Spring 2026 Tourism Grants

January 28
Tompkins County Public Library

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Today's Outline

- Introductions
- Tourism Program overview
- Visit Ithaca / Downtown Ithaca Alliance / IAED
- Spring Tourism Grants
    - Community Celebrations Grant
    - Tourism Advancement Grant
    - Tompkins Outdoors Grant
- Common Grant Application tutorial
- Consultation / Q&A

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Introductions

Tourism Program Overview

- Why does Tompkins County have a Tourism Program?
  - To maintain and enhance our county's appeal as a destination
  - To enhance quality of life for residents
  - To diversify and grow our local economy
- Strategic Tourism Plan defines values and goals for the County

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Tourism Program Goals

- Increase average overnight trip length by one night from 2-3 nights to 3-4 nights.
- Increase average visitor spending by 5% from $366 to $384 per day in established downtowns and villages.
- Offer indoor and outdoor visitor programming year-round.
- … plus others listed in the Strategic Tourism Plan

Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Organizational purpose

- Advise the Tompkins County Legislature on all aspects of tourism development
- Review and evaluate the activities of all entities receiving room tax funds
- Develop tourism policy for review and adoption by the Legislature
- Advise the Legislature on allocation of proceeds from the room tax

Membership

- 18 voting members
- 8 non-voting members

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Ithaca / Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)

visit ITHACA

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Marketing Fundamentals

Brand Promise

What expectations are you creating and communicating to your audience?

Audience Segment

Segment your market and choose your target, **know your audience.**

Positioning

For [Target Market], the [Brand] is the [Point of Differentiation] among all [Frame of Reference] because [Reason to Believe].

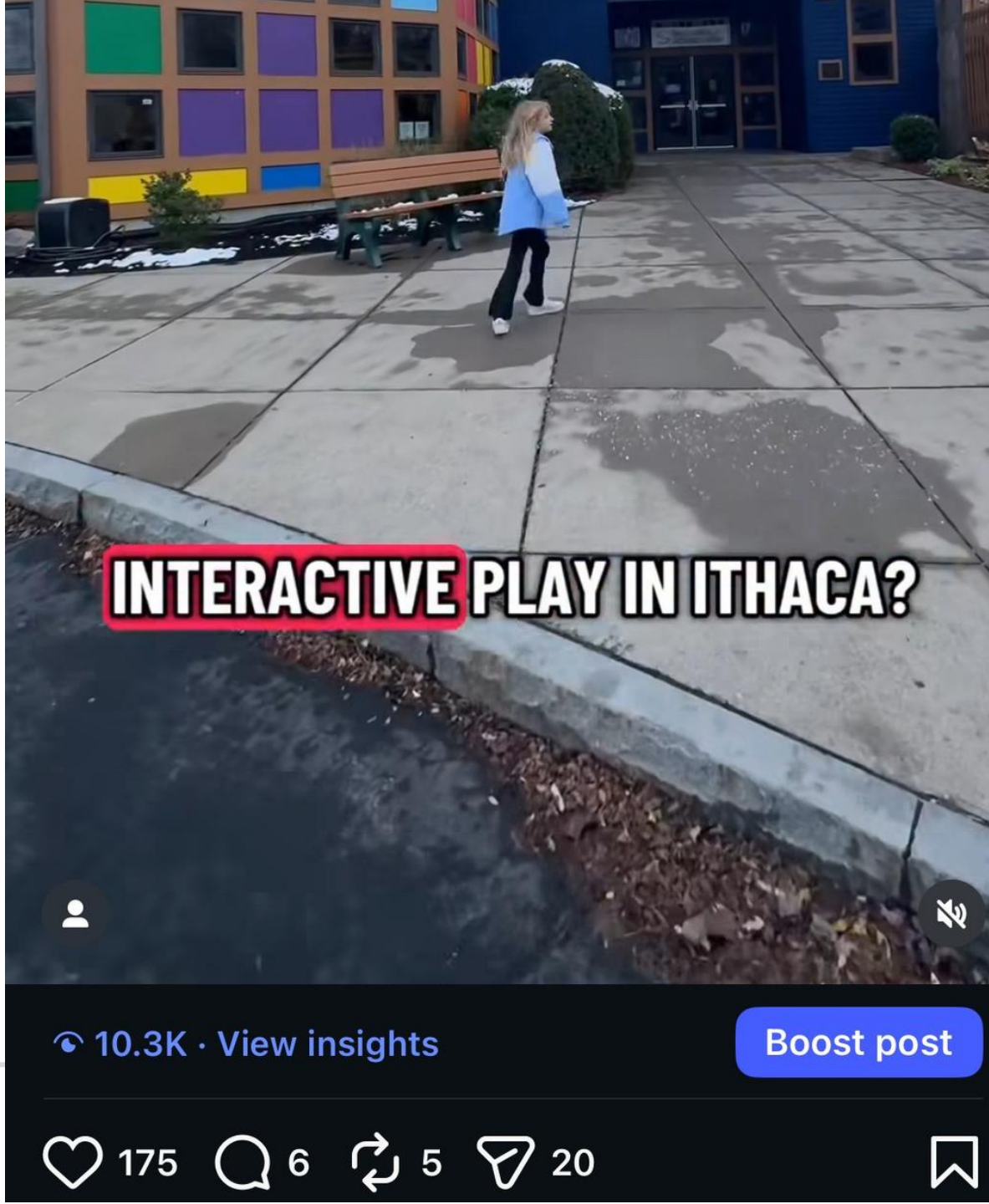
4 P's

Product / Price / Promotion / Place (Distribution or Location)

REACH

Visit Ithaca is here to amplify your business and programs!

- 579,000+ annual website sessions
- 77,896 referrals to partner websites
- 90K Travel Guides distributed annually
- 25.9K Insta followers + 45.0K Fb followers



Events Calendar

visit ITHACA

60,000+ VIEWS TO EVENTS LANDING PAGES

I Love New York

Eligible events are automatically added to the iloveny.com/events which feeds other seasonal content, including enewsletters and social posts

