



**Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) Spring 2024
Virginia Special Events & Festivals Sponsorship Program**

Overview &

Terms and Conditions

PLEASE REVIEW BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR FINAL APPLICATION!!!!

IMPORTANT! PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS STILL A RELATIVELY NEW PROGRAM. IT IS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT THAN VTC'S MARKETING LEVERAGE AND DMO GRANT PROGRAMS. THIS A **REIMBURSEABLE** SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS FOR CERTAIN MARKETING AND EVENT PRODUCTION COST REIMBURSEMENTS. **NO FUNDING IS PROVIDED UP FRONT.** FAILURE TO EXECUTE THE SPONSORSHIP DELIVERABLES CONTAINED IN YOUR MARKETING AND PRODUCTION PLANS COULD RESULT IN DENIAL OF YOUR REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS.

*****THE 2024 ROUND OF THE VTC SPECIAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS PROGRAMS IS ONLY FOR EVENTS THAT OCCUR BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2024, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024. *****

PENDING ALLOCATION OF FUNDING, ANOTHER ROUND OF THE VTC SPECIAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS PROGRAM WILL OPEN IN MID-2024 AND BE AVAILABLE FOR EVENTS BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2025, AND DECEMBER 31, 2025. GOING FORWARD, PENDING ALLOCATION OF FUNDING, THE SPECIAL EVENTS AND FESTIVAL PROGRAM WILL OPEN MID-YEAR EACH YEAR.

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.

THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOR THE 2024 ROUND. PLEASE REVIEW THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS IN FULL BEFORE APPLYING. IF YOU ARE NOT QUALIFIED FOR THIS PROGRAM ANYMORE, YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR THE MARKETING LEVERAGE PROGRAM.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS ARE MUSIC FESTIVALS, EVENTS, DMOs, BUSINESSES, ATTRACTIONS, CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, ORGANIZATIONS, LOCALITIES, AND NON-PROFITS THAT DRIVE VISITATION TO VIRGINIA AND HAVE ROBUST VISITOR EXPERIENCES. THIS IS AN **EVENT AND FESTIVAL-FOCUSED PROGRAM** AND THE MARKETING SECTION APPLICATION SHOULD REVOLVE AROUND MARKETING OF THE EVENT TO DRIVE TICKET SALES AND OVERNIGHT VISITATION AND THE PRODUCTION SECTION OF THE APPLICATION FOCUS ON IMPROVING OR EXPANDING VISITOR EXPERIENCES AT THE EVENT OR FESTIVAL. IMPROVING OR EXPANDING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE MEANS ADDING ADDITIONAL DAYS, ADDING ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS AN ARTISAN MARKET OR CONCESSIONS, ADDING ADDITIONAL STAGES, MAKING THE SPECIAL EVENT OR FESTIVAL ACCESSIBLE, OR OTHER ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO INCREASE VISITATION TO THE SPECIAL

EVENT OR FESTIVAL. YOU MUST CLEARLY EXPLAIN HOW THESE FUNDS WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN YOUR APPLICATION.

WHAT THIS PROGRAM WILL NOT FUND:

- THIS PROGRAM WILL **NOT** FUND START-UP SPECIAL EVENTS & FESTIVALS.
- THIS PROGRAM WILL **NOT** FUND EVENT/CONCERT SERIES THAT ARE ONCE-A-WEEK OR SERIES THAT OCCUR INTERMITTENTLY OVER A MONTH OR A SEASON. THE MARKETING LEVERAGE PROGRAM IS A BETTER FIT FOR EVENT SERIES.
- **NEW IN 2024!** THIS PROGRAM WILL **NOT** FUND EVENTS THAT HAVE **FEWER THAN 1,000 ATTENDEES**. **PROOF OF PRIOR ATTENDANCE** IS REQUIRED FOR THE 2024 ROUND AND **PROOF OF ACTUAL ATTENDANCE** IS REQUIRED IN YOUR FINAL REPORT. PROOF OF ATTENDANCE CAN BE TICKETING SYSTEM REPORT SUCH AS THOSE GENERATED BY SERVICES SUCH AS TICKETMASTER, EVENTBRITE, SALES REPORTS, FACEBOOK/SOCIAL MEDIA RSVPs, AND WRITTEN ATTESTATIONS. YOU WILL UPLOAD THESE DOCUMENTS IN THE APPLICATION PORTAL.

