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**Spring 2024 VTC Marketing Leverage Program**

**Application Template and Instructions**

**VTC has created this application template and instructions document to assist you in preparing your application. You can *copy and paste your answers from this document into the required web portal*. Applications will only be accepted via the online web portal and applications are due by 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2024.**

**We recommend that you also have the Spring 2024 Marketing Leverage Program Terms and Conditions document open and available as you fill out this application template. The Terms and Conditions document reviews applicant eligibility, eligible and ineligible expenses, and reimbursement processes. You can also review the reimbursement form and reimbursement instructions on** [**www.vatc.org/grants**](http://www.vatc.org/grants)**.**

**These documents can help you understand which receipts, proofs of payment, invoices, and tear sheets you will need to submit to be reimbursed if you are awarded funding. Please read those documents before starting your application.**

**Be sure to check the Terms and Conditions for what types of marketing expenses are eligible. This program has very strict requirements and you will not be reimbursed for ineligible expenses AND your award, if you qualify, may be reduced if ineligible expenses are listed in your match sections.**

**Once you completely submit your application you cannot edit it in the web portal. However, you can stop and start your application in the web portal by saving your application url. Do not click submit until you are absolutely sure you are ready to do so.**

**Please note attachments are not saved when you stop and start your application. If you are having trouble submitting your application, please double check that all your required attachments are uploaded in the portal with the corresponding question.**

**If you need technical assistance, you can use the Technical Assistance request box on the grant application web portal or you can contact** [**VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org**](mailto:VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org) **for assistance.**

**General Information Section**

Being listed on Virginia.org (the state tourism website) is a requirement for reimbursement. Please visit <https://www.vatc.org/marketing/digital-marketing/webmarketing/> to set up an account or manage your listing. You DO NOT have to have your listing completed when you apply. It does need to be completed before you request your reimbursement.

An example Virginia.org url looks like this: <https://www.virginia.org/listing/cape-charles/5128/>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Is your business listed on Virginia.org?** | Yes/No |
| **If yes, what is the url?** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant/Business/Organization Name:** |  |
| **# of full and part-time employees:** | Fulltime: Part-time: |
| **Locality where business/organization is located:** |  |
| **EIN# or SS# if sole proprietorship:** |  |
| **Applicant Contact Name:** |  |
| **Applicant Contact Title:** |  |
| **Applicant Contact Email:** |  |

If the applicant is a very small locality managed DMO, please list the County Manager or Finance Officer as the secondary contact. All other applicant types should include a secondary contact from within their organization or business.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Secondary Contact Name:** |  |
| **Secondary Contact Title:** |  |
| **Secondary Contact Email:** |  |

The program is only open to Virginia entities. Non-Virginia entities may partner with a Virginia lead on an application, but non-Virginia entities may not be the lead partner in VTC funding programs.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applicant Mailing Address:** |  |
| **Applicant City, State, Zip:** |  |
| **Applicant Phone:** |  |

The maximum award is $50,000. Applicants do not have to request the maximum award. Please refer to the Terms and Conditions for the match requirements for an award up to $20,000 and for an award more than $20,000 up to $50,000. There is a 1:1 match requirement up to $20,000 for a $20,000 award. There is a 2:1 match requirement of $100,000 for a $50,000 award.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Amount of Requested Funds:** |  |

If you are planning to use these funds to market any concerts, events, meetings, or conventions outside the scope of normal operations then you will need to provide a liability insurance policy/certificate with Virginia Tourism Corporation listed as an interested party. If you do not yet have insurance coverage, you do not need to upload a policy. VTC will send you reminders to complete this step.

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| --- | --- |
| **Are you planning to use these funds to market any events, concerts, meetings, or conventions outside the scope of your normal operations?** | Yes/No |
| **If, yes please upload insurance certificates if available.** |  |

Please list your social media handles, website, and hashtags where applicable.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Twitter:** |  |
| **Facebook:** |  |
| **Instagram** |  |
| **Website:** |  |
| **Hashtags:** |  |

**Program Marketing Goals (15 points)**

Please choose the best category for your marketing program.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Focus:** | Choose One from drop down list:   |  | | --- | | Arts & Culture  Culinary/Craft Beverage/Wine  Equestrian  Luxury Travel  History  Music  Outdoor Recreation  Sports  LGBTQIA+  Holidays  General Destination Marketing | |

