



Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)

Fall 2022 Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program Terms and Conditions

IMPORTANT! PLEASE NOTE THAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE AND THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR THE FALL 2022 MICROBUSINESS MARKETING LEVERAGE PROGRAM ARE DIFFERENT FROM PRIOR ROUNDS. **REREAD THESE GUIDELINES AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ADDRESSED EVERY ASPECT CONTAINED IN THE GUIDELINES.** FAILURE TO MEET THESE GUIDELINES WILL RESULT IN EITHER A LOWER SCORE OR INELIGIBILITY OF YOUR APPLICATION. BELOW IS A CHECKLIST FOR YOU TO USE IN REVIEWING YOUR APPLICATION BEFORE FINAL SUBMISSION. ALSO, BE SURE TO **READ THE HELPFUL TIPS** CONTAINED IN THE WORD VERSION OF THIS APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR APPLICATION!

- Have you read all instructions, Word version of this application, and helpful tips?**
- Have you completed the CONTACT INFORMATION section including Federal Employer Identification Numbers (FEIN) OR Social Security (SSN)? The FEIN and SSN (for sole proprietorships) is used to confirm eligibility.
- Have you answered the question about events outside the scope of your normal operations and do you understand the liability insurance requirement?
- Have you indicated the amount of your requested funds and does that amount correspond to your marketing plan budget?
- Have you filled out the Hub & Spoke section correctly with your business/destination as the hub and identified three spokes you can partner with?
- Have you identified your in-state and out-of-state target markets? Have you indicated why you chose those markets? Did you allocate at least 25% of your marketing plan budget to an out-of-state target market?
- Have you clearly stated what is your IN-KIND MARKETING MATCH, and what is the ESTIMATED VALUE of that marketing match? Have you included the dates of the items?
- Have you provided a *detailed* MARKETING PLAN, CALENDAR AND BUDGET AMOUNTS?
- Have you clearly stated your PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES including baseline measures of where you are today, and where you want to be in one year?
- BONUS POINTS** - Does your program activate and incorporate the "VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS" campaign opportunities?
- By applying, you are agreeing to follow the Terms and Conditions listed in this document and have checked off the acknowledgement of these binding Terms and Conditions in the application portal.

Please go back over your application to make sure all sections, tables, and forms are complete. Use this checklist to help evaluate your application. You will NOT be able to make amendments to your application after submitting your application or after the due date!

Applications are due **by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, September 20, 2022**

NO EXTENSION OF THIS DEADLINE WILL BE ALLOWED!!!



What is the Virginia Tourism Corporation Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program?

Virginia Tourism is offering these grant funds to spur economic activity and travel across the Commonwealth to support small businesses and drive shoulder season visitation (September to May.)

Examples of marketing expenses that are eligible for reimbursement include, but are not limited to: digital advertising, social media boosts and sponsored ads, print advertising, hiring photographers and videographers to gather content and marketing that content, rack card printing and placement costs at Virginia Welcome Centers and Safety Rest Areas, display and promotional materials for trade shows and events. Please refer to the full list of eligible and ineligible expenses on pages 8-12.

Virginia Tourism strongly urges, due to the \$5,000 award maximum and the 25% out-of-state marketing spend requirement, that applicants focus on social media marketing, rack cards, digital advertising, and print media.

PLEASE NOTE: The application process for the VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program differs from past VTC Marketing Leverage Program applications. Below is an overview of the changes:

- Different online application process than in the past.
- One funding level of \$5,000 max award for all applicants.
- Applications must be focused on microbusinesses (20 or fewer full-time equivalent employees) and must support shoulder season (September 2022 to May 2023) visitation. Please note: In early 2023, a Marketing Leverage Program for all Virginia travel industry partners, including larger businesses, organizations, and DMOs will be available.
- No requirement for a cash match; **however, a 1:1 in-kind marketing match value is required. If you are requesting a max award of \$5,000, you must list \$5,000 of in-kind marketing. In-kind marketing can be earned, owned, or paid media. Pay close attention to the provided formulas in the application instructions for valuing in-kind marketing.**
- Hub & Spoke Requirement – You will need to identify three spokes in the Hub & Spoke section. These are other businesses, attractions, or organizations that might partner with you on marketing. Think of the Hub & Spoke like an itinerary that visitors might follow at your destination.
- State/Federal agencies are not eligible to apply for this funding.
- **Bonus Points will be awarded based on activation of the Virginia is for Lovers brand and services. Please refer to the application instructions on how to maximize bonus points.**
- **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 Programs 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!
- The final application must be submitted via the online application no later than **September 20, 2022 by 5:00 PM**. No other application delivery formats will be accepted. Grading of applications is expected to be completed and award/denial notifications made by October 28, 2022.