EVENTS WITH FEWER THAN 1,000 ATTENDEES CAN APPLY FOR THE MARKETING LEVERAGE PROGRAM UNTIL THE EVENT OR FESTIVAL GROWS TO A MINIMUM ATTENDANCE OF 1,000 FOR TWO PRIOR YEARS.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS FUNDED UNDER THIS PROGRAM MUST:

- BE **AT LEAST TWO CONSECUTIVE** DAYS.
- HAVE BEEN HELD AT LEAST TWICE SINCE **2017**
- BE TOURISM ORIENTED
- HAVE SIGNIFICANT VISITOR EXPERIENCE
- GENERATE SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC IMPACT
- BE A SIGNIFICANT DRIVER OF VISITATION, AND IN PARTICULAR, OVERNIGHT VISITATION
- MUST BE BASED IN VIRGINIA
- MUST SUBMIT PROOF OF PRIOR ATTENDANCE WITH THE APPLICATION
- MUST REASONABLY PROJECT 2024 ATTENDANCE IN THE APPLICATION
- MUST IDENTIFY A LODGING PARTNER IN THEIR APPLICATION AND UPLOAD A LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM THAT PARTNER. A LODGING PARTNER CAN BE A HOTEL, INN, B&B, CAMPGROUND, ETC. BECAUSE WE KNOW SOME OF OUR RURAL LOCALITIES LACK LODGING AMENITIES, THE LODGING PARTNER CAN BE REGIONAL.
- MUST UPLOAD A LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM THEIR LOCAL OR REGIONAL DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION OR FROM THE LOCALITY IF THERE IS NOT A LOCAL OR REGIONAL DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION. WWW.VATC.ORG/DMOLIST

APPLICANTS MAY ONLY DO ONE APPLICATION PER CYCLE FOR THIS PROGRAM. APPLICANTS WHO HOST MULTIPLE LARGE MINIMUM TWO-DAY SPECIAL EVENTS OR FESTIVALS **MUST CHOOSE ONLY ONE SPECIAL EVENT OR FESTIVAL** FOR WHICH TO APPLY. WE RECOMMEND THAT APPLICANTS CHOOSE THEIR MOST SIGNIFICANT SPECIAL EVENT OR FESTIVAL WITH THE HIGHEST PROJECTED VISITATION AND HIGHEST ECONOMIC IMPACT.

READ 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!

- ☐ Do you have letters of support from the Destination Marketing Organization or locality? Do you have a letter of support from a lodging partner? Do you have proof of prior attendance? You will need to upload these attachments in the application portal.
- ☐ Have you read all instructions, Word version of this application, and helpful tips?
- ☐ Do you understand the **requirement** to use the Virginia is for Lovers logo on all your marketing materials, including social media posts and most digital marketing activities? Do you understand that you are encouraged to activate the Virginia is for Lovers brand through apparel, banners, flags, etc. at your special event or festival?
- ☐ Is the event listed on Virginia.org? Events must be listed on Virginia.org to qualify for reimbursements. However, the event listing does **not** need to be completed 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. Only **one** application per FEIN/SSN is permitted in this program.
- ☐ Have you indicated the dates of your special event or festival? Is the special event or festival a minimum of two days with **robust visitor experiences** on **ALL** days? Have you thoroughly described the visitor experiences?
- ☐ Have you indicated the amount of your requested funds and does that amount correspond to your marketing plan budget?
- ☐ Have you provided a thorough description of your event, event names, event coordinator, event location, and two years' prior attendance data?
- ☐ Do you understand the liability insurance requirement and that Virginia Tourism Corporation must be listed as an interested party on the policy? Failure to do so will disqualify your application for reimbursement.
- ☐ Have you specified what you want to accomplish with this specific marketing and production program?
- ☐ Have you indicated how this VTC funding will increase overnight visitation?
- ☐ Have you connected with LODGING AND FOOD & BEVERAGE partners to create special event or festival travel packages? Have you thoroughly explained those partnerships and packages?
- ☐ Have you identified your DMO and locality where the event takes place?
- ☐ Have you identified your TARGET MARKETS? Have you indicated what research you have to validate these as your target markets? Have you indicated the **target demographics** within these target markets?
- ☐ Have you clearly stated what is your CASH and/or IN-KIND MARKETING MATCH, and what is the ESTIMATED VALUE of that marketing match? Have you met the minimum required match? Have you exceeded the minimum match? **New in 2024—applicants will be scored on the quantity of MARKETING match in addition to the quality of MARKETING match.**
- ☐ Have you clearly stated what is your CASH and/or IN-KIND EVENT PRODUCTION MATCH, and what is the ESTIMATED VALUE of that event production match? Applicants are encouraged to include more than the minimum match in their application. **New in 2024—applicants will be scored on the quantity of PRODUCTION match in addition to the quality of PRODUCTION match.**