Please choose a creative name that reflects your marketing plan. Do not use an individual’s name and do not use the business/organization name. Indicate the dates of your marketing program being mindful of VTC’s 6-month (from application opening) lookback period and 18-month, from award date, program maximum. Our goal is to notify applicants of awards by mid-April 2024 hence the October 2025 program deadline. Think about how this marketing program can enhance your normal marketing activities, target new demographics, and promote accessibility.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Marketing Program Name:** |  |
| **Marketing Program Description:** |  |
| **Start Date of Marketing Program (can be no earlier than October 1, 2023)** |  |
| **End Date of Marketing Program (can be no later than October 15, 2025):** |  |
| **How will VTC funding enhance your normal marketing activities?** |  |
| **Will these funds enhance your marketing to diverse audiences or promote accessibility?** | Yes/No |
| **If yes, please explain.** |  |

Driving overnight visitation is a critical component of VTC programs. An overnight visitor is one who spend at least one night at or near the locality. A regional visitor is a day tripper who comes from at least 50 miles away. Explain how your marketing choices in this plan will help drive additional overnight visitation and additional out-of-region visitation. Be sure to reference research from your prior marketing campaigns, social media insights, and/or Virginia Tourism Corporation travel profiles that can be found on [www.vatc.org/research](http://www.vatc.org/research).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How will this program drive additional overnight or out-of-region visitation?** |  |

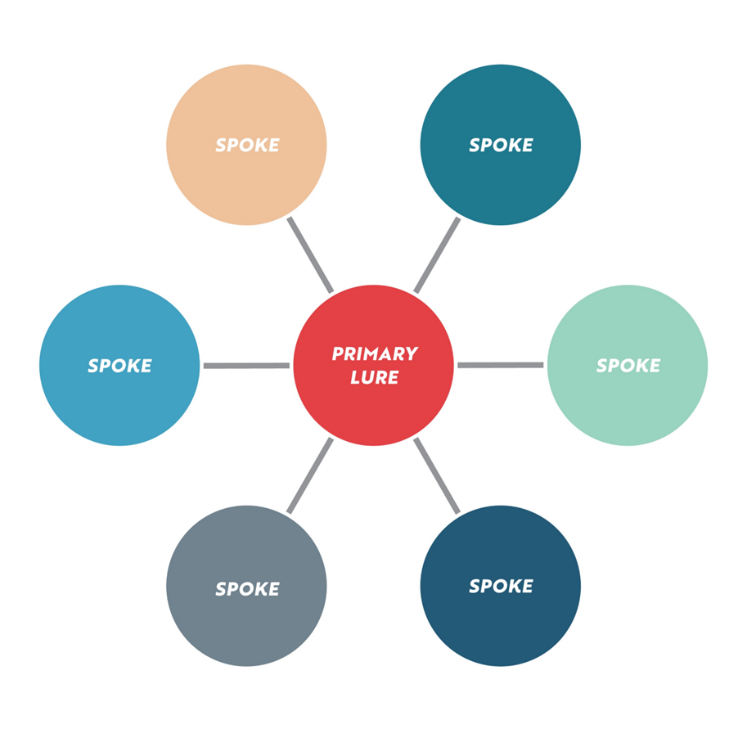
A DMO is a Destination Marketing Organization. These are local and regional tourism offices that are officially recognized by Virginia Tourism Corporation. A letter of support from the local or regional DMO is required for this program. Most, but not all, localities in Virginia are covered by a DMO. If your locality is not covered by a local or regional DMO, please select “Other” then a letter of support from locality leadership (i.e. county supervisor, city manager, EDA, PDC) will suffice.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Please select our nearest local or regional DMO:** |  |
| **Please upload a letter of support.** |  |

If the applicant is the DMO, you simply need to upload a letter stating that the applicant IS the DMO. There are limitations to our web portal system so you must upload a document into that section in order to submit your application.

**Hub & Spoke Section (20 points)**

Virginia Tourism Corporation uses a Hub & Spoke itinerary and development model as pictured below. Think of your event or festival as the main lure. Where will people stay who come to your event or festival? Will they be dining out? Shopping? Engaging in outdoor recreation, visiting a museum, or enjoying time at a local brewery, winery, or distillery? Think about your hub & spoke as a partnership model. How will you and these partners all work together to get more visitors?

Your business or destination is the Primary Lure and the itinerary/partnership has six spokes. Two of those are partners in your marketing plan and four of those are spokes in your marketing plan. For this program, you need to identify for your two partners (ONE OF WHICH MUST BE A LODGING PARTNER) and how they will support your marketing plan both financially and through their own marketing initiatives.