1. **IMPORTANT: Do not wait until the last minute to submit your application!** Waiting until the last minute does not allow VTC to diagnose any online submission problems and does not allow time to complete your application properly! No extensions on the deadline will be allowed.

The Rules

Applicant and Partners

Small tourism-related business with 20 or fewer full-time equivalent employees including boutique retail, restaurants, food trucks, small attractions, craft breweries, distilleries, wineries, boutique lodging and B&Bs, and events focused on shoulder season visitation which is September 2022 to May 2023.

Additional eligibility: DMOs and other organizations, such as PDCs and Main Street organizations, may apply but the application must support microbusinesses and/or shoulder season visitation with a robust marketing plan. Gaming establishments that are regulated by the Virginia lottery are eligible to apply. However, they must have a robust visitor experience separate from gaming, such as full-service dining, entertainment, music, and other activities and they must indicate how they support small business and shoulder season visitation.

Ineligible applicants: Federal and state agencies; business with more than 21 full-time equivalent employees.

The Federal Employer Identification number (FEIN) or Social Security number (SSN) must be included for the applicant.

Your program must be located in Virginia and drive visitation to Virginia during the shoulder season (September 2022 to May 2023.) Applications that will lead to increased overnight visitation are encouraged and preferred.

All applicants must be listed on <http://www.Virginia.org> and must provide a reciprocal link to <http://www.Virginia.org> on their website or social media pages. Reimbursement payments will be made only to the applicant listed in the application. Applicants may only submit ONE application for this funding cycle. However, they may be listed as “spokes” on other applications.

Potential vendor of services (i.e., advertising agency, PR firm, printer, web developer, etc.) for, or to, the application program cannot apply and cannot be a spoke in the application. Applicants are encouraged to seek services through a competitive bid process and are encouraged to utilize SWAM (Small Business, Women, or Minority-Owned) vendors, when possible. For more information about SWAM certification, please visit <https://www.sbsd.virginia.gov/certification-division/swam/>.

This program is not intended to be a sustainable funding source for your program. All programs must be for new initiatives focused on supporting microbusinesses and shoulder season visitation. The use of VTC funds must be clearly specified in the application.

Please approach your application carefully. Think about how this funding can take your marketing to new target markets, target new demographics, and/or support new businesses, itineraries, or travel motivations. Current research on tourism in Virginia can be found at: <https://www.vatc.org/research/>

Scoring

There are limited funds for this program, therefore funding will be awarded on a merit scale.

Awarding of funding is based upon information contained in the application and will be scored based upon the VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program Scoring Guidelines (shown below).

Since awards are determined from these scores, the application must be as complete as possible. Do not assume that the review team is familiar with your area, or program, so be sure to include all requested information. Actual award may or may not equal amount requested and is based on available funds at the time of award. Maximum award for this program is \$5,000.

In making decisions on funding applications, the Virginia Tourism Corporation may consider such factors as type and scope of the applying organizations, campaign audience and message, the organization’s additional resources, past awards to – and applications

from – the applying organizations, the impact and priority of the proposed program, the timetable, the number of applications received, the dollar amounts of the applications received and most importantly, the impact of the program’s ability to drive visitation, and visitor revenue in the program coverage area.

The following points are assigned to sections in determining your application score

APPLICATION SECTION	POINTS
Program Focus	10 points
Target Markets	20 points
Partnerships (Hub & Spoke)	25 points
In-Kind Marketing Plan	10 points
Marketing Plan, Calendar, and Budget	25 points
Performance Outcomes	10 points
BONUS - VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS Campaign Tie -in	5 points
Total Possible Points	105 points

The Funds

There is one level of funding in the VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program which is a \$5,000 max award for all applicants

