Tourism Marketing Grant

Spring 2022 Guidelines

Funding Purpose + Overview

This grant funds marketing and advertising campaigns that attract visitors from outside Tompkins County.

- Award Range: $500 to $3,000[1]
- Deadline: February 23, 2022
- Contact: Nick Helmholdt – tourism@tompkins-co.org – 607-274-5560

Examples of campaigns that have been funded in the past include the Ithaca Summer Shakespeare Festival, Qinfolk Festival, Open Farm Days, Greater Ithaca Open Art Trail, and other favorite local offerings.

This grant is funded by Hotel Room Occupancy Tax collected in Tompkins County, NY. Up to $10,000 is available for spring 2022 grants. This grant cycle can support activities taking place from May through December 2022. A grant workshop will be held on February 10, 2022.

All applications must be submitted online through Common Grant Application.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

- Non-profit organizations designated as 501(c)3
- Applicant must have an adopted organizational policy on diversity, equity and inclusion
- Two or more non-profit organizations may prepare a **joint application**. One organization serve as the lead applicant to receive grant funding.

Eligible Activities

The following expenses are eligible only if they are targeted to visitors outside of Tompkins County:

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[1] The maximum award for a joint application is equal to $3,000 per organization.

- Print, radio, and television advertising
- Direct mail
- Permission-based email campaigns
- Website enhancements likely to increase tourism
- Web and social media marketing that increases traffic of potential visitors
- Production and/or distribution of collateral material
- Other types of targeted tourism marketing expenses

Other Limitations

- Applicants must demonstrate a financial **match** of at least 50% of the costs of out-of-county marketing and advertising. The match must be provided in cash. Donated goods and services are *not permitted* sources of matching funds.
- Grant funds may not be used to market or advertise events whose primary purpose is **fundraising** for a specific cause.
- Applications that exclusively promote a **religious** tradition are ineligible.
- Promoted events must be **open to the public**. Membership in an organization must not be required to participate in the proposed event.
- Groups planning **conferences** or meetings in Tompkins County targeting specific interests should work through the Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) to obtain conference services. These gatherings are not eligible for support from this grant.

Creating a Strong Application

Evaluation Criteria

The review committee will score applications based on an assessment of how well they meet the following criteria and answer the related questions:

1) Cohesiveness of Proposal
   o Is the application clear and well written?
   o Is the proposal's budget clear?
2) Organizational Capacity
   o Is the proposed project clear and technically feasible?
   o Does the project team have the right skills and experience to administer the award and carry out the project?
   o Does the project team have a demonstrated history of success in carrying out similar projects?

- o Does the applicant's organization demonstrate the appropriate level of financial security to carry out the project?
- o Does the project description demonstrate understanding of the specific steps that will be taken to deliver a successful tourism marketing campaign?

3) Project Benefits
- o How significant is the potential for direct, measurable tourism impact in Tompkins County?
- o If developed, will there be economic benefits in Tompkins County in the form of additional hotel/B&B room nights and visitor spending?
- o Will the campaign support tourism growth in the winter, on soft weekends, or during the mid-week?
- o Are the expected economic benefits likely, given other constraints or barriers?
- o Are there significant quality of life benefits?
- o Do projects with longer life spans (such as website enhancements) demonstrate measurable benefits for up to three years?
- o Does the application describe how diverse populations will participate in and benefit from this project?

4) Project Outcome and Cost
- o Are the overall project cost and requested grant funds justified based on the expected benefits?
- o Relative to the project cost, how significant are the potential benefits?

5) Alignment with Strategic Tourism Plan
- o Does the project show strong alignment with the values, goals, and actions of the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan?

6) Marketing Plan
- o Does the application contain a clear, well-thought-out marketing plan that identifies target visitor groups?
- o Does the marketing plan demonstrate efforts to attract a diverse audience?
- o Does the project's marketing strategy align with the CVB?

Considerations

Applicants should be aware of the Diversity Statement approved by the Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB). The STPB encourages applicants to consider how their projects can appeal to diverse audiences and reflect the diversity of our community. You can review the Diversity Statement online.

