**Spring 2025 VTC DMO Marketing Program –**

 **Application Instructions & Template**

Below are the VTC DMO Marketing Program Application Instructions and Template. This document is designed to assist you in completing the grant application. You can also use this template to record your responses to the questions in this document, and then copy and paste those responses into the grant application portal.

We recommend that you also have the Spring 2025 DMO Marketing 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).

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 sure you are ready to do so. Once you click submit, you will receive a pdf of your application. If you do not receive this pdf, please reach out to the VTC Grants Team via the Technical Assistance portal on [www.vatc.org/grants](http://www.vatc.org/grants) or via email.

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 VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org for assistance.

If you have any questions regarding the application process or eligibility, please reach out to the VTC Grants Team for assistance.

**Please continue to the next page to view the application screenshots, questions, and helpful information about how to fill out the application in the online portal.**

**This template is divided into two columns. On the right are screenshots from the web portal and on the left are the applicant questions and other information that will be helpful.**

**Applicant Acknowledgment Section:**

*Applicants must check the boxes acknowledging they understand the programs rules, terms and conditions*.

*Please be sure that the checkmarks turn blue as you check them off in the online application portal.*

*Once you complete the checkbox acknowledgements, click “Continue” to continue to the next section.*

*If the screen does not move on to the next section, it means that something is incomplete. If this happens, double check your responses, checkmarks, attachments, etc.*

**Contact Information Section:**

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**Applicant Organization Name:**

**EIN#/SSN:**

**Applicant Street Address:**

**City, State, Zip:**

**Applicant Locality:**

*Select your locality from the drop-down box*

*In the application*

**Business/Organization Type:**

*Select your business or organization type from the*

*Drop-down box in the application*

**How many full-time employees do you have?**

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**How many part-time employees do you**

**have?**

**Amount of Requested Funds:**

*The amount of grant funding you’re asking*

*from VTC*

**Contact Name:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Address:**

**City, State, Zip:**

**Marketing Initiative Focus** (select one of the options from the drop-down menu in the application):

**Marketing Initiative Name** (this is the name of your marketing proposal. This CANNOT be the name of the grant for which you are applying):

**Marketing Program Start Date: (can be no earlier than December 1, 2024)**

**Marketing Program End Date (can be no later than October 31st, 2026):**

**Indicate whether your event/business/destination is listed on Virginia.org** and **include the url where requested**. *While the listing isn’t required to apply, you must have your listing completed before you seek reimbursement.*

*You can create an account and listing here:* [*https://www.vatc.org/marketing/digital-marketing/webmarketing/*](https://www.vatc.org/marketing/digital-marketing/webmarketing/)

*This is a multi-step process and cannot be completed in one day.*

**Click “Continue to Goals and Partnerships”**

**Goals & Partnerships Section:**

**This section is worth 25 points.**

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**What do you want to accomplish with your requested funds?**

*Tell us what you want to accomplish with the requested funds. Will you target a new marketing, target new demographics, create new marketing collateral with your partners, do a robust social media marketing push? Be sure your goals align ability to achieve outcomes.*

**How will you measure your progress?**

*Beyond the performance outcomes below, how will you be tracking your progress to make sure you are reaching the goals you mentioned above?*

**Select two performance outcomes that you can track and that align with your program goals.** *Give a baseline number as of the date of application and then give a goal you will strive to achieve* a*t the end of this marketing campaign.*

**The Hub and Spoke is VTC itinerary building tool and is designed to help you build tourism partnerships in your destination.** *Imagine your business, destination, or attraction as the hub. And then identify a lodging partner, another tourism partner, and four tourism-oriented spokes that will work with you to achieve your goals.* ***Media vendors and event sponsors are not eligible to be partners or spokes.*** ***Partners and spokes must be tourism-oriented businesses such as attractions, lodging, outfitters, tours, and/or restaurants.***

**Be sure to use the drop-down box and identify the category of your partners and spokes.** *One lodging partner is required. However, you may select additional lodging partners.*

**How will you and your partners work together to achieve your goals?**

*In this section, tell us how you are all working together. Are you creating lodging packages, cross-promoting each other, pooling marketing funds to do more robust marketing, etc.*

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**What marketing message will help you achieve your visitation goals? How will you motivate travelers to visit?**

*Think through what message, images, videos, taglines, etc. that will motivate your target market/demographic to visit your event. How will you convince your target market/demographic to go to your special event or festival.*

**Click “Continue to the Research/Data”**

**Research & Data Section.**

**This section is worth 25 points**

*In this section, indicate what research you data-mined to make your marketing decisions. VTC research can be found on* [*www.vatc.org/research*](http://www.vatc.org/research)*. You might also use social media insights, focus group studies, Adara, Zartico, Arrivalist or other paid research vendors or studies. Please be detailed by referencing the research source and the actual statistics, percentages, and other details in your response.*

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**What research/data did you use to set your goals?** *(Must state the exact name of the research source and the data you are using to make your marketing decisions)***:**

**What research/data did you use to develop your marketing message?** *(Must state the exact name of the research source and the data you are using to make your marketing decisions):*

***If you have any supporting research documents you wish to include, you can upload them by clicking “Select Files” Please be mindful of what research documents you are uploading. Limit to no more than 3 pages of data, charts, or narrative.***

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**Choose one out-of-state and one in-state target market from the drop-down box and explain why you chose this target market.**

*****Your choices should be reflected in your marketing plan in the next section.*

*Ensure that you specifically state what research you used in selecting this target market and what data you have to support this target market choice*

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**Select one of the three audience characteristics from the drop-down box.**

**What research/data are you using to choose this target audience?**

**What are the additional demographic characteristics of your target audience?**

**What research/data did you use to identify these additional demographic characteristics?**

**Click “Continue to go to Marketing Plans”**

**Marketing Plans Section:**

**This section is worth 50 points.**

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*In this section you will fill out two marketing plans.*

*The first one is your match. This can be in-kind or cash match, and you must list a minimum of 50% match compared to the grant funds you are requesting. For example, if you are requesting $20,000 from VTC, you must list a total of $10,000 in eligible in-kind or cash match.*

 *Cash match should be listed as the actual cost of the advertising or eligible production costs you are paying for with your own marketing and event production budget.*

*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, 2024)*
* *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, 2024.)*
* *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.*

*In the reimbursable marketing plan, you will list the items for which you will seek reimbursement from VTC. These can only be expenses that you have paid for and CANNOT be any owned or earned many values. Your reimbursable marketing plan total should equal the amount of grant funding you are requesting from VTC.*

***Remember, only eligible items will qualify as match and/or reimbursable****. Including ineligible items may disqualify your application from being reviewed. Please refer to the full program terms and conditions and/or the eligible items list for his program for a detailed list of which marketing expenses are eligible in this program.*

**Bonus Points Section:**

**Earn up to 5 extra points**

*Going above and beyond the requirement to use the Virginia is for Lovers brand/logo in your marketing can earn you extra points. Choose items from the drop-down box and give a detailed description on how you will activate the brand and partner with VTC.*

**You’ve Reached the End of the Application!**

Before submitting your application, ensure that all the information you provided is accurate. VTC does not allow for grant application revisions. What you submit through the application portal is what will be reviewed and scored.

If you have any questions regarding the Marketing Leverage Program application process, please reach out to the VTC Grants Team. See our contact information below:

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