- Funds will be disbursed on a **reimbursement basis** for your qualifying marketing plan items upon receipt from the Lead Applicant by VTC of copies of vendor invoices showing the actual costs, proof of payment of invoices, proof of product or ad campaign (tear sheets, examples of printed and digital materials, copies of audio or video footage, etc.), and/or screen captures and active web addresses for website related programs. Funding payment requests must include the VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program Reimbursement Request form provided after award notification.
- Applicants that include eligible event costs for events, meetings, or conventions outside the normal scope of business operations, must provide a certificate of liability insurance where VTC is listed as an interested party. Failure to do so may result in disqualification of reimbursements.
- **REIMBURSEMENTS: Only ELIGIBLE items covered by the VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program will qualify for reimbursements.**
- **IN-KIND MARKETING MATCH VALUE: You will be required to provide a 1:1 in-kind marketing match but note that match can be in-kind.** In considering your in-kind marketing match items and value, be aware that you can use your existing marketing budget as match. In addition to your PAID MEDIA match components, you may use YOUR OWNED AND/OR EARNED MEDIA VALUE in determining your in-kind marketing match value. **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. Be sure to include the placement dates for the items.
 - VTC allows a “lookback” period for your Paid Media components. Eligible expenditures that have occurred or will occur after June 1, 2022, and before May 31, 2023 AND that promote small businesses and/or off-peak/shoulder season visitation could be submitted for reimbursement provided they meet all other requirements.
- VTC realizes that changes may need to be made to your marketing program. Any changes in the applicant’s program that arise after notification of award must be submitted in writing and approved in writing by VTC.
- All programs must be completed by June 30, 2023 with final reimbursements and reports due by August 31, 2023.
- No further extensions of these deadlines will be granted.

- VTC must report on the effectiveness of the VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program to our stakeholders. We must show a return on investment of the program. To that end, you will be required to provide a brief final report on the effectiveness and outcomes of your programs.
- A final report must be submitted to the VTC within 60 days of the end of the program detailing the results of the program, including return on investment, performance outcome results based upon your Performance Measures Plan and other supporting data. The final report is a simple, two-page summary of the results of your Performance Measures, and other outcomes of your program.
- Failure to provide the final report, or failure to meet guidelines stated in the application, may result in partners being in default and any funding awarded to date may be refundable to VTC.

What the VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program Will Fund

VTC will implement a variety of marketing campaigns over the next several months. Using VTC campaign templates and tie-ins are not required but are encouraged. Based on your timing and marketing goals, you may choose which campaign(s) would be most beneficial for you to join our efforts. All Virginia is for Lovers campaigns offer opportunities for our partners to participate by providing a partner toolkit, logo treatments, creative templates, and sample messaging. Information on the VTC Virginia is for Lovers campaigns is available at <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/brandinitiatives/>.

VTC also encourages partners to review the Virginia Industry Advertising Co-Op program that offers simple, affordable, and flexible advertising opportunities with strategic partners. You will need to indicate on your application if your marketing campaign items are Co-Op opportunities. Info on Co-Ops can be found here: <https://vatc.org/marketing/advertising/partneradvertising/>

VTC also encourages partners to review the Virginia PMAP (Welcome Centers & Rest Areas) program that offers simple, affordable, and flexible advertising opportunities at Virginia Welcome Centers and Safety Rest Areas. You will need to indicate on your application if your marketing campaign items are PMAP opportunities. Info on the PMAP opportunities can be found here: <https://www.welcomeva.com/>

You MUST include the Virginia is for Lovers logo in your marketing. Logo requests and approved logos can be found here: <https://vatc.org/marketing/advertising/vifl-logo-request/> **IMPORTANT: FAILURE to incorporate Virginia is for Lovers logo in your marketing may result in reimbursement requests being denied. Exceptions: 30 second radio advertisements, web banner advertisements, and 1/12 page or smaller advertisements are not required to have the VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS and/or campaign logos.**

Although you are not required to creatively activate and the Virginia is for Lovers brand, campaigns, and opportunities in your marketing, by doing so you can receive up to 5 bonus points on your application. Think about how you can provide creative opportunities, beyond the required logo usage in your marketing, in your campaign to activate the Virginia is for Lovers brand. Examples might include signage and banners on site, staff wearing Virginia is for Lovers apparel, opportunities to shoot photography or video at your location, and carrying Virginia is for Lovers merchandise at your location.

Virginia is for Lovers branded items, such as apparel, banners, and other promotional items, must be purchased from the Image Group through the VA Store. Partners are eligible to set up wholesale accounts. Information can be found here: <https://vatc.org/about/merchandise/> Please note that up to 10% of your budget may be used for these items. Costs above 10% (max \$500 for a \$5,000 award) are NOT reimbursable but may be counted in your in-kind marketing match as long as the items are used in a way that creatively activates the VIFL brand on site or as part of a PMAP program.

