



## Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Spring 2024

### Destination Marketing Organization Marketing Program

#### Overview &

#### Terms and Conditions

**ELIGIBILITY: ONLY VIRGINIA DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS (DMOs) THAT HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED BY VIRGINIA TOURISM CORPORATION AS OF 12/31/2023 MAY APPLY. OTHER APPLICANTS MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE MARKETING LEVERAGE PROGRAM AND/OR THE SPECIAL EVENTS & FESTIVALS PROGRAM. DMOs ARE ALSO ELIGIBLE FOR THIS PROGRAM AND THE MARKETING LEVERAGE PROGRAM AND SPECIAL EVENTS & FESTIVALS SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM. HOWEVER, ONLY ONE APPLICATION PER DMO PER PROGRAM MAY BE SUBMITTED.**

**IMPORTANT! PLEASE REVIEW THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE APPLYING.** YOU WILL ACCEPT THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS AT THE END OF YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION IN THE APPLICATION WEB PORTAL FOUND ON [WWW.VATC.ORG/GRANTS](http://WWW.VATC.ORG/GRANTS)

*As a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia Tourism Authority (DBA Virginia Tourism Corporation) must comply with open records policies per Virginia Code §2.2-3700, and therefore must provide copies of awarded grant applications when requested. If your application is requested by an individual or organization, you will be notified, and any personal and banking information will be redacted.*

FOR THE SPRING 2024 ROUND, **VTC IS REQUIRING A MINIMUM 50% CASH OR IN-KIND MATCH AND APPLICATIONS THAT DEMONSTRATE HIGHER MATCH WILL RECEIVE MORE POINTS.**

FOR THE SPRING 2024 ROUND, VTC IS OFFERING **ONE** AWARD TIER OF UP TO \$20,000 WITH A **MINIMUM** 50% CASH OR IN-KIND MATCH.

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?
- Do you have letters of support from two partners, one of which must be from a lodging partner, ready to upload?

- Is your destination listed on [Virginia.org](https://www.virginia.org)? Applicants and partners must be listed on Virginia.org. Reimbursements may be delayed or denied if not listed on Virginia.org. However, listing on Virginia.org is not required at the time of application.
- Have you completed the CONTACT INFORMATION section including Federal Employer Identification Numbers (FEIN)? The FEIN 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 reimbursable marketing plan budget?
- Have you identified the dates of your marketing program? Final reports and final reimbursement requests are due no later than 60 days after your program end date or 18 months from award date [whichever is earlier](#).
- Have you THOROUGHLY described your PROGRAM HUB, identified **TWO PARTNERS** spokes and **FOUR SUPPORTING** spokes? These [six partners](#) should be working with you on your application and should be supporting your marketing efforts through itinerary building, cooperative marketing, marketing of travel packages, and overall destination marketing.
- Have you identified your TARGET MARKETS and TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS? Have you indicated what [research you have to validate](#) these as your targets? Have you identified your target demographics within those markets?
  - Have you clearly listed at least the [minimum required amount of cash or in-kind match](#) for your requested award? [Note: Applications with higher match will score higher](#). Is your cash or in-kind match marketing plan clear, concise, and only listing [eligible marketing items](#)? [Proof of cash or in-kind match is not required. However, you are attesting to the match by listing the items on your cash/in-kind match marketing plan.](#)
- Have you provided a [detailed](#) reimbursable marketing plan listing only eligible marketing items for which you plan to seek reimbursement? Is your reimbursable marketing plan clear, concise, and connected to your target markets and target demographics?
- Have you clearly stated your PERFORMANCE MEASURES including baseline measures where you are today, and where you want to be at the end of your marketing program? Are your goals reasonable and achievable with this marketing program?
- BONUS POINTS** - Does your program activate the “VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS” brand?

**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 in the **ONLINE PORTAL**

**by 5:00 PM on Thursday, March 14, 2024.**

**NO EXTENSION OF THIS DEADLINE WILL BE ALLOWED.**

**NO MAILED, E-MAILED, OR FAXED APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**



## What is the Virginia Tourism Corporation Marketing Leverage Program?

The Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) announces that applications are now open for the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Spring 2024 Destination Marketing Organization Marketing Leverage Program. Virginia Tourism Corporation offers these marketing grant funds annually to spur tourism-related economic activity, create robust public-private marketing partnerships, and promote travel to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Programs must be designed to drive visitation to Virginia and generate a positive economic impact.