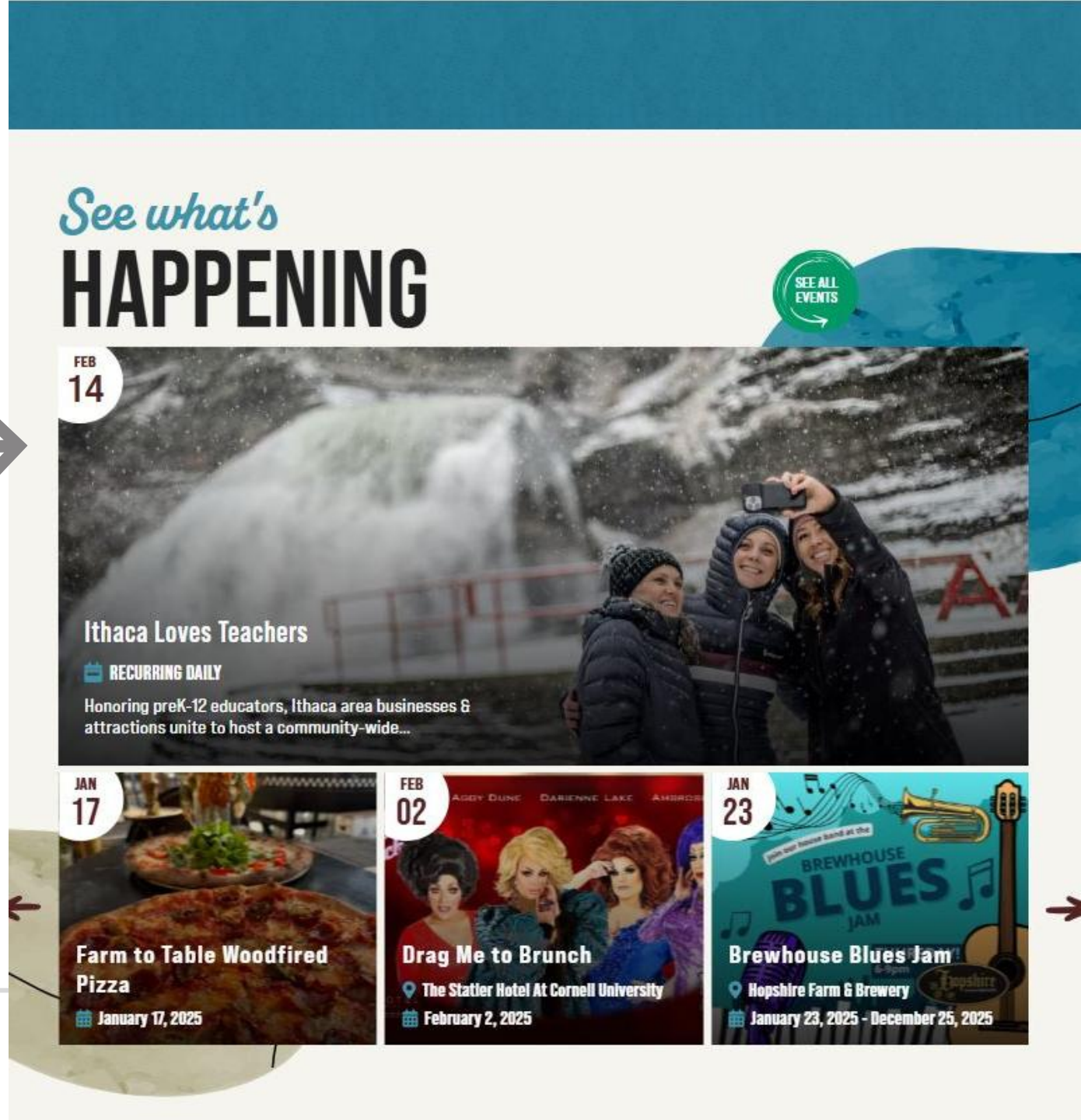
ExploreFingerLakes.com

Visit Ithaca is a member of the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance and will submit events with broad visitor appeal.

WHAT IS A FEATURED EVENT?

$100 /week

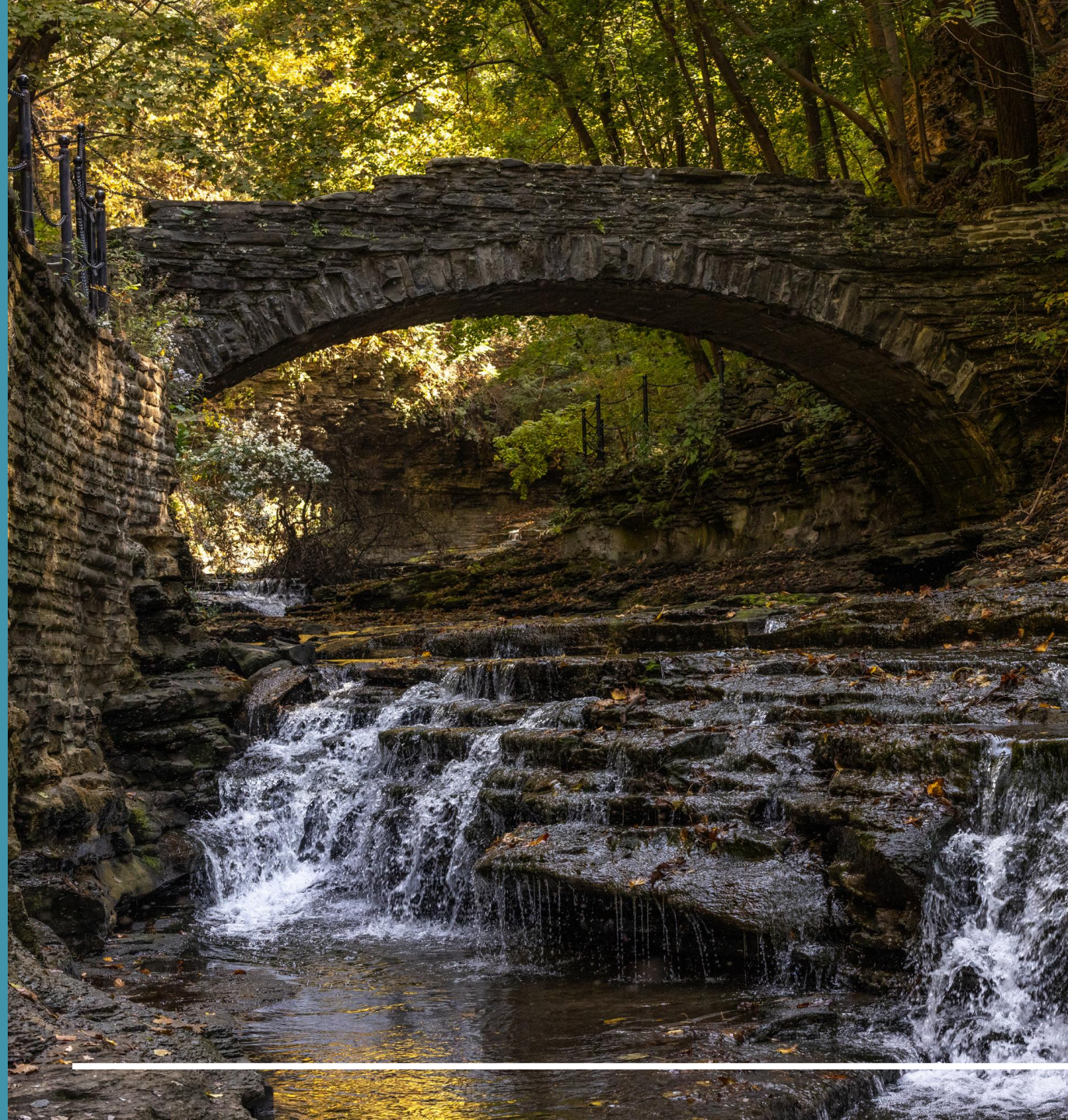
- Top banner on visitithaca.com/events/event-calendar/
- Top placement on the homepage
- Bonus: event slider placement
- Top event in one of the Wednesday Event emails sent to all tourism partners
- One social post on Facebook and/or Instagram mentioning your event



OTHER MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

- Annual Travel Guide
- Targeted consumer emails
- Featured spotlights on visitithaca.com
- Social Media collaborations
- Group travel & tour promotion

...and more!



Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA)

Equipment Lending Library

Available Items

- Tables, 6-foot
- Chairs
- Tents
- Tent Weights
- Traffic Cones
- Trash Cans
- Generic Banner
- Cash Box
- Traffic Cones
- Cable Cover Ramps
- Recycling Bins
- Extension Cords
- Gorilla Cart
- Chest Coolers
- A-Frames
- Generators
- Cable Covers
- PA System
- Tend Weights

ELIGIBILITY

1.) Equipment lending priority is given to: Events free and open to the public and events occurring within the Business Improvement District (BID)
2.) Events must occur within Tompkins County.

PROCESS

1.) To make your equipment request, fill out this form in its entirety.
2.) Wait to be contacted by the DIA via info@downtownithaca.com. Generally, you will get a reply email within 5-7 business days of the request submission.
3.) Once details are established and agreed upon, you will receive a Request Approval Letter.
4.) You will then sign and return the approval letter, and make any appropriate payments. Please note, reservations are not final until the approval letter is returned signed and the appropriate payment is made.
5.) Pick-up and drop-off equipment within the agreed upon dates and times.

PRICING GUIDELINES

An administration fee ($5.00 nonrefundable) will be charged to all users of the equipment lending library to cover the DIA's associated costs.

1.) Events that are free and open to public, and occur within the BID:

Weekday: pick-up $25, drop-off $25
Weekend: pick-up $50, drop-off $50

2.) Events that are not free and open to the public **OR** events that take place outside of the BID:

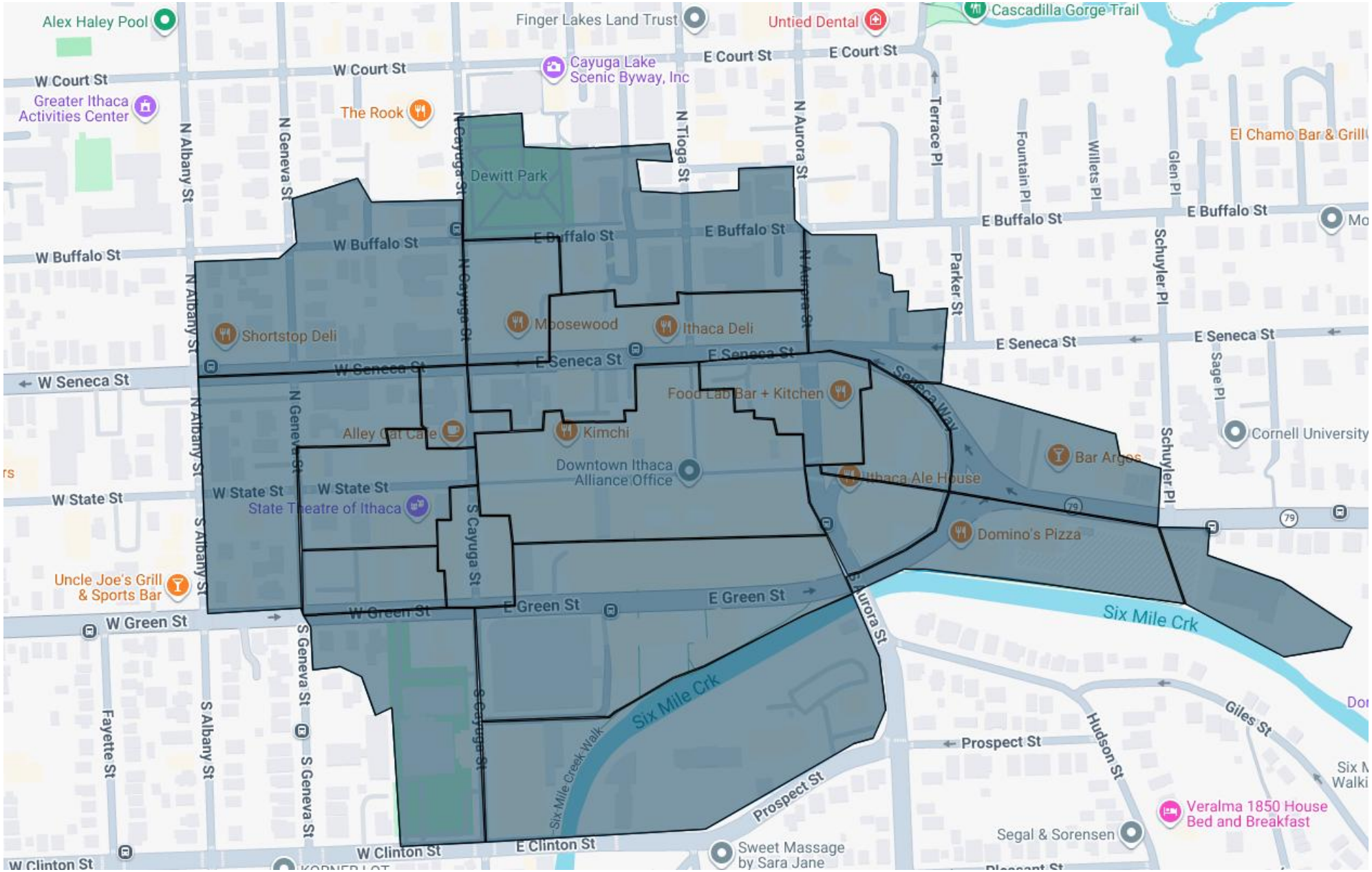
Weekday: pick-up $50, drop-off $50
Weekend: pick-up $100, drop-off $100

You are financially responsible for items broken or not returned and will be charged.
A borrower's misuse of equipment, or disrespect for program rules and policies, will affect future rental approvals.

Link to Website - we are still making updates:
https://www.downtownithaca.com/lending-library/

Link to Application: https://forms.gle/DzQ8Kqgkwwy4tHsp8

BID District Map



Ithaca Area Economic Development

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Tourism Capital Grants

- Purpose: to support major investments in visitor-generating projects
- Eligibility:
  - Nonprofit organizations & municipalities
  - Capital investments & feasibility studies
- Award range: $5,000 to $100,000 ($250,000 available)
- Match: $1 grant : $2 other sources
- Application deadline: **TBD**

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Spring 2026 Tourism Grants

- Community Celebrations
- Tourism Advancement
- Tompkins Outdoors

Community Celebrations

- Purpose: to support events that convey the unique culture and history of Tompkins County
- Eligibility:
  - Event is free and open to all
  - Event is an observance, jubilation, presentation, etc.
  - No carnival rides, fireworks, religious celebrations, etc.
- Award Range: $500 - $2,500 ($16,850 available)
- Match: $1 grant : $1 other sources
- Application deadline: **February 26, 2026**

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Tourism Advancement Grants

- Purpose: to attract visitors to Tompkins County for overnight trips
- Eligibility:
  - Nonprofit organizations & municipalities
  - Performances, festivals, guided tours, exhibits, and other events
  - No fundraisers, membership groups, faith congregations, or conferences
- Award range: $2,500 to $10,000 ($85,000 available)
- Match: $1 grant : $1 other sources
- Application deadline: **February 26, 2026**

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Tompkins Outdoors Grants

- Purpose: to enhance Tompkins County's reputation and profile as a leading outdoor recreation destination
- Eligibility:
  - Nonprofit organizations that manage natural areas or offer outdoor tours / programs
  - Other criteria in guidelines
- Award: up to $19,000 ($55,000 available)
- Eligibility questionnaire: February 10, 2026
- Application deadline: **February 26, 2026**

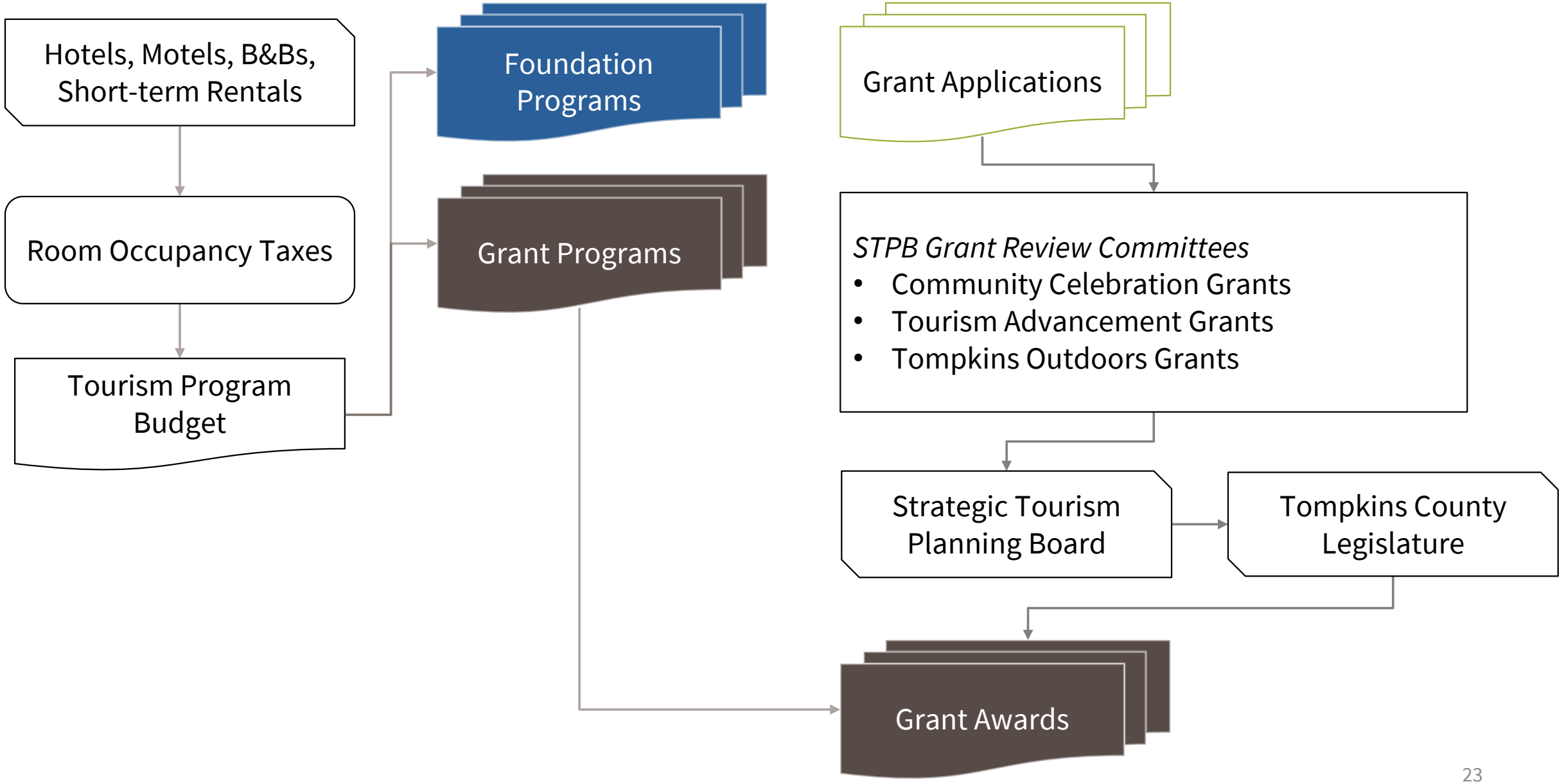
TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Getting Help

- ✅ the grant guidelines
- 📧 tourism@tompkins-co.org
- 📞 607-274-5560

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Tourism Grants - Award Decision Process



Award Decision Process

- County staff review applications (completeness and eligibility).
- Grant review committee evaluates applications and recommends funding to Strategic Tourism Planning Board.
- Tourism Board considers review committee's report and votes to submit recommended funding to Tompkins County Legislature (via Housing and Economic Development Committee).
- Legislature considers funding request and votes to authorize grant awards.
- County staff prepare and send contracts.