Projects must show how they will draw and/or serve visitors, especially overnight visitors, to Tompkins County. The primary focus is on out-of-county attendance from areas at

least 90 miles from Ithaca. **Projects limited to serving the local community without a strategy for growth and regional outreach are not likely to be funded.** All applicants are required to document past visitor attendance (if applicable) and set specific goals for future visitor attendance, as well as to outline methods for collecting this data.

All applications must demonstrate alignment of the project with the goals of the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan.

Applicants are expected to spell out in detail which marketing vehicles they propose to use, the costs of those investments, the expected number of marketing impressions generated, and the estimated portion of those impressions that will be for non–Tompkins County residents.

Required Attachments

Failure to provide the following required attachments will cause your application to be ineligible for funding.

1) Detailed project budget (Applicants are *strongly encouraged* to use the template budget spreadsheet available on the application webpage. All major categories of expenses should be listed along with all types of revenue.)
2) Proof of non-profit status in the form of a 501(c)3 determination letter. (Each applicant filing under a *joint application* must submit this attachment.)
3) Returning applicants must submit the final report from their most recent grant funded project. (New applicants are exempt from this requirement.)

Optional Attachments

Applicants may submit letters of support from key partners, graphics, or ancillary documentation (including video and audio files). However, the grant review committee will focus primarily on evaluating the information in the online application and the project budget.

Award Decision Process

o Tompkins County staff review applications for completeness and eligibility. Complete and eligible applications are shared with the appropriate grant review committee.
o The review committee makes funding recommendations for each application to the STPB.
o The STPB makes funding recommendations to the Tompkins County Legislature.
o The Legislature votes on the grant awards.
o Staff send emails to all applicants with funding decision and a contract.

Appeal Process

Applicants can appeal the decision of a funding award based on improprieties in the grant selection process. These include misrepresentation of information, non-presentation of information, or improper procedures. A denial of funding, or dissatisfaction with the amount of the award, is not justification for an appeal. To appeal a funding decision, send a letter stating the reason for the appeal to tourism@tompkins-co.org or STPB chair within 14 days of receiving written notification of the grant decision.

Grant Recipient Responsibilities

Please check for COVID updates available on the Tompkins County Health Department website: https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health

Grant awardees are required to enter into a contract with Tompkins County. Several of the responsibilities listed below are included in the contract.

Awards will be paid directly to registered not-for-profit organizations. (Successful applicants applying under a joint application should contact the lead applicant for payment instructions.)

Grant recipients are expected to work with the CVB to refine their marketing plan. CVB approval of the marketing plan is required prior to grant disbursement. Technical assistance from the CVB will be available to support successful grant awardees in the following areas:

- Market identification
- Vacation / destination package development
- Development of data collection mechanisms
- Demographic and market research
- Advertising design and layout
- Procurement of targeted mailing list

Grant funds are disbursed upon the approval of the marketing plan and an authorized payment voucher. This grant is paid in advance. All unspent funds must be returned to the County.

Grant recipients are required to acknowledge the support of the Tompkins County Tourism Program in all public relations materials, posters, and programs. The standard acknowledgment statement is: "This program was made possible in part by a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program." Grant recipients may use the Tompkins County Tourism Program logo in accordance with the recognition guidelines.

Grant recipients are expected to submit a grant report no later than 30 days after their campaign. The grant report asks for information about attendance, actual expenses, and event promotion. A template report is attached to each contract.

Prepare and Submit Your Application

Pre-Application Checklist

- ✓ My organization is an **eligible recipient**.
- ✓ My project is an **eligible activity**.
- ✓ I have documented **matching funds** equal to at least 50% of the cost.
- ✓ I have all **required attachments**.
- ✓ I have reviewed the **evaluation criteria** and **considerations**.
- ✓ I understand the **grant recipient responsibilities**.

Application Instructions

All applications must be submitted through [Common Grant Application](). Use one of the links below to start an application:

- Already have an account: [Log in to start an application.]()
- First time applying: [Register for a new account and start an application]().
- Review [other grants]()offered by Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability/Tourism Program.

Resources

The **Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)** is available to provide technical assistance related to promoting your event. Grant recipients are encouraged to work with the CVB if they would like to attract visitors from outside Tompkins County. For more information contact Peggy Coleman, VP Tourism & Community Relations, [peggy@visitithaca.com]().

Additional funding opportunities are listed on the following websites:

- [Tompkins County Administration]()
- [Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County]()