## General Overview

- **Only Virginia Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), officially designated as of 12/31/23, may apply for this program.** If you are not a DMO, please apply to the Marketing Leverage Program that is also open during this same time frame. The DMO program is only open to DMOs. A list of recognized Virginia DMOs is available at <https://vatc.org/dmo-ctic-lists/>. **Questions about eligibility should be directed to [VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org](mailto:VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org).** VTC Grants Division staff will be the final arbiter of eligibility.
  - **Potential vendors of services (i.e., advertising agency, PR firm, television stations, radio stations, printers, web developers, podcasters, influencers, etc.) cannot be a partner in the application.**
  - **Applicants are required to:**
    - a. **Include the Virginia is for Lovers brand/logo in the marketing campaign. Logos requests and a list of approved logos can be found here:** <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/vifl-logo-request/>  
**Failure to include the Virginia is for Lovers logo on your marketing materials, including in radio advertising and broadcast advertising, may result in denial of your reimbursement request. Read further in terms and conditions for additional information on required usage of the Virginia is for Lovers logo.**
- Applicants are encouraged to:**
- b. **Incorporate a VTC Brand campaign into your marketing plan. Info can be found here:** <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/brandinitiatives/>
  - c. **Incorporate of VTC PMAP/Welcome Center 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. Not all applicants will receive an award.
  - Awardees of prior VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage Programs and/or prior VTC Marketing Leverage Program, VTC DMO 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.

- DMO applicants are eligible to submit one application to each of the following programs: DMO Marketing Program, Marketing Leverage Program, and Special Events & Festivals Program.
- 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. The online application portal can be found at [www.vatc.org/grants](http://www.vatc.org/grants).
- 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 the online portal.
- The final application must be submitted via the online **application no later than Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 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 mid-April 2024 with the official announcement of awards to be made in mid-May 2024.

**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.

### **Applicant and Partners**

Applicants may only be local or regional destination marketing organizations (DMOs.)

Partners can be **tourism-oriented** private businesses, museums, attractions, cultural or other events, localities, Chambers of Commerce, Planning District Commissions, and other tourism-related entities.

**Programs promoting cannabis are not eligible.**

Stand-alone hair salons, nail salons, yoga studios, personal fitness studios, and other wellness services are only eligible to be partners if they are part of a larger single-entity resort complex that includes lodging. For instance, a hair salon that is part of The Homestead Resort would be eligible. However, a hair salon in strip mall would not be eligible. **The Federal Employer Identification number (FEIN) or SSN must be included for the applicant.**

Your program must be in Virginia and drive visitation to Virginia. Applications that will lead to increased overnight visitation are encouraged. **DMO applicants must identify a lodging partner in their application and upload a letter of support from that lodging partner.** A lodging partner can be a hotel, inn, B&B, campground, VRBO, etc. Because we know some of our rural localities lack lodging amenities, the lodging partner can be regional. However, a letter of support is still required.

All applicable partners in the application must be listed on <http://www.Virginia.org> and must provide a reciprocal link to <http://www.Virginia.org> before reimbursements can be processed. However, it is not required at the time of application.

Applicants will administer the program and receive the reimbursement payments. The applicant can **only submit one application for this funding.**

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, such as targeting new markets, targeting new demographics, featuring new travel motivations, new tourism product, and/or new festivals or events.. The use of VTC funds must be clearly specified in the application.

**Partial funding may be awarded** in some cases and applicants who accept the partial funding award will need to adjust their marketing plan based on the partial award amount.

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 Destination Marketing Organization 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 destination, 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 \$20,000. In making decisions on funding applications, the Virginia Tourism Corporation may consider such factors as type and scope of the applying organization, campaign audience and message, the organization's additional resources, the amount and type of matching funds, 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 Marketing Goals	15 points
Competition	10 points
Hub & Spoke Section	15 points
Target Markets	20 points
Marketing Plan, Calendar, and Budget	30 points
Performance Outcomes	10 points
BONUS - VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS Activations	5 points
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>105 points</b>

## The Funds

There is one level of funding for this Destination Marketing Organization Marketing Leverage Program round. The maximum award is up to \$20,000 with a minimum 50% cash or in-kind marketing match. In-kind marketing match is accepted in this program and proof of cash marketing match spend on eligible marketing is not required. **However, you are attesting to the merit of your match when you submit your application.** For a \$10,000 award, you must list a minimum of \$5,000 in in-kind or cash match marketing activity. For a \$20,000 award, you must submit proof of a minimum of \$10,000 in-kind or cash match marketing activity. DMOs are encouraged to list **MORE** than the minimum match. The 2024 round will include scoring your in-kind or cash match marketing plan based on the quality of the marketing plan **and** the amount of match.