- ☐ Have you provided detailed MARKETING PLANS, including MEDIA CHANNEL/VENDOR NAME, PLACEMENT DATES, TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS, AND BUDGET AMOUNTS?
- ☐ Have you provided detailed PRODUCTION PLANS, including VENDOR NAME, PLACEMENT DATES, TYPE OF EQUIPMENT/SERVICE, AND BUDGET AMOUNTS? Do you understand that there are a limited number of eligible production items, and any ineligible expenses will be disqualified and your award reduced?
- ☐ Have you indicated the number of days your special event/festival is open to the public with robust visitor experiences? Have you thoroughly described the visitor experiences on each day? Have you projected your special event attendance and indicated the research, info or data you used to make that projection?
- ☐ Have you indicated how many attendees spend at least one night in the locality where the event takes place, how many attendees are day trippers, and how many attendees are locals? Have you indicated the research, info, or data you used to make that projection?
- ☐ Have you clearly stated two additional PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES including baseline measures where you were during your last event, and where you want to be for this special event or festival?
- ☐ **BONUS POINTS** - Does your program activate and incorporate the “VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS” brand and marketing opportunities?

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 Thursday, March 14, 2023.

NO EXTENSION OF THIS DEADLINE WILL BE ALLOWED!!!



What is the Virginia Special Events & Festivals Program?

The Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) announces that applications are now open for the Virginia Special Events & Festivals Program. The Virginia Special Events & Festival Program purpose is to assist with marketing and production of **established** overnight Virginia special events and festivals to grow their attendance, visitor experience, and economic impact. Preference is given to special events and festivals that have a significant and positive economic impact on the Virginia local community. THIS A REIMBURSEABLE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS FOR CERTAIN MARKETING AND PRODUCTION COST REIMBURSEMENTS. NO FUNDS ARE GRANTED UP FRONT. THIS IS A REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM ONLY AND ONLY ELIGIBLE EXPENSES WILL BE REIMBURSED UP TO YOUR AWARD AMOUNT. FAILURE TO EXECUTE THE SPONSORSHIP DELIVERABLES COULD RESULT IN NO REIMBURSEMENT.

PLEASE NOTE: This is a relatively **NEW** program and differs significantly from past VTC Marketing Leverage Program applications and past Virginia Music Festival Sponsorship applications. Below is an overview of the changes:

- Different online application process than in the past.
- **Three** funding levels:
 - Tier One:** up to \$5,000 for special events and festivals with a minimum of 1,000 to 4,999 attendees *Agritourism special events and festivals located on working farms in federally designated Economic Development Districts may apply for tier one with a minimum attendance of 500. All other program terms and conditions apply.* <https://www.eda.gov/grant-resources/economic-development-directory/va>
 - Tier Two:** up to \$10,000 for special events and festivals with a minimum of 5,000 up to 19,999 attendees
 - Tier Three:** up to \$20,000 for special events and festivals with a minimum of 20,000 or more attendees*There is a 50% cash or in-kind minimum match for each tier. Applications that have higher match will score higher.*

