**ARPA Meeting & Convention Incentive Program Information & Application Tips**

The purpose of the Meeting & Convention Incentive Program is to help ease the financial burden destinations or venues experience when they host professional meetings and conventions, as well as incentivize meeting planners to bring events that are beneficial to Virginia’s economy.

**Who Can Apply:**

* Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO/CVBs),
* Meeting venues – i.e., convention center, event venue, hotel
* City or County local government agencies (i.e., parks & recreation community center)

**Applicants can apply more than once; each application is for an individual event.**

**Important Dates:**

* The event must have been contracted on or after December 7, 2021.
* Application submissions begin April 1, 2022.
* Application submission must be received no later than May 31, 2022.
* VTC and the review committee will review your application after May 31, 2022 and successful applications will be approved no later than July 15, 2022.
* Meeting/Event must be contracted by December 31, 2022 and be held in Virginia no later than June 30, 2024.

**Criteria to Qualify for Funding:**

* Professional meetings, conventions, and events only. Meetings/Events not eligible for the program include – (weddings, fraternal (unless national), social events and group tours (except for group tour national convention).
* New event to the destination/venue not held in the destination for at least three years.
* Must be a competitively bid meeting, convention, or event.
* Must bring attendees from outside the area (100 miles or more).
* Minimum size of the event must be 50+ attendees and staff.
* Meeting/Event must be multi-day. Single day events will be considered if they bring a majority of attendees from outside the area (100 miles or more).

**Please Note:**

* There is NO match requirement.
* State/Federal agencies are not eligible to apply for this funding.
* Applicants must be a Virginia based business. Out-of-state businesses will not receive funds.
* Only one application will be approved for an event. DMO and venue can’t both apply for the same event.
* Applicants can apply for multiple events
* Applicants should reach out to their local DMO to let them know you are submitting this application.
* Only online submissions will be accepted.
* Applicants can submit documentation for application approval prior to contracting: however, applicants will not receive funds until after the event and a copy of the contract and proof of payment (s) are submitted.
* Please do **NOT** send – via email or regular mail – any attachments or supplemental materials.  Submit them through the VTC ARPA application portal.

**Expenses:**

All expenses should be used to support economic recovery from the COVID pandemic or the resulting negative economic effects.

These lists of eligible and ineligible expenses are extensive and represent the most common types of expenses, but they are not all-inclusive. Even though an item may be found in a list, it does not guarantee reimbursement.

**Eligible expenses:**

* Facility meeting room rental fees
* Rental of furniture, fixtures or equipment (i.e. stage, chairs, tables, easels, lectern, risers etc.)
* Contracted security or traffic services
* Event-specific signage
* Event-specific printed marketing materials
* Event-specific paid advertising/media buys to promote event
* Event production and technical expense
* Meeting Planner site visit travel/hotel costs after contract signed for purposes of planning the event in destination/venue
* AV rental and/or services for sound system/lighting/streaming
* Wifi/Internet fees in meeting room/venue and/or hotel guest rooms – comp or % discount
* Local Permit fees
* Event insurance
* Transportation/Shuttling costs between venue and hotels
* Assistance with technology provider costs to host hybrid meetings
* Discount on F&B and/or complimentary meal
* Complimentary or discounted parking at venue
* Charges for room set-up changes
* Box storage and shipping and receiving fees
* Upgrades for VIPs or complimentary suites for VIPs
* Resort fees for guests at host hotels
* Service fees
* Exhibit costs – pipe & drape, table and chairs
* Welcome bags and small gift(s) for attendees, VIPs or event staff

**Ineligible expenses:**

**The following expenses will NOT be funded by the ARPA Meeting & Convention Incentive Program:**

* ARPA funds must be used for New events geared at increasing visitation.  ARPA funding cannot be used to supplant or replace an organization’s existing tourism funding commitment for existing budgets, marketing and/or staffing
* Meeting Planner entertainment or client events
* Site visits prior to contracting event
* Non-refundable RFP/bid fees when destination/venue is not awarded the event
* Funds to advertise their incentive program
* Renovations or building permanent structures at facility for event
* Expenses from an event that was contracted prior December 7, 2021
* General operating or administrative expenses (travel reimbursement, salaries, maintenance etc)
* Travel cost to solicit event
* Purchase of permanent equipment
* Monetary or non-monetary awards (plaques, certificates, trophies, etc)
* Printed programs which solicit advertising
* Meetings/Events not eligible for the program include – (weddings, fraternal (unless national), social events and group tours (except for group tour national convention).
* Purchase or production of items for resale
* Ads or content that appear on a political or unsavory website or publication, determined at the discretion of VTC
* Personal Protective Equipment products
* Purchase of alcohol for meetings, events, sponsorships, etc.
* Programs that promote and market cannabis will not qualify.

**HELPFUL TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION:**

**Contact Information**

* Be sure to complete ALL sections of the Contact Information, including your Federal Tax ID. This information can be found on your company W9 form. This information is essential for receiving the funds.
* Be sure to attach your company’s most up to date W9 form.

**Requested Funds**

* Indicate the amount of funding you are requesting. This amount **MUST** equal the amount of your total incentives line-item list.
* Below are general award guidelines. Earned media, estimated economic impact, value to community and other factors will be considered by the review panel.

 Based on anticipated number of attendees/staff outlined in RFP/contract:

50 – 250 people = up to $5,000

251-750 people = up to $10,000

751 – 1250 people = up to $15,000

1251+ people = $20,000+

NOTE: Lesser or larger amounts may be awarded based on the merits of the application.

 **Documentation**

* If there isn’t a signed contract when applying, please attach signed contract once one is available. Contracts need to be signed by December 31st 2022.
* Receipts can be added to the portal as they become available

 **Meeting/Event Organization Information**

* Please include the meeting planner and organization information. If no RFP or bid document is available, please include a document from the meeting planner with their contact information, confirmation that other destinations are being consider (identify competitive destinations) and outline of the requirements and general information (i.e., number of attendees, room nights etc.) about the event.
* Spell out the meeting organization and meeting conference names instead of using acronyms. i.e. National Bar Association instead of ABA.
* Indicate actual dates of when your meeting/event begins and ends. Don’t include move in/out dates.

**Meeting/Event Description**

* Provide a narrative of the meeting, convention or event, along with any details that the review committee might need to know. Do the attendees come from around the world? Are national or local speakers being used? Is there a festival or consumer expo component?

**Community Value**

* Describe what value the meeting/event brings to the community. For example: are community businesses involved in/during the event? Are youth groups involved? Is there any community services aspect to this event or economic benefit to a local area? (Ex. Use of local vendors/services)

 **Direct Economic Impact**

* Provide the Direct Economic Impact number for the event, describe how you came up with that number? What tool was used? Destinations International Meetings Calculator or did you do a local study to determine a calculator? In house calculator?
* If an in-house calculator was used, provide the metrics used to come up with direct economic impact number.

**Earned Media**

* If there was earned media, provide details on exactly what was received (and how you calculated the earned media value?
* Examples of earned media could be ads on TV or in their newsletter, streaming broadcast, live streams, social media posts etc. that promote your destination.

**Fund Utilization**

* Provide details of the how the funds will be utilized, please be descriptive in this section.
* Attach a list of line items the incentive funds will be utilized for; all line items **MUST** add up to the total funding amount requested.

**Supplemental Funding**

* Any other grant funding **cannot** be used for the same line items that these ARPA Recovery funds are being utilized for.
* If any other grant funding is being used, please provide detailed information regarding what that funding is being used for.
* While completing the application, please include all documentation through the portal. Unless requested otherwise by the review committee, documentation will not be accepted through email.