- In-kind marketing match based on owned and earned media can be calculated based on the following:
- Print editorial \$250/quarter page. \$1,000 per full page. (Must have appeared in print after June 1, 2023.)
- Online editorial \$500/quarter page. \$2,000 per full page. (Must still be hosted online.)
- Print listing \$100/each (Must have appeared in print after June 1, 2023.)
- Online listing \$200/each (Must still be hosted online.)
- Social Media Followers 10 cents each
- Owned media website clicks 10 cents each per link (Must be as of June 1, 2023.)

In-kind marketing match should be listed in the In-Kind and Cash Match Marketing Plan as separate line items with detailed information about the articles, dates, social media channel, website, links, etc.

Cash match should be calculated on the actual cost of the marketing activity.

Any eligible marketing expenses reimbursed by VTC must include the Virginia is for Lovers logo where required.

Applicants are not required to apply for the maximum amount, but \$20,000 is the maximum amount that will be awarded to any single applicant. Our goal is to increase visitation to Virginia in a very competitive travel environment. VTC may not be able to fund all programs at the maximum request. Programs will be evaluated on the points scale in the previous section.

- If selected for an award, funds will be disbursed on a **reimbursement basis** for your eligible marketing plan items upon receipt from the 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. Proof of Virginia is for Lovers logo placement on eligible marketing expenses where required must also be submitted. Reimbursement request must include the VTC DMO 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.
- VTC allows a six month “lookback” period for your Paid Media match components. Eligible expenditures that have occurred since the October 1, 2023 can be used as part of your match component and part of your reimbursable marketing plan section upon successful award notification and receipt of required documentation.
- 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. Should changes need to be made please request a Marketing Plan Revision form from [VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org](mailto:VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org). Those revisions will be reviewed and notice of approval will be send to the applicant within 7 days.
- All programs should be completed within 18 months of the award notification date or within 60 days of the marketing program end date listed in the application, whichever is earlier. VTC will send reminders about final reimbursement and final reports 60 days before the due date.
- The applicant may request up to a 6-month Extension ONCE before the end of the 18-month duration of the application program. No further extensions will be granted.
- VTC must report on the effectiveness of the VTC DMO 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 reverted to VTC.

### **What the VTC DMO 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. 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 Center program that offers simple, affordable, and flexible advertising opportunities at Virginia Welcome Centers and Safety Rest Areas. PMAP/Welcome Center opportunities include brochure and rack card pocket space, window clings, video spotlights, and other unique opportunities only available at Virginia Welcome Centers or Safety Rest Areas. You will need to indicate on your application if your marketing campaign items are PMAP/Welcome Center opportunities. Info on the PMAP/Welcome Center opportunities can be found here: <https://www.welcomeva.com/>

You MUST include the Virginia is for Lovers logo in your marketing and advertising where applicable. Logo requests and approved logos can be found here: <https://vatc.org/marketing/advertising/vifl-logo-request/>

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 banners on stages, videotaped interviews disseminated via social media with performers wearing Virginia is for Lovers apparel, Virginia is for Lovers apparel on staff, unique photography or videography opportunities, behind-the-scenes opportunities, or other creative ways to include the brand in your marketing.

Virginia is for Lovers branded items, such as apparel, banners, and other promotional items, must be purchased through the VA Store from VTC's sole source contractor. Partners are eligible to set up wholesale accounts. Information can be found here: <https://vatc.org/about/merchandise/> Please note that only 10% of your award can be used for promotional items. However, additional items may be counted in your cash marketing match if the items are used in a way that creatively activates the VIFL brand on site or as part of a PMAP program.