Key 2026 Dates

- January 28 — Grant information session
- February 10 — Eligibility questionnaire due for Tompkins Outdoors grant
- February 26 — Application deadline
- March 18 — STPB makes grant award recommendation
- April 1 — HED Committee votes on grant resolutions
- April 21 — County Legislature votes on grant resolutions
- April 22 and beyond — Grant contracts issued and signed
- … 30 days after your event or project completion – grant report due

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

Common Grant Application

TOMPKINS COUNTY Tourism Program

www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/grants

Tourism Grants

Overview

The Tompkins County Tourism Program invests Hotel Room Occupancy Tax through a variety of grant programs. This page provides resources for grant applicants and recipients.

All tourism grant awards are reviewed by members of the Strategic Tourism Planning Board and approved by the Tompkins County Legislature.

Current Grant Programs

Applications are now open for our spring 2026 grant round! Three funding opportunities are available to support community vitality, visitor engagement, and outdoor recreation in Tompkins County:

- **Community Celebrations Grants** – Support local events that celebrate our unique culture and history
- **Tourism Advancement Grants** – Fund initiatives that attract overnight visitors to our area
- **Tompkins Outdoors Grants** – Strengthen organizations that enhance Tompkins County's reputation and profile as an outdoor recreation destination, with grants up to $19,000 or 10% of organizational budget (whichever is less)

Learn more about eligibility requirements and application guidelines for each program below.

Deadlines

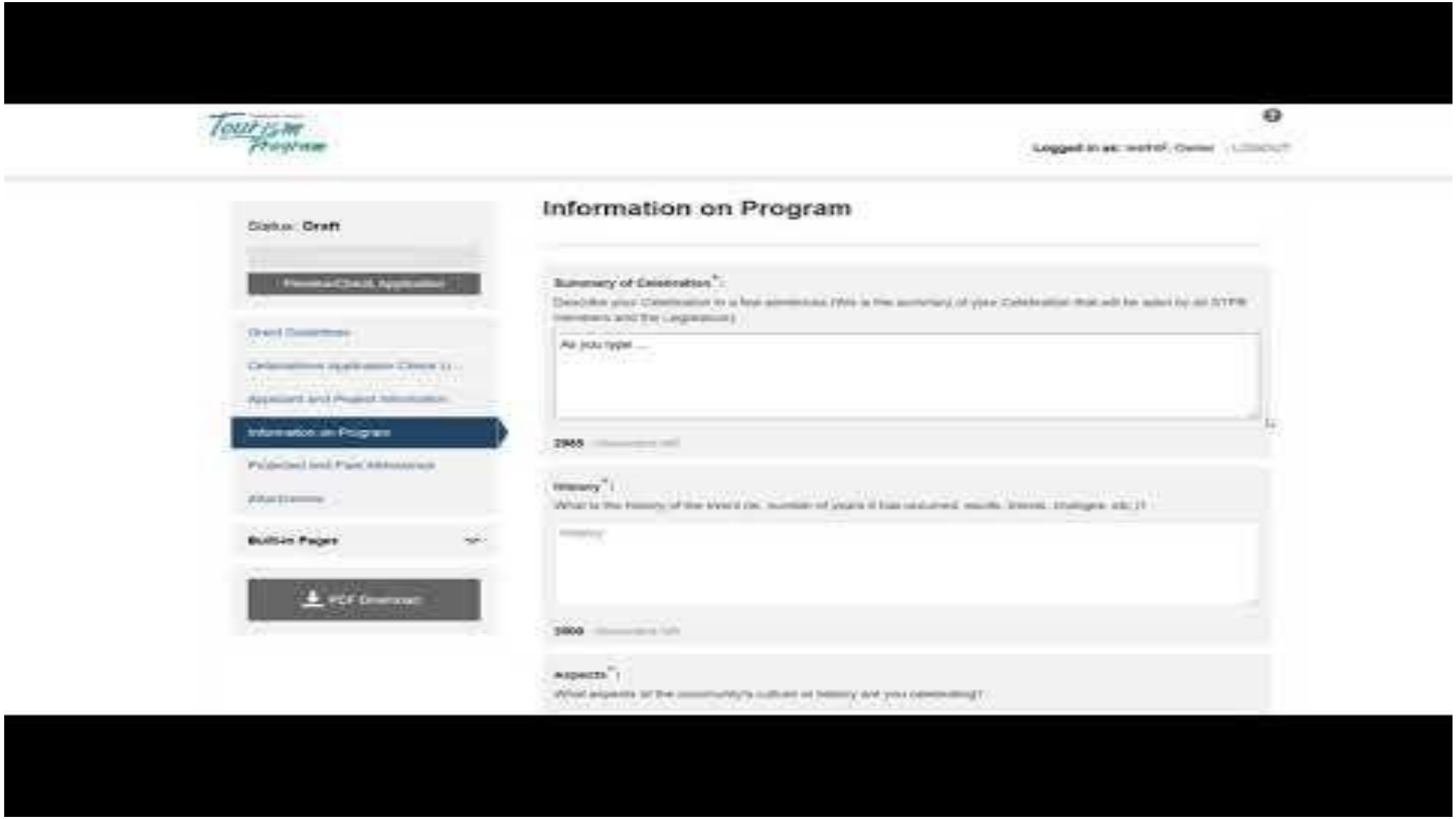
- Community Celebrations and Tourism Advancement Grants: Feb. 26, 2026, at 11:59PM ET.
- Tompkins Outdoors Grants: Two-part process with an eligibility questionnaire due Feb. 10, 2026, at 11:59 PM ET (reviewed continuously); approved applicants may then submit their full application by Feb. 26, 2026, at 11:59 PM ET

Grant Information Session

Join us for an information session on **Jan. 28, 2026, at 3:30 pm** at the Tompkins County Public Library (101 E. Green St., Ithaca, NY 14850). While RSVPs aren't required, you are welcome to email us if you plan to attend and would like to be notified of any scheduling changes.

Arts and Culture Organization Development (ACOD) Grant +

Video Tutorial



https://youtu.be/xD85LuIZjRM

Choose a program

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SIGN UP | LOGIN

GRANTMAKERS | APPLICANTS | ABOUT US | HELP | CONTACT US

Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability (Ithaca, NY)

ORGANIZATION | PROGRAMS

GRANTS

NAME	SUMMARY
Community Celebrations	**Description:**

This grant program is designed to provide assistance to events, programs, or series of events endorsed by a municipality that are free and open to all, and are planned by community members as a benefit to the community.

Program Type:

Grant

Grant Cycle Dates:

CYCLE NAME	APPLICATIONS OPENED	APPLICATIONS CLOSED
Spring	January 2	February 28
Fall	July 1	August 29

Documents:

NAME	NOTES
Community Celebrations Project Budget Template.xlsx	
FINAL 2019 - Community Celebrations Grant Guidelines.pdf	

Start an Application:

Already have an account? Login to start an application.

Don't have an account? Sign up to open an account and start an application.

Start Here!

Powered by **Common Grant Application**

Register

Register here if you are a non-profit organization that would like to apply for grants or in-kind donations or an individual that would like to apply for scholarships that may be offered by the grantmakers using our site. Please read the grantmaker guidelines to determine your eligibility before applying. Grantmakers and their grantmaking interests are listed at the Grantmaker List.

Please note, the Common Grant Application does not make grants, in-kind donations or give scholarships; only the grantmakers using the site do. The Common Grant Application can support multiple users within the same organization's account. If your organization already has an account please contact your account administrator and ask them to issue you an account user name and password. There are no applicant fees to use the site.