Eligible Items

Recommended for Small Businesses, DMOs, and organizations:

- Placement of Advertisements – (includes print ads, printed rack cards, digital ads, social media boosts, radio ads, television ads, etc.). Ads must promote the applicant’s area to visitors. Applications that more fully integrate the “VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS” Industry Advertising Co-Op and/or PMAP Program will score higher. If the proposal includes media outlets that are not part of the VTC Advertising Opportunities, justification should be included as to why the proposed media outlet is used. Please visit <https://www.vatc.org/advertising/partneradvertising/> for more information on VTC Partnership Advertising Opportunities.
- Digital Marketing – Search engine optimization, banner and website advertising, and other electronic marketing initiatives.
- Social media marketing initiatives, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.
- Outdoor advertising through paid billboards.
- Creative services including agency fees.
- Printed Materials – Travel related printed materials including brochures, media kits, group tour publications, meeting planner publications and other printed information materials designed to promote the partner’s area as a travel destination. Such programs **MUST** include a marketing/distribution mechanism and plan for promoting the availability of such printed materials.
- Website Development – Development and/or expansion of websites to promote the applicant’s area are eligible. Maintenance fees for websites are NOT eligible. Websites must include the “VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS” logo and must provide a reciprocal link to <http://www.Virginia.org> from the partner’s website. Website development programs must include a marketing mechanism and plan for promoting the awareness and availability of such websites. NOTE: Costs associated with programming of your current website to allow data share with Virginia.org is an eligible expense.
- Production of photography and video marketing materials:
 - All photography and video marketing materials created using a VTC MLP grant should include usage rights for VTC in perpetuity. You can secure those rights for Virginia Tourism corporation in one of two ways:
 1. When creating your for-hire contract, include language that allows you to transfer usage rights to partners (like VTC). Not only is it a great way to maximize your marketing dollars, but it is a practice VTC has been implementing for years. It is what allows us to share our photo assets with partners like yourself.
 - For an example of the language we use in our contracts, see section 3 in our [licensing terms & conditions](#). Please feel free to copy and adapt this language for your own contracts.
 2. You can have the copyright owner complete our [photo & video release form](#). This MUST be completed by the copyright owner, not by the licensing entity.
 - For information on planning your photo shoot, please see our [How to Plan a Photo Shoot](#) document. Here, we break down our planning process while giving recommendations and tips on maximizing your budget, staying organized, and considering the details.
 - Note: The cost of purchasing equipment for photographic and video production is NOT an eligible expense.
 - Note: The costs of food and other props during a photo shoot are NOT eligible expenses.
 - High resolution photography and b-roll may be delivered to Sarah Hauser. Please contact her at shauser@virginia.org with assets and any questions.
- Tradeshow Displays – Design and production of display units that will be used in conjunction with travel promotions at travel and tradeshows are eligible.
- Participation costs in the VTC Virginia Welcome Center Partnership Marketing and Advertising Program (PMAP). More information on PMAP is available at <https://www.welcomeva.com/>.
- Costs of promotional items (such as pens, pencils, t-shirts, hats, general merchandise, stickers, on-site or local banners, signs, glassware, etc.) NOT to exceed 10% of your total marketing budget.
- The cost of music licensing fees for concerts, performances, or use in video content. Music licensing fees may be up to 10% of your overall marketing budget. Examples of music licensing fees include fees charged by ASCAP, BMI, SESAC and other licensing companies.
- The cost of event cancellation insurance and/or event liability insurance. Up to 10% of your overall marketing budget may be used for event insurance policy costs. However, VTC must be added as an interested party to any event liability

insurance policy AND a copy of the policy must be submitted for reimbursement. Event liability insurance is required for applications that include events, meetings, or conventions outside your normal scope of business.

- The cost of Audio-Visual equipment rental as part of hosting an event, meeting, or convention. Up to 10% of your overall marketing budget may be used for A/V equipment rental.
- The cost of Wi-Fi Internet fees as part of hosting an event, meeting, or convention. Up to 10% of your overall marketing budget may be used to cover these costs.