While the applicants will project estimated attendance, those projections/estimates must be backed up by research, data, and information. **Proof of prior attendance must be submitted with your application.**

- No requirement for a cash match; **however, a 50% cash and/or in-kind marketing and production match value is required. The in-kind match must be at least 50% of your requested funding amount. Applicants are encouraged to list more than the minimum required match.**
- State/Federal agencies are not eligible to apply for this funding. However, tourism-oriented state or federal owned attractions, museums, or parks may be listed as a marketing and/or lodging partner on your application.
- Only one application per applicant is permitted.
- DMO Requirements: Recognized Virginia Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) may apply for this program. If you are not a DMO, you should let the DMO where the special event or festival will be held know you are applying for this funding program and upload a letter of support from the DMO. A list of recognized Virginia DMOs is available at www.vatc.org/dmolist
- **Applicants are required to:**
 - a. **Include the Virginia is for Lovers brand 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/>

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 VTC PMAP/Welcome Center opportunities in your campaign. Info can be found here:**
<https://www.welcomeva.com/>
 - d. **Use VTC Industry Advertising Cooperative Marketing opportunities in your campaign.** Info can be found here:
<https://vatc.org/marketing/advertising/partneradvertising/>
- **COMPETITION FOR THIS 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 funding program grants or who have received extensions on prior funding program applications may also apply.
 - 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 **March 14, 2024, at 5 p.m.** 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 a public announcement in mid-May 2024.
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

Applicant and partners may consist of Virginia towns, cities, counties, convention and visitors' bureaus, planning district commissions, chambers of commerce, other local or regional destination marketing organizations (DMO), private businesses, museums, attractions, cultural and other events, and other tourism-related entities. **The Federal Employer Identification number (FEIN) must be included for the applicant.** An SSN may be substituted if the applicant is a sole proprietorship.

DMOs are *not required* to be a partner; however, all applications must indicate the DMO and locality where the special event or festival is located, and **applications must include a letter of support from the local or regional DMO.** If the area is not covered by a DMO then a letter of support from the locality where the event is held will be accepted. A list of DMOs can be found at <https://www.vatc.org/dmolist>

Programs that are regional in scope are encouraged. If you have non-Virginia partners, you **MUST** indicate a minimum of four **Virginia** partners in the Hub and Spoke section, one of which must be a lodging partner. **You must upload a letter of support from the lodging partner.** Lodging partners may be regional if there are no local lodging options and may include campgrounds, state and national parks, hotels, motels, B&Bs, VRBOs, etc.

In addition, your special event or festival must be located in Virginia, and drive visitation to Virginia. Applications that will lead to increased **overnight visitation are encouraged and preferred**. State/federal agencies are not eligible to apply for this funding but may be listed as partners in the hub and spoke section.

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>. The applicant will administer the program and the reimbursement payments will be made to the applicant only. Applicants can only submit one application to this program.

Potential vendor of services (i.e., advertising agency, PR firm, printer, web developer, podcasters, influencers, etc.) for, or to, the application program cannot be a partner 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 special event or festival. The use of VTC funds must be clearly specified in the application and must be used to enhance the visitor experience at the special event or festival.

Partial funding may be awarded in some cases and applicants who accept the partial funding award will need to adjust their marketing and production plans 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 and how this funding can expand your production budget to add additional special event or festival space, stages, comfort stations, or book new talent, or rent high quality A/V services. Current research on tourism target markets and demographics in Virginia can be found at: <https://www.vatc.org/research/>

Special events or festivals that are cancelled or rescheduled due to circumstances beyond the event organizer's control may still be eligible to revise their marketing and production plans and qualify for reimbursement. However, applicants must contact the VTC Grants Team as soon as possible to discuss the cancellation and circumstances. Event cancellation insurance is strongly encouraged. Rescheduling events further out than 90 days from the original event date is considered an extension of your program deadline and final reports will be due 60 days after the new date.