Already have an account? Problems Registering?

Account

*Required Fields

Organization or Individual:*	Organization
First Name:*	
Last Name:*	
Organization Name:*	
Country:*	-- Select --
Email:*	
Re-enter Email:*	
User Name:*	
Password:*	
Re-enter Password:*	

Register

Powered by **Common Grant Application**

Logged in as: [redacted]@gmail.com, Owner | LOGOUT

Confirm Grant Program

If you would like to start an application to:

Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability

and their program:

Community Celebrations

click on the "Continue to Application" button below. This will start a step-by-step process to fill out and submit an application.

You will be able to interrupt and return to the step-by-step process to check or change your account settings and status at any time by clicking on the "Pause" button.

Logout | Continue to Application

If you would rather just browse your account before doing anything, click on "Continue to Dashboard" below. This will take you to the dashboard, which will show you information about the settings and status of your account.

You'll be able to start a step-by-step process to fill out and submit an application at any time from the dashboard by clicking on the "Start Draft Application" or "Resume Draft Application" links.

Continue to Dashboard

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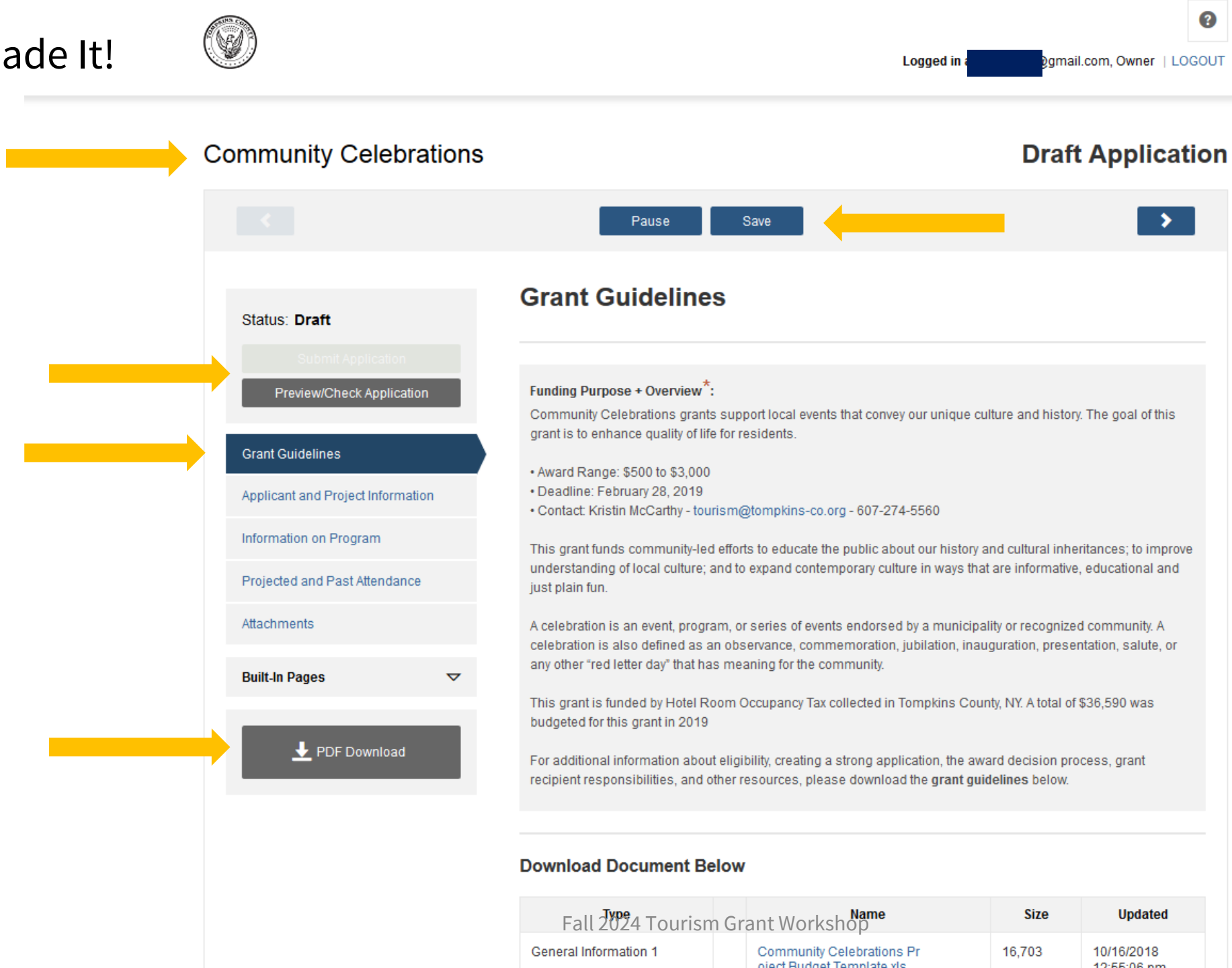
You Made It!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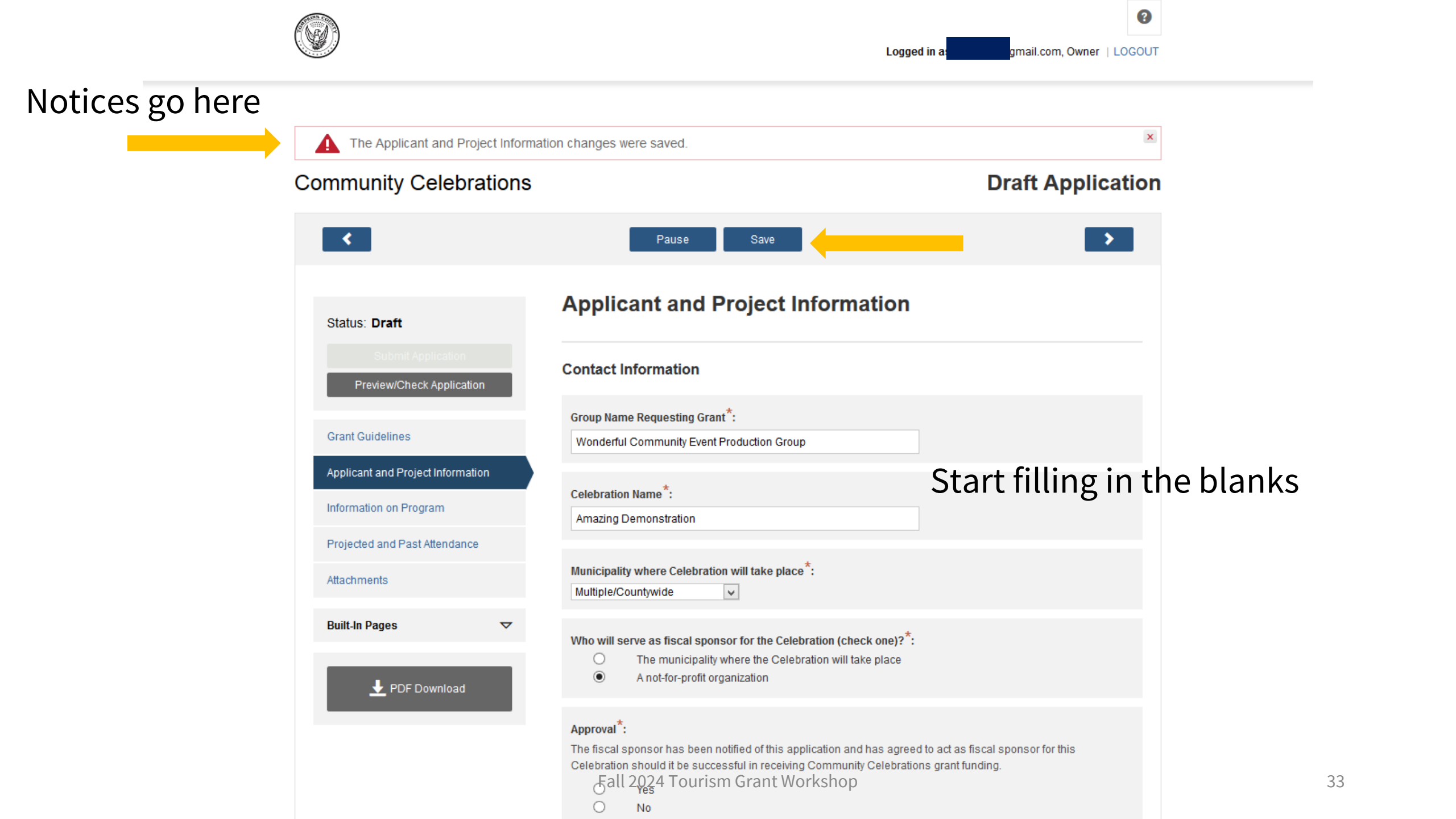
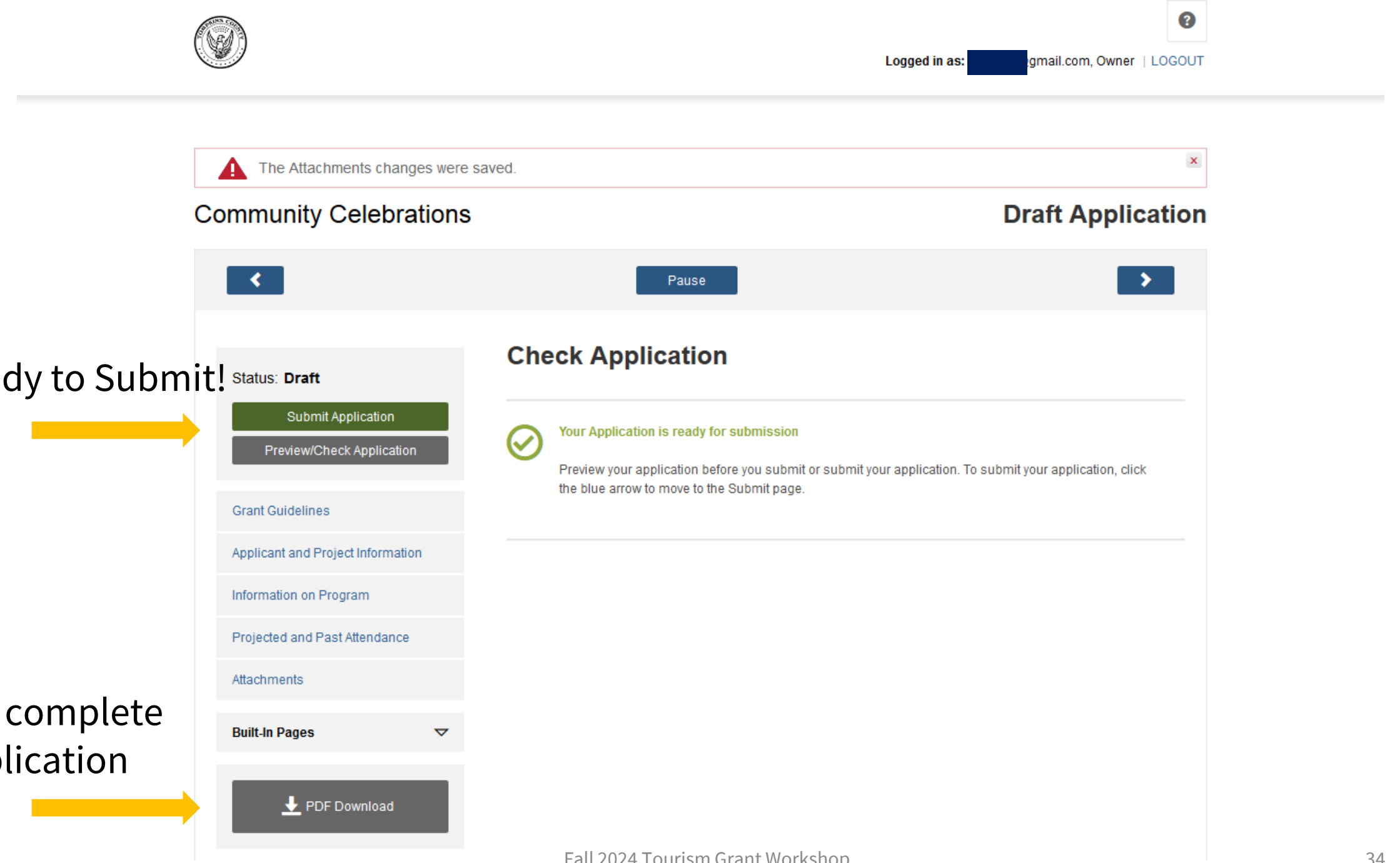
Community Celebrations
Draft Application
Pause
Save
Status: Draft
Submit Application
Preview/Check Application
Grant Guidelines
Applicant and Project Information
Information on Program
Projected and Past Attendance
Attachments
Built-In Pages
PDF Download
Grant Guidelines
Funding Purpose + Overview*:
Community Celebrations grants support local events that convey our unique culture and history. The goal of this grant is to enhance quality of life for residents.
• Award Range: $500 to $3,000
• Deadline: February 28, 2019
• Contact: Kristin McCarthy - tourism@tompkins-co.org - 607-274-5560
This grant funds community-led efforts to educate the public about our history and cultural inheritances; to improve understanding of local culture; and to expand contemporary culture in ways that are informative, educational and just plain fun.
A celebration is an event, program, or series of events endorsed by a municipality or recognized community. A celebration is also defined as an observance, commemoration, jubilation, inauguration, presentation, salute, or any other "red letter day" that has meaning for the community.
This grant is funded by Hotel Room Occupancy Tax collected in Tompkins County, NY. A total of $36,590 was budgeted for this grant in 2019
For additional information about eligibility, creating a strong application, the award decision process, grant recipient responsibilities, and other resources, please download the grant guidelines below.
Download Document Below
Type
Name
Size
Updated
General Information 1
Community Celebrations Project Budget Template.xls
16,703
10/16/2018

