

# Vacation Starts with VA DMO MMLP Co-Op Program

## Terms & Conditions

Applicants must attest to these terms and conditions at the time of application. For information on how to apply to this program, please refer to the [Vacation Starts with VA DMO MMLP Program Instructions](#), [Sample Application](#), and [Webinar recording](#).

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### GENERAL INFORMATION

Funding available in this grant program: **\$375,000**

# of proposals to be funded this round: **100**

**Application Window:** June 10, 9:00AM – June 26, 5:00PM (NO EXTENSIONS)

#### Four Award Tiers

- \$1,250- Social Media Program
- \$2,500- Digital Advertising Program
- \$5,000- Influencer Program
- \$30,000- Philadelphia Takeover

Available to VTC-recognized Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)

#### Matching Grant Program

- To receive the award amount you request, you must be able to match an equal amount of cash matching expense
- Only items listed in the Eligible Expenses section of this document can be used as cash match to obtain your award. However, Earned or Owned media may be counted as an additional in-kind match. Please refer to the application instructions to learn how to value your Earned or Owned media.

#### Reimbursement-Based Grant

- This is a reimbursement-based grant program. Awarded funds will not be paid out up-front.
- Tiers 1 and 2 are reimbursement based programs. If you are selected for Tier 3 or 4, you will be invoiced by VTC for your match. In Tier 3 and 4, VTC will pay the influence and Takeover site directly.
- For Tiers 1 or 2, your award is held in a grant account with VTC, and you may spend-down your funds by submitting your invoices, proofs of advertising, and proofs of payment for review. Once reimbursement is approved, your funds will be paid to you.

Only online applications entered through our website will be accepted. The application for this program can be found at this link **ONLY** when the grant officially opens: <https://vatc.org/grants/>

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## APPLICANT & PARTNER/SPOKE ELIGIBILITY

Applicants to the VSWVA DMO Marketing Leverage Program...

- Must be a VTC recognized DMO that appear on this list: [www.vatc.org/dmolist](http://www.vatc.org/dmolist)
- The goal of this program is to grow out-of-region visitation and increase visitor spending. Applications must show a significant and positive economic impact on the business and surrounding community.
- Must have a FEIN or SSN (if sole proprietor)
- CANNOT be a federal or state agency.
- CANNOT be a vendor of services, such as an advertising agency, PR firm, printing agency, television channel, web developer, influencer, marketing consultant, etc.

Partners/Spokes...

- Must be tourism-oriented businesses/attractions that are open, operating, and have appropriate locality licensing.
- CANNOT be a personal health and wellness business, such as nail salons, gyms, massage parlors, and yoga studios unless they are in a lodging resort which is a tourist attraction.
- ARE allowed to be a state or federal entity, such as a state or national park.
- CANNOT be a vendor of services, such as an advertising agency, PR firm, printing agency, television channel, web developer, influencer, marketing consultant, etc.

***If you or your listed partners/spokes do not meet the above criteria, your program will not be awarded.***

## Partner/Spoke Involvement Requirements

Using VTC's Hub & Spoke model, the partners/spokes you list in your application must contribute to your program initiative, either through a financial commitment to the marketing initiative or through marketing collaboration. Please refer to the application instructions for more details on the Hub & Spoke model. These contributions/collaborations must be documented in the application narrative and will be evaluated.

### Lodging Partner Requirement

- To apply for this program, you must list a lodging business as a partner in your application. This can be a hotel, bed & breakfast, resort, campground, or state park.
- You DO NOT need a letter of support from this lodging partner. However, you must list how they will support your program through contributions/collaborations.

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## APPLICATION PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Your marketing proposal must meet the following requirements to be considered for an award:

- Applicants can only submit ONE application proposal per FEIN.
- Marketing proposal must have an end-date no later than November 30th 2025. NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE ALLOWED IN THIS GRANT PROGRAM due to the off-season focus requirement.
- This is a competitive grant program, with programs awarded by the strength and score of their applications.
- Applicants must develop new marketing initiatives for their event or expand upon previously generated initiatives. Applications must explain and justify how the proposal's target markets, demographics, and marketing channels will drive overnight and out of region visitation to their locality. Proposals which lack adequate justification of the choices outlined in the application may be subject to a reduced award or not receive funding. Applicants are encouraged to use their own data/research, their local DMO research, and/or data/research provided by VTC in the application. VTC's research portal can be found here: <https://www.vatc.org/research/>
- Marketing proposals must focus on the identified timeline for this initiative, which is between September-November 2025.
- If your proposal is an event or event series, your event must occur within the campaign initiative window (September-November).
- A final report is required to be submitted after the completion of your initiative and will be due: Feb. 28th, 2026

### Ineligible Programs:

- Non-tourism related businesses/events
- Cannabis-related businesses/events
- Businesses/events related to political activities.
- Private events (like family reunions, weddings, birthday parties, and "members-only" events)

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## SCORING PROTOCOL

### Scoring Statements

There are limited funds available for this program. Therefore, funding will be awarded on a merit scale; only the highest scoring application proposals will be funded. Since awards are determined from these scores, your application must be complete and thorough. Actual awards may or may not equal the amount you originally requested and are based on available funds at the time of award.