**LODGING PARTNER**

**PARTNER**

New in 2024 is that every applicant must have a lodging partner in their hub & spoke model and must **upload a letter of support** from that lodging partner. The lodging partner can be a hotel, motel, B&B, campground, state/national park, etc. We recognize some rural areas may have a lodging deficit. A regional lodging partner is acceptable, but a letter of support is still needed.

And you will need to identify four additional spokes that are actual businesses, attractions, restaurants, lodging, etc that visitors may go to during a visit to your business or destination. Please do not list general categories such "restaurants." Instead, list exact names of businesses, such as Whistlestop Café or Joe's B&B.

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| --- | --- |
| What is the primary lure? |  |
| Lodging Partner Name: |  |
| Lodging Partner Address, City, State, Zip: |  |
| How will partner support your marketing program: |  |
| Is the partner listed on Virginia.org? | Yes/No |
| If yes, what is their Virginia.org url? |  |
|  |  |
| Partner #2 Name: |  |
| Partner #2 Address, City, State, Zip: |  |
| How will partner support your marketing program: |  |
| Is the partner listed on Virginia.org? |  |
| If yes, what is their Virginia.org url? |  |
|  |  |
| Spoke #3 |  |
| Spoke #4 |  |
| Spoke #5 |  |
| Spoke #6 |  |
| How will these spokes support your marketing program? |  |

**Target Markets (20 points)**

Your must choose at least TWO target markets, but you may choose THREE. Be sure to reference data from your social media insights, credit card processing data, other market research, and VTC research to justify why you selected those target markets. VTC visitor profile data and other research can be found at [www.vatc.org/research](http://www.vatc.org/research). Applicants are encouraged to spend at least 25% of their requested amount on an out-of-state target market. The drop-down box selections are: Baltimore, MD; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Raleigh, NC; Boston, MA; Cleveland, OH; Columbus, OH; Harrisburg, PA; Nashville, TN; Pittsburgh, PA; Atlanta, GA; Charlotte, NC; Chicago, IL; Washington D.C.; Hampton Roads; Richmond; Roanoke-Salem; Bristol; Charlottesville; Danville; Northern Virginia; Harrisonburg; Winchester; Fredericksburg; In-State Other, Out-of-State Other, International Other.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Target Market #1 |  |
| Why did you choose this market? |  |
| Target Market #2 |  |
| Why did you choose this market? |  |
| Target Marketing #3 |  |
| Why did you choose this market? |  |

**Marketing Plans (35 points)**

**Your marketing plan is a critical component of your application. Please be sure to reference the Terms and Conditions of this program for a list of eligible and ineligible marketing expenses.**

**VTC recommends that you research the VTC Co-op Industry Advertising Plan that provides some discounts with certain publications. Information on those opportunities can be found at:** [**https://vatc.org/marketing/advertising/partneradvertising/**](https://vatc.org/marketing/advertising/partneradvertising/)

**You may also want to research advertising opportunities through the PMAP/Welcome Center program managed by VTC. You can find information on those opportunities here:** [**www.welcomeva.com**](http://www.welcomeva.com)

**Be sure to indicate the name of the vendor, such as Facebook/Meta or Instagram/Meta in your marketing plan. If you don’t know the name of the vendor, such as an event insurance policy underwriter, then please describe the vendor/business type in that column.**

Cash Match Marketing Plan: This is your match. This grant requires a minimum of 1:1 cash match at the $20,000 award tier and a minimum cash match of 2:1 at the more than $20,000 up to $50,000 award tier.

**In-kind match is no longer permitted with this program.** If you are asking VTC for $5,000, you must have AT LEAST $5,000 in cash match listed. The maximum award for this program is $50,000 and requires a minimum of $100,000 in cash match. We encourage you to list more than the minimum match, so we are better able to understand the economic impact of these programs. Documentation, including invoices and proof of payment, will be required for proof of match.

Create your cash match marketing plan by listing eligible marketing plan items. See the Marketing Leverage Program Terms and Conditions for a list of eligible marketing plan items.

Each line items must list the media channel/vendor; marketing items description including target markets, target demographics, etc; placement dates; and amount.

The VTC scoring teams will be looking at how your marketing plan choices match up to your chosen target markets and target demographics. Make sure you are looking at your marketing funnel and that your have made deliberate choices backed up by data and research.