Notices go here

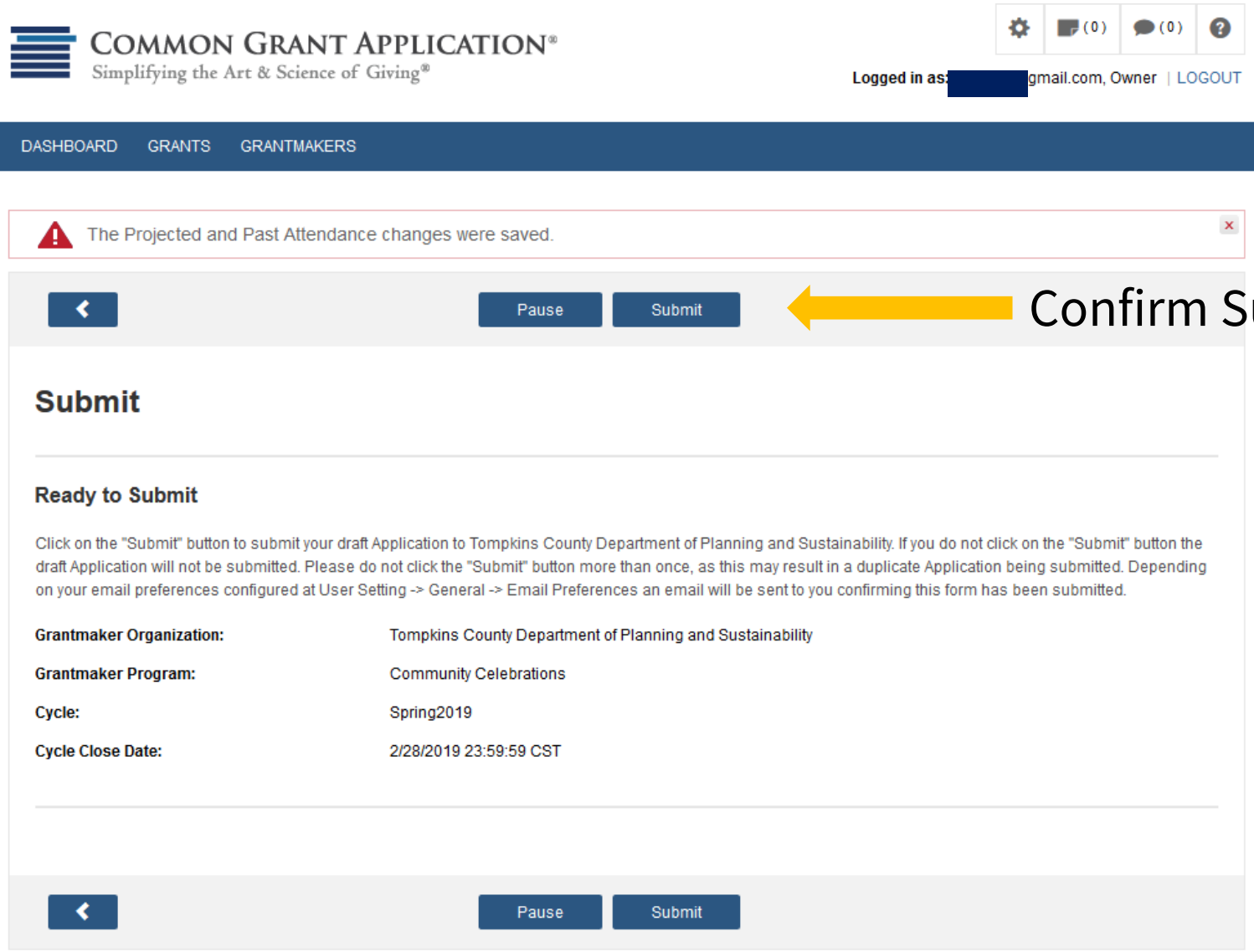


Start filling in the blanks



Ready to Submit!