**Do not assume that the review team is familiar with your area, destination, business, event, or festival. You should include all requested information and be as detailed as possible.**

When determining the award total for an application, Virginia Tourism Corporation may consider a variety of factors. These include the type and scope of the organization, the proposal's audience and message, the number of applications received, the regional distribution of funds, and MOST IMPORTANTLY, the economic impact of the program and its ability to drive visitation/visitor revenue in the program coverage area.

Please see the score breakdown for each section below:

Criteria	Points
Campaign Goals and Support	50
Hub and Spoke itinerary	50
<i>Local amplification (optional Q1)</i>	3
<i>Creative Quality (images provided)</i>	3
<b>Total (out of 100) potential for 106</b>	

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## REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT PROCESS

This is a reimbursement-based grant program. Awarded funds will not be paid out up-front.

Tiers 1 and 2 are reimbursement-based programs. If you are selected for Tier 3 or 4, you will be invoiced by VTC for your match. In Tier 3 and 4, VTC will pay the influence and Takeover site directly.

Once you receive an award notification, via email, from the VTC Grants Team, we will place your award in a grant account that you can spend down on your own basis, up until the final date we accept reimbursements ([Due Date: Feb 28, 2026](#)).

**Failure to utilize your awarded funds by this due date will result in VTC releasing your award back to the grant funding pool.**

You must have a valid virginia.org listing of your business or event BEFORE you can receive VTC reimbursement.

### How To Submit A VTC Reimbursement Request

(follow the VTC Reimbursement Instructions Document for more details)

You will need the following information in your reimbursement package:

- VTC Reimbursement Request Form
- W-9
- ACH Direct Deposit Form (optional)
- Invoices & Proofs of Payment of these expenses being paid.
- Proofs of Placement of your marketing, including social media, digital media. (These should be included on a USB drive and mailed with the rest of the items)
- Photography Release (if grant funds were used for photography/videography)

You MUST mail the above items, in one package, to our main office addressed to:

**VTC Grants Team; 901 East Cary Street, Suite 900, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.**

After the VTC Grants Team receives your reimbursement request package, it will be reviewed. Afterwards, you will be notified, via email, regarding the status of your reimbursement request and whether we need further information.

- **NOTE: Only the PRIMARY contact on your application/grant account can submit reimbursement requests to VTC.** Reimbursement requests CANNOT be submitted by partners/spokes or any other parties; requests submitted by those parties WILL NOT be reviewed or processed.
- VTC Reimbursement payments will ONLY be sent to the applicant business/organizations. No other party will receive payment from VTC.

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## ELIGIBLE EXPENSES FOR MATCH AND REIMBURSEMENT

All marketing/advertising submitted to VTC for match or reimbursement should be from one of the selected tiered programs and will require the use of the campaign templates and “Virginia is for Lovers” logo.

The eligible expense period: [September - November 2025](#).

The only expenses eligible are from the Tiered programs, including Meta/Social Media program, Sojern/Digital Advertising program, Influencer program and/or Philadelphia Takeover.

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## VIFL Logo Usage Section

Below are the ways you must incorporate the “Virginia is for Lovers” brand into your marketing to receive VTC Reimbursement:

- Any social media posts, digital media, or website/app creation MUST include the “Virginia is for Lovers” logo or a Virginia is for Lovers sub-brand logo, link to Virginia.org AND/OR Hashtag #LoveVA to be eligible as MATCH or be approved for REIMBURSEMENT. Sub-brand examples include but are not limited to “Virginia is for History Lovers” or “Virginia is for Wine Lovers”. Logos can be requested at <https://vatc.org/marketing/advertising/vifl-logo-request/>.
- Any print media, like brochures, flyers, magazines, newspapers, etc., MUST include the “Virginia is for Lovers” logo or a Virginia is for Lovers sub-brand logo, link to Virginia.org AND/OR Hashtag #LoveVA to be eligible as MATCH or be approved for REIMBURSEMENT. Sub-brand examples include but are not limited to “Virginia is for History Lovers” or “Virginia is for Wine Lovers”. Logos can be requested at <https://vatc.org/marketing/advertising/vifl-logo-request/>.
- Radio ads that are LONGER THAN 30 SECONDS must include the “Virginia is for Lovers” phrase within the advertisement. This can be included as part of the advertisement narrative, such as “Everyone knows Virginia is for Lovers, and you’re going to love this event...”
- Video ads (OF ANY LENGTH) MUST include the “Virginia is for Lovers” logo AND/OR phrase within the advertisement. An example of this can include a banner in the background or an actor/performer wearing Virginia is for Lovers apparel.



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## **Open Records Policy**

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.

## **VTC GRANTS TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION**

For questions regarding any of the information in this document, please reach out to the VTC Grants Team:

VTC Marketing Leverage Email: [vtcmplgrant@virginia.org](mailto:vtcmplgrant@virginia.org)

Staci Martin, Grants Director [smartin@virginia.org](mailto:smartin@virginia.org)

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