**VTC Winter 2022 Recovery Marketing Leverage Program**

**This Word Document contains the questions and information within the online application for the VTC Winter 2022 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) Winter 2022 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.
* Two funding tiers:
  + $10,000 for most applicants
  + $20,000 for **TICKETED** attractions with at least 100,000 visitors in a calendar year. Examples of ticketed attractions include ticketed museums, botanical gardens, amusement parks and other ticketed attractions that are significant regional tourism drivers.
* No requirement for a cash match; however, **a 50% 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. You will also need to identify four other partners and how they complement your marketing campaign.
* State / Federal agencies are not eligible to apply for this funding.
* DMO Requirements: Virginia Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) officially recognized as of 12/31/21 may apply for this program. If you are not a DMO, you must let the DMO know you are applying for this funding program. A list of recognized Virginia DMOs is available at <https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DMOlist.pdf>.
* **Bonus Points will be awarded as follows:** 
  + **Creative activation of the Virginia is for Lovers brand in your marketing campaign. Logos requests and a list of approved logos can be found here:** <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/vifl-logo-request/>
  + **Incorporation of a VTC Brand campaign into your marketing plan. Info can be found here:** <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/brandinitiatives/>
  + **Incorporation of VTC PMAP opportunities in your campaign. Info can be found here:** <https://www.welcomeva.com/>
* **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.
* Awardees of prior VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Programs and/or prior VTC Marketing Leverage Program who have received extensions on prior applications may also apply. However, marketing plans and programs must be for NEW initiatives and not a repeat of a 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 Winter 2022 Recovery Marketing Leverage Program Terms & Conditions . The Terms & Conditions contain information on eligible expenses under the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program.

Download the VTC Winter 2022 Recovery Marketing Leverage Program Application Word Document (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 & Program Information
* Requested Funds
* DMO Information
* Partner Hub & Spoke
* Feeder Markets and Research
* In-kind Marketing Match
* Marketing Plan
* Program Performance Measures
* Bonus Section
* **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, March 8, 2022
* NO extensions to this deadline will be possible.
* Award announcements should be made by April 15, 2022

**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** |  |

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

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| **Is the applicant a ticketed attraction?** |  |
| **How many tickets are sold in the calendar year?** |  |

**HELPFUL TIPS for Insurance**

* If you are using these funds for events outside your normal scope of business such as large concerts, concert series, conventions, or meetings, you must obtain a certificate of liability insurance for the event(s) and **add Virginia Tourism Corporation as an interested party.**
* Event cancellation insurance is recommended, but not required.
* You may use up to 10% of your award toward insurance policy costs.
* It is OK if you have not yet obtained your insurance policy. You must submit a copy of the policy/binder [VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org](mailto:VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org) **BEFORE** your event. Failure to do so may result in full disqualification of all your reimbursement requests.

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| Are you planning to use these funds to market any events, concerts, meetings, or conventions outside the scope of your normal business operations? | Yes/No |
| Upload Insurance Documents |  |

**Note: Most applicants are eligible to apply for $10,000. Applicants that are ticketed attractions with 100,000+ visitation in a calendar year may request up to $20,000.**

**REQUESTED FUNDS**

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| --- | --- |
| **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 at least equal the total of your Marketing Plan Budget.**

**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. By marketing the whole Hub and Spokes, you can make your destination more appealing to visitors.

**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? Why would this be a great place to visit? How does this place drive tourism to the region?

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| **HUB** | **Explain why this is your Hub?** |
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**WHAT ARE YOUR SIX SPOKES?**

**![Diagram

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.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Supporting Spokes** | **Spoke Name** | **Describe how these spokes complement 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. These could be specific cities, specific neighborhoods/zip codes in specific cities, and specific demographics in specific cities. 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. This can be as complex as referencing research studies and visitor profile studies.
* 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

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **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 eligible in-kind MARKETING values may be used for match and must be listed on the eligible expense list in the Terms & Conditions.

**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 September 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
* **REMINDER:** USE WHOLE NUMBERS; NO DOLLAR SIGNS, DECIMALS, OR COMMAS.
* **IMPORTANT:** PLEASE DOUBLE CHECK YOUR MATH ON THE TOTALS. IF YOU EDITED A LINE ITEM, BE SURE TO CLICK BACK THROUGH THE BOXES SO THE GRAND TOTALS UPDATE.

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

**Owned Media** is media you create and control. This could be your business blog, YouTube 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.**

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**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, insurance policies, music licensing fees, or web development, follow the same format as for media placements:
* For example:
  + My Town Outdoor Brochure – Printing of 5000 brochures – Feb 2022- $1200.00
  + ASCAP music license fee—Event dates: April 1 to April 3, 2022—$1,000
* 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
* **REMINDER:** USE WHOLE NUMBERS; NO DOLLAR SIGNS, DECIMALS, OR COMMAS.
* **IMPORTANT:** PLEASE DOUBLE CHECK YOUR MATH ON THE TOTALS. IF YOU EDITED A LINE ITEM, BE SURE TO CLICK BACK THROUGH THE BOXES SO THE GRAND TOTALS UPDATE.
* 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 & PMAP Program**
  + You are encouraged to use the VTC Co-Ops and PMAP opportunities to further leverage your marketing dollars.
  + The **VTC Advertising Co-Op Program** and **PMAP Program** offer 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/>
* More information on the VTC PMAP program is available at:

<https://www.welcomeva.com/>

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.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Marketing Plan Item** | **Description of Marketing Plan Item** | **Date of Placement or Activity (Month/Year)** | **Budget Amount** | **Is this a VTC Co-Op or PMAP?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **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 OUTCOMES (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 Outcomes as needed.

**HELPFUL TIPS for your PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES**

* 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%
  + Meals Tax Revenue $750 $1200
* Complete the section below with your Performance Outcomes
* The system will allow you to add additional Performance Outcomes as needed.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Measure Metric** | **Where are you today? Baseline** | **Where do you want to be in one year? Goal** |
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**BONUS POINTS (5 bonus points)**

**Virginia is for Lovers Brand Campaign Tie-In, Virginia Co-Op/PMAP program, and Virginia is for Lovers Brand Activation.**

**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 or PMAPs 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.**
* More information on the Virginia is for Lovers campaigns is available at <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/brandinitiatives/>, and below in the application.
* Activating the Virginia is for Lovers brand on-site or through your social channels is an opportunity to be creative. This is what you would do beyond the requirement that the Virginia is for Lovers logo be included in your marketing collateral for reimbursement. Think about how you can integrate the brand in unique ways such as having performers wear Virginia is for Lovers apparel, having banners on site, or possibly including VTC on PR/photography opportunities related to your campaign.

**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 any of the active VTC campaigns change.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Co-Op, PMAP, or Activation** | **Description of Tie-in to YOUR campaign** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION**

**VERY IMPORTANT:**

* Your application information is saved on our server as you enter it.
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