D/L complete application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DASHBOARD
GRANTS
GRANTMAKERS
The Projected and Past Attendance changes were saved.
Pause
Submit
Confirm Submission
Submit
Ready to Submit
Click on the "Submit" button to submit your draft Application to Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability. If you do not click on the "Submit" button the draft Application will not be submitted. Please do not click the "Submit" button more than once, as this may result in a duplicate Application being submitted. Depending on your email preferences configured at User Setting -> General -> Email Preferences an email will be sent to you confirming this form has been submitted.
Grantmaker Organization: Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability
Grantmaker Program: Community Celebrations
Cycle: Spring2019
Cycle Close Date: 2/28/2019 23:59:59 CST
Pause
Submit
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Check your Email for a Confirmation

[Common Grant Application] Application Submitted

Inbox ×

Common Grant Application <noreply@commongrantapplication.com>
to me

4:06 PM (0 minutes ago)

January 23, 2019

The following grant application has been submitted by the applicant and received by Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability

Application #: 41146

The application was submitted to the program: Community Celebrations. The program contact is:

Nick Helmholdt
Principal Planner / Tourism Program Director
Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability
Ithaca, NY
United States
(607) 274-5560
NHelmholdt@tompkins-co.org

The grant application may be viewed by clicking on the following link: http://www.commongrantapplication.com/gsk/bin/gsk_newappreview.php?appId=41146&mode=reviewApp or by logging in, clicking on the Grants tab, clicking on the Review button and then clicking on App # 41146 in the left hand column.

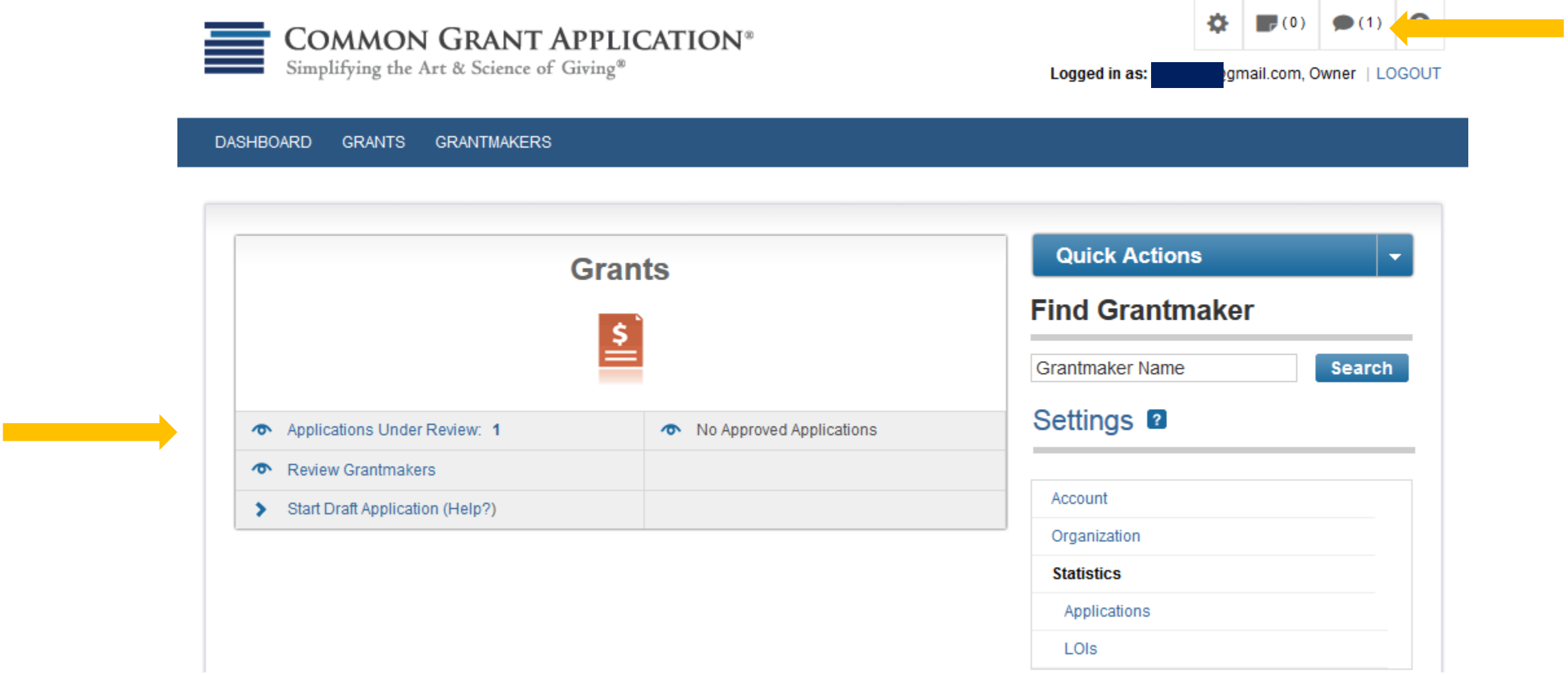
The application was submitted for the grant cycle that has an open date of: 1/2/2019 00:00:01 CST and a close date of: 2/28/2019 23:59:59 CST

If you have any questions about an application or the grantmaker, please contact the grantmaker directly. If you have any questions or comments about your account or the Common Grant Application in general, we may be reached by email at: info@commongrantapplication.com. Also, as a reminder, your user name is: [redacted]gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Common Grant Application