Rescheduling events beyond 90 days from the original special event or festival date will require contacting VTC to discuss your award and it may mean that the funds will revert to VTC.

Moving events from one locality to another will disqualify an awarded special event or festival due to the specific legislative requirements and regional limits that fund this program.

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 Virginia Special Events and Festivals 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, destination, special event, festival, 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. The maximum award varies by attendance. Be sure to request the appropriate amount for your event based on prior attendance.

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 Marketing Goals	10 points
Special Event/Festival Visitor Experience Improvements	15 points
Partnerships (Modified Hub & Spoke)	15 points
Target Markets/Demographics	10 points
Marketing & Production Plans	40 points
Performance Outcomes	10 points
BONUS - VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS Activations	5 points
Total Possible Points	105 points

The Funds

There are three levels of funding in the Virginia Special Events & Festivals Sponsorship Program.

Tier One: up to \$5,000 for special events and festivals with a minimum of 1,000 to 4,999 attendees

Tier Two: up to \$10,000 for special events and festivals with a minimum of 5,000 up to 19,999 attendees

Tier Three: up to \$20,000 for special events and festivals with a minimum of 20,000 or more attendees

There is a 50% cash or in-kind minimum match for each tier. Applications that have higher match will score higher in the Marketing and Production Plans section.

- Funds will be disbursed on a **reimbursement basis** for your qualifying marketing and event production 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. Most expenses reimbursed under this program must include the Virginia is for Lovers logo. Funding payment requests must include the Virginia Special Events & Festivals Sponsorship Program Reimbursement Request form provided after award notification.
- Applicants must provide a certificate of liability insurance where VTC is listed as an interested party. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of reimbursements.

- **REIMBURSEMENTS:** Only ELIGIBLE items covered by the Virginia Special Events and Festivals Program will qualify for reimbursements.
- **IN-KIND MARKETING & PRODUCTION MATCH VALUE:** You will be required to provide a minimum 50% cash and/or in-kind marketing and production match. The in-kind match must be at least 50% of your requested funding amount. In considering your in-kind marketing and production match items and value, be aware that you can use your existing marketing and production 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.
 - 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.
- Questions about the eligibility of in-kind match should be directed to VTCSEFProgram@virginia.org BEFORE the application deadline.
- **NOTE:** Non-marketing and production value, such as office space and staff wages CANNOT be used as in-kind value match. ONLY eligible in-kind MARKETING and PRODUCTION values may be used for match.
- Eligible expenses that have occurred six months prior (October 1, 2023) to the due date of March 14, 2023, can be used as part of your marketing plan and may be reimbursable upon successful award notification.
- VTC realizes that changes may need to be made to your marketing or production 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 should be completed within 60 days after the event date.
- VTC must report on the effectiveness of the Virginia Special Events & Festivals 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 after the event detailing the results of the program, including return on investment, performance outcome results based upon your Performance Outcomes and other supporting data. The final report is a simple, two-page summary of the results of your Performance Outcomes 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 Virginia Special Events & Festivals 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. 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-Ops 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. You will need to indicate on your application if your marketing campaign items are PMAP/Welcome Center opportunities. Applicants for this program are encouraged to look at the **PMAP/Welcome Center Special Event & Festivals marketing 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 materials, including digital boosts, posts, and ads. 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 and advertising 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. 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.

Although you are not required to creatively activate 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 temporary banners on stages and throughout the event space, videotaped interviews disseminated via social media with performers wearing Virginia is for Lovers apparel, press passes, VIP access, behind-the-scenes filming or photography opportunities, comped or discounted lodging during photography or videography, 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 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/>.

Eligible Items

ONLY THE FOLLOWING **MARKETING ITEMS** ARE ELIGIBLE and **MUST BE MORE THAN 50%** OF YOUR REQUESTED AMOUNT

- Placement of Advertisements – (includes print ads, digital, radio, television, 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.