**IMPORTANT: FAILURE to incorporate Virginia is for Lovers logo in your marketing and on your marketing materials may result in reimbursement requests being denied. Exceptions: 30 second radio advertisements, web banner advertisements, and 1/12 page or smaller advertisements, advertorial designed to look like editorial are not required to have the VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS and/or campaign logos.**

Please visit <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/vifl-logo-request/> to request the **VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS logo**. Also refer to the **VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS Creative Resources Guide for more information**. The Guide can be found at [https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/creative\\_resources\\_guide\\_03262020v3.pdf](https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/creative_resources_guide_03262020v3.pdf). For questions or to seek an exemption from this requirement please email [VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org](mailto:VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org). For instance, an exemption may be granted for paid advertorial that is designed to look at like editorial and where the Virginia is for Lovers logo may disrupt the aesthetic of the article/layout. Another exception might be for sponsorship of a PBS or cable television broadcast show showing the destination. However, VTC would like for applicants in these instances to work “Virginia is for Lovers” apparel into the broadcast or incorporate the logo in the narrative or some other creative way.

**ONLY the following items are eligible marketing expenses**

- Placement of Advertisements – (includes print ads, digital, radio, television, etc.). Ads must promote the applicant’s business, region, destination, etc. to visitor are eligible. Applications that more fully integrate the “VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS” Industry Advertising Co-Op and/or PMAP Program will score higher. Please visit <https://www.vatc.org/advertising/partneradvertising/> for more information on VTC Partnership Advertising Opportunities.
- Outdoor advertising through paid billboards is eligible. Higher scores are given to billboard advertising that occurs at least 50 miles away from the destination.
- Outdoor advertising on out-of-market vehicles, including vehicle wrap partnerships with ride-share services facilitated through a third party such as Carvertise. However, these costs are only reimbursable if the advertising is occurring outside of the local market (at least 50 miles away) and is measurable through a QR code or website are eligible. Wrapping locally owned vehicles, locality-owned vehicles, and/or business-owned vehicles is NOT eligible.
- Creative services including agency fees, including advertising agency fees, PR agency fees, and social media management fees are eligible. However, grant funds can not be used to pay staff wages to do these activities. Creative services must be invoiced with a clear description of activities, tear sheets/links/proof of activities and proof of payment must be submitted with the reimbursement request.
- Sponsorship fees to appear in Public Broadcasting or cable television series that are broadcast to a large viewing market either on television or through streaming services are eligible. It is recommended that the Virginia is for Lovers logo be incorporated into the filming through props, apparel, or posters/banners that may occur as a natural part of a scene. A copy of the broadcast footage with the VIFL time mark should be submitted with reimbursement materials.

- Printed Materials – Travel related printed materials including brochures, media kits, event posters, group tour publications, meeting planner publications and other printed information materials designed to promote the applicant’s partner’s area as a travel destination are eligible. Such programs **MUST** include a marketing/distribution mechanism and plan for promoting the availability of such printed materials are eligible. For instance, applicants may include the cost of design and printing of a rack card if there is also information about where the rack card will be distributed. The same applicant could also include the costs of rack card pocket space at a Virginia Welcome Center in the marketing plan and be reimbursed for design, printing, and distribution costs. Applications that only include printing costs and do not include a distribution plan may not qualify for an award.
- Website Development – Development and/or expansion of websites to promote the applicant’s business or destination are eligible. **Maintenance and hosting 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.
- Participation fees for desk-side media appointments with the VTC Communications Department are eligible.
- Participation in the VTC LOVEworks RENTAL Program is eligible.
- Participation in the Virginia Travel Guide is eligible. For more information, please refer to <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/guideadvertising/>
- Participation fees in international sales missions with VTC & CRUSA, including Canada are eligible. For more information, please refer to <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/international/>.
- Digital Marketing – Search engine optimization, banner and website advertising, and other electronic marketing initiatives are eligible.
- Creation of mobile marketing applications (“Apps”) so long as they are measurable are eligible
- Social media marketing initiatives, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, etc. are eligible.
- Influencer Marketing – Use of Influencer Marketers is eligible. 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 invoiced travel expenses, such as transportation, lodging, and meals for influencers are eligible, but alcohol expenses are **not** eligible.
- Production of photography and video marketing materials is eligible as follows:
  - 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 Atkins. Please contact her at [satkins@virginia.org](mailto:satkins@virginia.org) with assets and any questions.
- Participation fees in VTC domestic sales trade show opportunities are eligible.
- Participation fees in a sales mission with VTC Domestic Sales to target markets for Tour and Travel, Meetings & Conventions or Sports Marketing are eligible. 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.
- Tradeshow Displays – Design and production of display units that will be used in conjunction with travel promotions at travel and tradeshow are eligible.
- Participation costs in the VTC Virginia Welcome Center Partnership Marketing and Advertising Program (PMAP) are eligible. More information on PMAP is available at <https://www.welcomeva.com/>.
- Fulfillment Costs – Fees associated with mailing collateral materials as a result of the marketing programs are eligible. This only includes the shipping and fulfillment costs associated with marketing materials. Shipping costs related to equipment for an event, tradeshow, etc are not eligible.
- The cost of doing research **DIRECTLY RELATED TO YOUR PROGRAM** is eligible. 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.
- Costs of promotional items (such as pens, pencils, t-shirts, hats, general merchandise, stickers, on-site or local banners, temporary event signs, glassware, etc.) NOT to exceed 10% of your total marketing budget are eligible.