In addition to the above, the following items are recommended for DMOs and organizations engaging in more complex destination and regional marketing:

- Participation in the Virginia Travel Guide. For more information, please refer to <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/guideadvertising/>
- Participation fees in international sales missions with VTC & CRUSA, including Canada. For more information, please refer to <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/international/>. Travel expenses, including accommodations, and transportation, are NOT eligible.
- Creation of mobile marketing applications (“Apps”) so long as they are measurable.
- Influencer Marketing – Use of Influencer Marketers. To read and review our Best Practices for Influencer Marketing, please refer to <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/public-relations/prbestpractices/>. NOTE: This is a password protected page. Information on requesting a password is available at the link above. Please note that travel expenses, such as transportation, lodging, and meals for influencers are eligible, but alcohol expenses are **not** eligible.
- Participation fees in VTC domestic sales trade show opportunities. Travel expenses, including accommodations, and transportation, are NOT eligible.
- Participation fees in a sales mission with VTC Domestic Sales to target markets for Tour and Travel, Meetings & Conventions or Sports Marketing. Travel expenses, including accommodations, and transportation, are NOT eligible.
- Travel and Trade Show Booth Rental/Participation Fees – Fees associated with registration at travel and trade shows are eligible. Travel expenses, including accommodations, and transportation, are NOT eligible.
- Dues and Memberships – Fees that are required to participate in marketing initiatives or travel trade shows are eligible. Membership fees shall not exceed 10% of your total marketing budget.
- The cost of doing research **DIRECTLY RELATED TO YOUR PROGRAM**. Research may be up to 15% of your overall marketing budget. Research programs funded by the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program must share the research results and any reports with the VTC Research Department.

INELIGIBLE ITEMS: What the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program will NOT Fund

The following will **NOT** be funded by the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Program:

- ***Programs that do not contribute to increased visitation to Virginia and Virginia destinations will not qualify.***
- ***Programs that promote and market cannabis will not qualify.***
- **Administrative and Office expenses** including office space, salary and personnel costs, office supplies, office equipment, normal office postage, other administrative costs, cost of doing business and overhead costs, vehicle costs; are NOT eligible expenses.
- Maintenance fees (such as hosting and ongoing maintenance) for websites are NOT eligible.
- The cost of purchasing computers/equipment (such as iPads, Point of Sale devices, drones, etc.) are NOT eligible expenses.
- Event start-up and production costs are NOT eligible expenses.
- Production of items such as books, art, music, etc. are NOT eligible expenses.
- Programs that focus on a tangible product’s marketing (such as books, art prints, etc.) are NOT eligible expenses.

- Sponsorship costs not directly related to marketing activities are NOT eligible expenses.
- FAM/Media Tours costs associated with travel (transportation, lodging, meals, etc.) are NOT eligible expenses. Development of media kits and/or other collateral marketing materials are eligible expenses.
- Programs that focus exclusively on a RESEARCH project, will not qualify. **SUCH APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE EXTENSIVE MARKETING INITIATIVES AND NOT JUST FOCUS ON RESEARCH. The research costs must be directly associated with the marketing program. Research costs not directly associated with the program are NOT eligible expenses**
- Programs that focus exclusively on a BRANDING project will not qualify. **SUCH APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE EXTENSIVE MARKETING INITIATIVES AND NOT JUST FOCUS ON BRANDING.** The branding initiative must be directly associated with the marketing program. Branding costs not directly associated with the program are NOT eligible expenses.
- The costs of signage, vehicle wraps, and local/onsite banners - including production and installation - are NOT eligible expenses.

EXCEPTIONS:

- (1) Costs associated with design, fabrication, and installation of Virginia Civil War Trails or Road to Revolution Trail interpretive markers *ARE an eligible signage cost*. Maintenance fees for Virginia Civil War Trails or Road to Revolution interpretive markers are NOT eligible expenses. Projects that include Virginia Civil War Trails or Road to Revolution Trail interpretive markers must include a marketing component promoting the presence of the marker. An application for a project that features Virginia Civil War Trails or Road to Revolution interpretive markers must be endorsed by Drew Gruber, Executive Director, Virginia Civil War Trails, Inc. (Contact: 757-378-5462 or Virginia Civil War Trails, PO Box 1862, Williamsburg, VA 23187). This endorsement must be indicated in your program description, and proof of endorsement (signed letter) must be included with reimbursement requests for Virginia Civil War Trails or Road to Revolution markers.
- (2) Costs associated with Virginia is for Lovers posters, banners, and signage as part of a PMAP program when those posters, banners, and signage will be displayed at the Virginia Welcome Center or Safety Rest Area
- (3) Cost associated with Virginia is for Lovers posters, banners, apparel and signage that will be displayed on-site or worn at an event by event staff and performers are not eligible for reimbursement, but may be counted as part of your in-kind match.
- Customer service and industry training programs are NOT eligible expenses.
- Travel expenses, including accommodations, and transportation, are NOT eligible expenses.

DEADLINE INFORMATION

- Applications are due by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, September 20, 2022
- **NO extensions to this deadline will be possible.**
- Applicants will be notified of awards by late October.