Please note: The sender's email address is NHelmholdt@tompkins-co.org. If you have any questions about this email, please direct them to the sender at that address. Please do not reply directly to this email. The email address this email was sent from is not monitored and you will not receive a response.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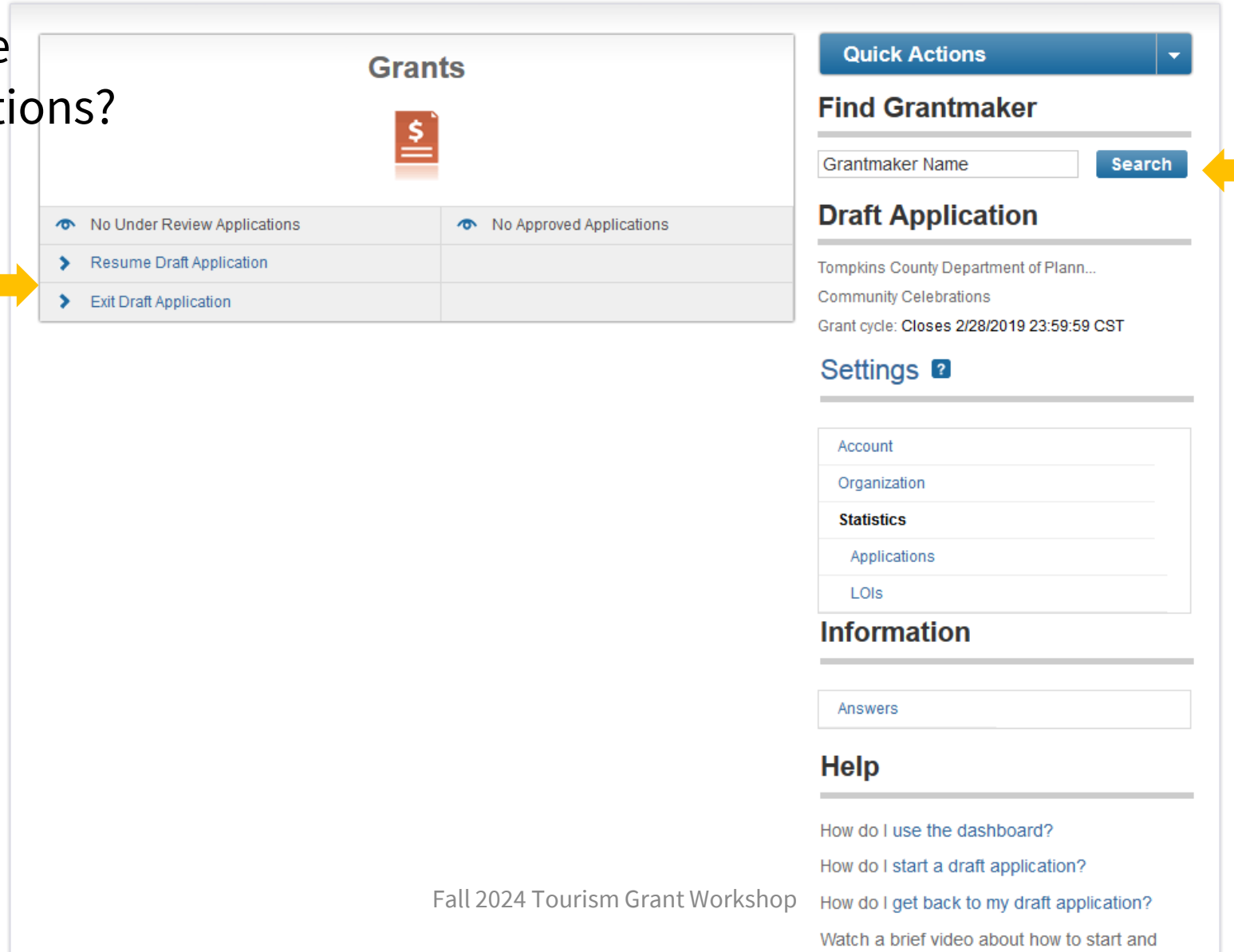
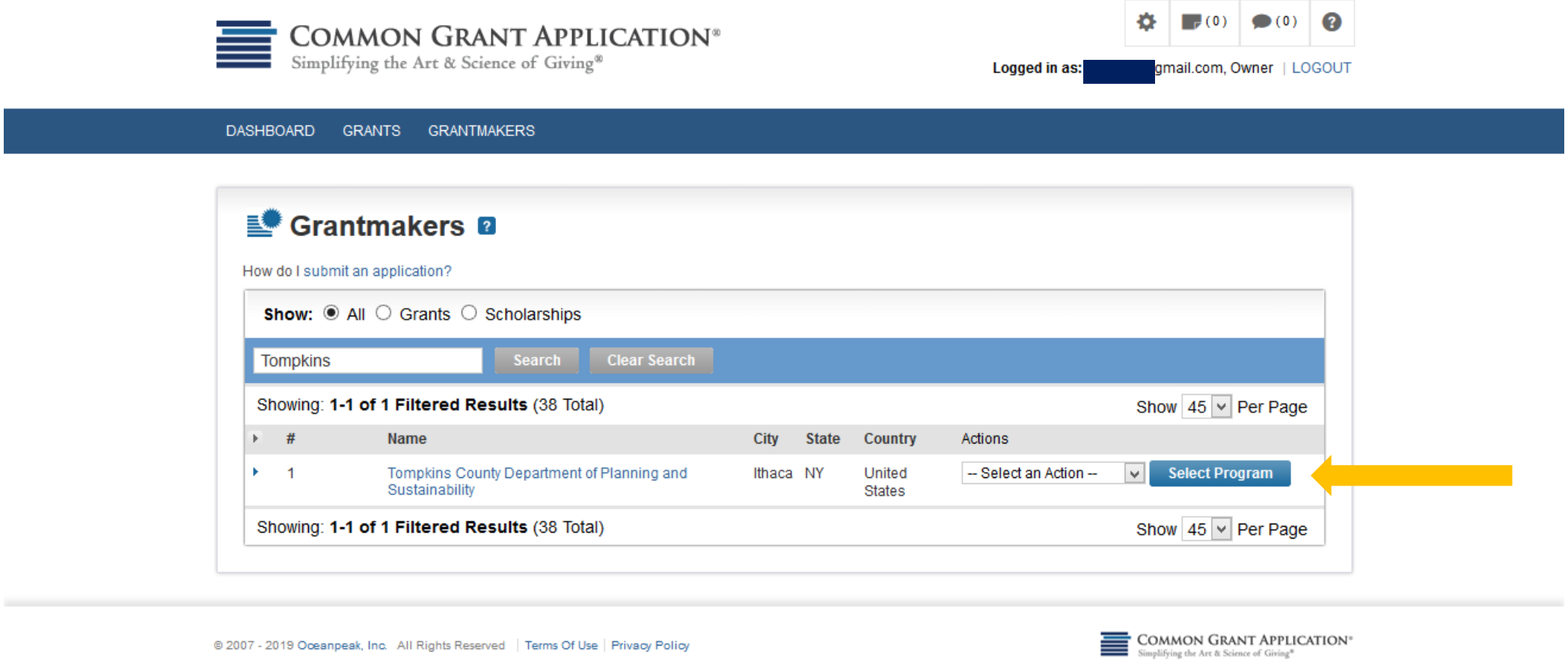
DASHBOARD
GRANTS
GRANTMAKERS
Grants
Applications Under Review: 1
No Approved Applications
Review Grantmakers
Start Draft Application (Help?)
Quick Actions
Find Grantmaker
Grantmaker Name
Search
Settings
Account
Organization
Statistics
Applications
LOIs

How do I Prepare Multiple Applications?

1- Exit your draft

2- Search: TOMPKINS

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DASHBOARD
GRANTS
GRANTMAKERS
Grantmakers
How do I submit an application?
Show: All Grants Scholarships
Tompkins
Search
Clear Search
Showing: 1-1 of 1 Filtered Results (38 Total)
Show 45 Per Page
Name City State Country Actions
1 Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability Ithaca NY United States
-- Select an Action --
Select Program
Showing: 1-1 of 1 Filtered Results (38 Total)
Show 45 Per Page
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DASHBOARD GRANTS GRANTMAKERS

Select Program - Tompkins County Department of Plann...

How do I submit an application?, submit a 2nd application to the same grantmaker?, Click on "Watch Video" in the "Actions" column to watch a brief video about how to start and submit an application.

Enter Search Terms | Search | Clear Search

Showing: **1-6 of 6 Filtered Results** (6 Total) Show 45 Per Page

Name	Summary	Type	Status	Actions
Community Celebrations	This grant program is designed to provide assistance to events, programs, or series of events endorsed by a municipality that are free and open to all, and are planned by community members as a benefit to the community.	Grant	Okay	-- Select an Action -- Start Draft App
Strategic Tourism Letter of Interest	Prospective applicants are required to submit a letter of interest prior to submitting a full application.	Grant	Not Okay	-- Select an Action --
Tourism Capital Grant - Capital Investment	Tourism Capital grants support major investments in visitor-generating projects such as theaters, museums, and other major cultural and recreational attractions. The funds can be used for design, renovation, and new building projects; investments in unique permanent installations such as exhibits.	Grant	Okay	-- Select an Action -- Start Draft App
Tourism Capital Grant - Feasibility	Tourism Capital grants support major investments in visitor-generating projects such as theaters, museums, and other major cultural and recreational attractions. This application is for feasibility studies of potential capital projects.	Grant	Okay	-- Select an Action -- Start Draft App
Tourism Project Grant and Tourism Marketing & Advertising Grant	Tourism Project Grants fund efforts that draw visitors to Tompkins County for overnight stays or accomplish other critical actions listed in the "2020 Strategic Tourism Plan." Tourism Marketing & Advertising Grants fund campaigns that attract visitors from outside Tompkins County.	Grant	Okay	-- Select an Action -- Start Draft App
Towns and Villages Parks and Trails Grant Program	The Towns and Villages Parks and Trails Grant Program funds up to $5,000 for improvements to municipal parks and trails. Please see the grant guidelines below for detailed information about eligibility, criteria, and process.	Grant	Not Okay	-- Select an Action --

Showing: **1-6 of 6 Filtered Results** (6 Total) Show 45 Per Page

Start a new application