Example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Media Channel/Vendor** | **Marketing Items Description** | **Placement Dates** | **Amount** |
| *Example: Facebook/Meta* | *Monthly Facebook boosts targeted wine enthusiast aged 25-64 located in the Charlotte, NC area* | *Monthly: 12 months; October 2023 to October 2024 at $1,000/month* | *$12,000* |
| *Example: XYZ Ad Agency* | *Creative services including brand design, advertising placement, and public relations pitches. Scope of work includes: 6 social media posts, 4 press releases, logo and rack card design.* | *June 2024-August 2024* | *$8,000* |
| *Event Insurance/Vendor TBD* | *Event insurance coverage for the weekend of July 4-6, 2024* | *Policy in effect July 4-6, 2024* | *$800* |
|  |  | *Total Cash Match:* | *$20,800* |

**Add lines** as needed to your marketing plan until you have allocated your match. You are encouraged to include more than the minimum match. Please double check your totals as you tab through creating your marketing plan.

VTC Reimbursement Marketing Plan: These are items for which you will be seeking VTC reimbursement. The total of your VTC Reimbursable Marketing Plan should at least equal your requested award amount. Be sure to list only eligible expenses from the program Terms and Conditions. You will only be reimbursed up to your award amount. Partial awards may be made and applicants must be willing to revise their marketing plans.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Media Channel/Vendor** | **Marketing Items Description** | **Placement Dates** | **Amount** |
| *Example: Charlotte Observer* | *Quarterly Print Ads in the Travel section; 4”x7”; targeting wine enthusiasts ages 25-64 who are interested in wine festivals who live in the Charlotte, NC area and who read the Charlotte Observer* | *Jan 2023*  *April 2023*  *July 2023*  *October 2023*  *$3000/each placement* | *$12,000* |
| *Example: The Image Group* | *Promotional items for staff during wine festival to included 20 T-shirts and one pull-up banner with Virginia is for Wine Lovers. Event marketing is targeting wine enthusiasts ages 25-64 who will see the banner and logo shirts on site.* | *July 2023* | *$2,000* |
|  |  | *Total VTC Reimbursable Marketing Plan* | *$14,000* |

Add lines as needed to your VTC Reimbursable Marketing Plan until you have allocated the full amount of your funding request. Please double check your totals as you tab through creating your VTC Reimbursable Marketing Plan.

Make sure you are not going over the maximum 10% of requested award allowance for certain types of expenses. More information about the maximum 10% of award allowance for certain marketing expenses can be found in the program Terms and Conditions document.

Make sure your VTC Reimbursable Marketing Plan total matches up with your requested amount at the beginning of the application.

Make sure your Grand Total (Cash Match Marketing Plan + VTC Reimbursable Marketing Plan) is correct.

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| --- | --- |
| Grand Total: | $34,8000 |

**Performance Outcomes (10 points)**

Your must select two performance outcomes from the drop-down box. Sources of data upon which to base your projected measures can be visitor logs, credit card data, ticket sales, overall sales, tax revenue, etc. Set reasonable baselines and goals. Increases of 3%-5% are reasonable.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Outcome #1** | **Select from Drop Down Box**   |  | | --- | | # of Room Nights | | # of Customers/Visitors | | $ Annual Sales | | # of Visitors | | # of Event Attendees | | **Performance Baseline** | **Performance Baseline Date** | **Performance Projection (Goal)** | **Performance Projection (Date)** |
| **Performance Outcome #2** |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Example* | *Room Nights* | *1500* | *06/01/2023* | *1575* | *06/01/2025* |

**Bonus Section (5 points)**

This section allows for you to get creative. Think about ways you could activate the Virginia is for Lovers brand at your destination, business, or event. Are there special opportunities or behind-the-scenes opportunities you could offer to journalists, reporters, photographers, and videographers? Be detailed in your descriptions and dates. Including opportunities in this section ***does not*** guarantee that VTC can provide staff or journalists to take advantage of those opportunities.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Select from Drop Down Box**   |  | | --- | | Press Passes or Tickets to Events | | Booth at Event | | Visitor Center has Virginia is for Lovers merchandise | | Photography Opportunity | | VIFL Banners at events, visitor centers | | VIFL apparel on staff/performers | | Unique "behind the scenes" opportunity  Comp or Discount Lodging for Photography/Video Acquisition  Recognition of VTC as a sponsor at events | | Other | | **Describe the activation:** | **Dates of activation:** |