended for Search and Social*

**Goal:**

Increase awareness and consideration of Virginia as a premier vacation destination for families

**Partner Participation:**

If you want to join the Share What You Love campaign, we encourage you to think of ways your destination, business or attraction can position as a place for families to disconnect from their chaotic lives and connect with each other while visiting you. Creative templates and messaging are available here: [vatc.org/loveshare](https://www.vatc.org/loveshare/)

**EAT. DRINK. LOVE. -** Culinary campaign

When it comes to food and drink in Virginia, there’s a lot to LOVE. We invite you to explore the epicurean adventure that awaits!

Eat. Drink. Love. is our state-wide campaign focusing on all things culinary in Virginia. This campaign showcases the fresh local restaurants, exciting foodie experiences, and the best craft breweries and wineries in Virginia.

Join us in leveraging Virginia’s many culinary experiences to inspire travel throughout the state, from farm-to-table restaurants to craft breweries and wineries, we will invite travelers to eat and drink what they love in Virginia.

**Timing:**

Fall 2021

**Audience:**

In-state and out-of-state audiences, couples, bucket listers

**Goal:**

Increase awareness and consideration of Virginia’s culinary experiences

**Partner Participation:**

If you want to join the Eat.Drink.Love. campaign, we encourage you to think of unique culinary experiences in your destination that would attract all food and drink lovers. Creative templates and messaging are available here: [vatc.org/eatdrinklove/](https://www.vatc.org/eatdrinklove/)

**In the section below, indicate in broad terms how you will integrate the VTC Brand Campaigns. Specific details are not needed for this section.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **VTC Campaign Name** | **Description of Tie-in to YOUR campaign** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION**

**VERY IMPORTANT:**

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