- Outdoor advertising through paid billboards. 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 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. More information on VTC Datashare is available at <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/digital-marketing/datashare/>.
- Participation in the VTC LOVEworks RENTAL Program. For more information, please refer to <https://www.vatc.org/LOVEartworkapplication>
- Participation in the Virginia Travel Guide. For more information, please refer to <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/advertising/guideadvertising/>
- Digital Marketing – Search engine optimization, banner and website advertising, and other electronic marketing initiatives.
- Creation of mobile marketing applications (“Apps”) so long as they are measurable.
- Social media marketing initiatives, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.

- Influencer and Podcaster Marketing – Use of Influencer and Podcaster 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.
- Production of photography and video marketing materials:
 - All photography and video marketing materials created using a VTC funding 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 with assets and any questions.
- 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. Such 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). 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**. Research may be up to 15% of your overall marketing budget. Research programs funded by the Virginia Special Events & Festival 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 requested funds.**
- 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 insurance policy costs. However, VTC must be added as an interested party to the required event liability insurance policy **AND** a copy of the policy must be submitted for reimbursement.
- 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.

ONLY THE FOLLOWING PRODUCTION ITEMS ARE ELIGIBLE and MAY NOT BE MORE THAN 50% OF YOUR REQUESTED AMOUNT:

- Rental/Purchase of a temporary stage. The grant can not pay for construction materials or capital improvements to build a stage. The stage must be a rental or non-permanent and moveable if a purchase.
- Tents rentals/purchase if they are non-permanent and moveable.
- Fencing rentals/purchase if they are non-permanent and moveable.
- A/V equipment services that are contracted and invoiced. A/V equipment purchases are NOT eligible.
- Performer booking fees that are contracted and invoiced.
- Ticketing platform fees that are contracted and invoiced.
- Restroom rentals if they are contracted and invoiced. Purchase or construction of restroom facilities is NOT eligible.
- Table rentals/purchase if they are non-permanent and moveable. Grant funds CAN NOT be used for construction materials to build tables.
- Banners and on-site event temporary signage such as those printed on real estate board, corrugated cardboard, or vinyl. Permanent signage is not eligible. VDOT signage is not eligible.
- **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 requested funds.**
- 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 total requested funds. 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 total requested funds may be used for insurance policy costs. However, VTC must be added as an interested party to the required event liability insurance policy **AND** a copy of the policy must be submitted for reimbursement.
- The cost of Wi-Fi Internet fees as part of hosting an event, meeting, or convention. Up to 10% of your total requested funds may be used to cover these costs.

Any other event production expenses are ineligible. Grant funds can not be used to pay for staff, police, fire, or emergency services, referees, timekeepers, vehicle rentals, permanent signage, food, beverage, accommodations, or any other equipment rentals or event production costs.

INELIGIBLE ITEMS: What the Virginia Special Events & Festival Program will NOT Fund

The following will **NOT** be funded by the Virginia Special Events and Festivals Program:

- ***Programs that do not contribute to increased visitation to Virginia and Virginia destinations will not qualify.***
- ***Programs or special events/festivals that promote and market cannabis will not qualify.***
- ***Programs or special events/festivals that are related to political activities or private family events like family reunions, weddings, birthday parties will not qualify.***
- **Administrative and Office expenses** including office space, business cards, stationery, 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.
- 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 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 signage - including production and installation - are NOT eligible expenses except as noted below:
 - 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 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.
 - (3) Costs 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 cash and/or in-kind match.
- Customer service and industry training programs are NOT eligible expenses.

- Ongoing maintenance and hosting fees for websites are NOT eligible expenses.
- Travel expenses, including food, accommodations, and transportation, are NOT eligible expenses.
- Costs to construct any **permanent** staging, fencing, comfort stations, or restrooms are NOT eligible expenses. However, **rentals/purchase of such equipment are permitted**, but must be temporary and moveable.
- Costs for event security is NOT an eligible expense.
- Costs for police, fire, and/or emergency services are not eligible.
- Vehicle, golf cart, trailer rentals and purchases are not eligible.
- Event staffing costs, such as referees, timekeepers, etc. are not eligible.
- 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, 2023**
- **NO extensions to this deadline will be possible.**
- Applicants will be notified of awards by mid-April 2024.