- The cost of music licensing fees for concerts, performances, or use in video content is eligible. 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 is eligible. Up to 10% of your overall marketing budget may be used for 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 is eligible. 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 is eligible. Up to 10% of your overall marketing budget may be used to cover these costs.
- **Any other marketing expenses are ineligible.** Grant funds can not be used to pay for staff, police, fire, or emergency services, referees, timekeepers, vehicle rentals, signage, food, beverage, accommodations, or any other equipment rentals or event production costs.
- **VTC is the final arbiter of eligible and ineligible expenses.** Please email [VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org](mailto:VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org) with questions about eligibility of items not listed BEFORE you complete your application.

### **INELIGIBLE ITEMS: What the VTC Destination Marketing Organization 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.***
- ***Programs that are not tourism-oriented will not qualify. Tourism-oriented means having a robust visitor experience that brings in visitors from out-of-region and out-of-state.***
- Wrapping locally owned vehicles, locality-owned vehicles, business-owned vehicles is NOT eligible.
- **Travel expenses**, including lodging, transportation, mileage, meals, or alcohol are not eligible even if the costs are associated with a VTC desk side appointment, CRUSA trade mission, tradeshow or other marketing opportunities. The only exception is invoiced travel by influencers and agencies that are providing marketing services.
- **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.
- **Employee wages, salaries, or other normal costs of doing business are not eligible. Costs for event security and/or emergency services for an event are not eligible.**
- Costs associated with producing an event are not eligible in this program. This includes event staff, such as timekeepers, security, referees, emergency services, attendants, and concession workers. Other production costs such as stage rentals, chair rentals, fencing, performer fees, etc are not eligible in this program.
- 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.
- 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 unless that marketing activity is driving visitation to a particular tourism-oriented destination or region. VTC Grants Division reserves the right to make the final decision on eligibility of these activities.
- 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 cost 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. VDOT highway signage is NOT an eligible expense.

**EXCEPTIONS:**

- (1) Costs associated with posters, banners, and signage to assist with relaying information and changes due to COVID-19 *ARE an eligible signage cost.*
- (2) Costs associated with design, fabrication, and installation of Virginia Civil War Trails interpretive markers and/or Road to Revolution interpretive markers *ARE an eligible signage cost.* Maintenance fees for Virginia Civil War Trails and/or Road to Revolution interpretive markers are NOT eligible expenses. Projects that include Virginia Civil War Trails and/or Road to Revolution interpretive markers must include a marketing component promoting the presence of the marker. An application for a project that features Virginia Civil War Trails and/or Road to Revolution interpretive markers must be endorsed by Drew Gruber, Executive Director, Virginia Civil War Trails (Contact: 804-783-7423 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 and/or Road to Revolution Trail markers.
- (3) Costs associated with Virginia is for Lovers posters, banners, and signage as part of a PMAP/Welcome Center program when those posters, banners, and signage are temporary will be displayed at the Virginia Welcome Center or Safety Rest Area or at a grant-funded event or festival.
- (4) 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 beyond 10% of the applicant's total award, but may be counted as part of your match.
- Customer service and industry training programs are NOT eligible expenses.

- Software subscriptions/purchases, such as Adobe Creative Suite, WordPress, Windows, MS-Office, are NOT eligible expenses.

## **DEADLINE INFORMATION**

- Applications are due by 5:00 PM on Thursday, March 14, 2024.
- **NO extensions to this deadline will be possible.**
- Applicants will be notified of awards by mid-April 2024 with a public press release in mid-May 2024.