



2020 Montgomery County Tourism Marketing Grant Program

Program Purpose: The tourism **marketing** grant program is designed to stimulate visitor spending and to increase overnight stays in Montgomery County and the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg. This program provides dollar for dollar **matching funds** to encourage growth for local businesses, organizations and entities (hereafter referred to as “organizations”) that are supported in part by visitor spending.

Award: The award amounts will be determined based on the number of eligible applications within each district and the annual allocated amount for this funding from the tourism operating budget. No single award shall exceed 50% of the project/event’s total **marketing** plan.

Eligibility: Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

1. The project/event must be located within Montgomery County
2. **Grant application must be for a new component of an existing event or project, or for a new event or project**
3. The organization must have a current marketing plan, for the requested project/event, that includes the targeting of visitors from at least 50 miles beyond Montgomery County.
4. The organization must be in good standing with local and state agencies.
5. The proposed project/event must comply with all applicable licenses, permits and regulations.
6. Must incorporate the County’s tourism brand logo within the project/event marketing plan.
7. Must provide dollar for dollar match for awarded funds.
8. **Must be a non-profit organization as classified by the IRS - Ref. IRS Pub. 557**
9. Must permit the Montgomery County Regional Tourism Office to conduct surveys during the time of the project/event. If the organization chooses to conduct its own surveys, the results must be shared with the tourism office.

Application Sections:

Cover Sheet- Provide the requesting organization’s name, address, phone, website and primary point of contact with authority to sign on behalf of the organization- include their title, phone number and email address; the name of the project/event and district in Montgomery County where the organization or project/event is located and a brief summary of the project/event.

Attach **mini business plan** for the project/event clearly stating project/event description, goals, metrics for measuring the success of the project/event and a list of other partners and contributors. The proposal must describe in detail, how it will stimulate day trips and overnight stays and associated increase in visitor spending in Montgomery County.

Attach **marketing plan** for the project/event clearly describing goals and objective, marketing tactics, the target audience for the tactic, how the audience will be reached, media and advertising schedule, associated timelines, and costs of each tactic. The requested grant amount should be recorded in this section.

Attach the **overall project/event budget** along with a financial statement for the project/event, detailing expenses and revenues.

Attach the **plan for sustaining and further development of** the project/event into the future.

Attach any **references** related to the project/event.

Application Process:

Application reviews are held once per calendar year:

Application period opens in February. Applicants are given 30 calendar days to return the application. Awardees are typically notified of award within 30 calendar days after applications are due.

1. Submit application by mail, postmarked by due date:

Lisa Bleakley, Director
Montgomery County Regional Tourism Office
755 Roanoke Street,
Christiansburg, VA 24073

INCOMPLETE/ LATE APPLICATIONS MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED DURING THE RESPECTIVE GRANT CYCLE.

2. Applicants should be available via the contact information provided on the application in the event the review team needs to ask questions to clarify and or address any concerns regarding the application.
3. Finalists may be asked to create and present the project or event to the review team in support of the application.
4. The review team will make a recommendation to the Tourism Operating Board and Director of Tourism for final approval and award of grants.
5. Following the award of the grant, the following procedures will be followed:
 - a. To be reimbursed for the required grantee match, detailed receipts for approved expenditures must be submitted along with a final report on the project/event within 90 days of the event/project completion.
 - b. Approved funds will be dispersed as reimbursements. The organization shall invoice the Montgomery County Regional Tourism Office and submit receipts outlining expenses incurred. Approved expenses will be reimbursed for up to the amount of the award, not to exceed 50% of the event/project marketing budget.
 - c. Unless otherwise approved by the Tourism Operating Board, a project must occur and have submitted the final report to the tourism office within one calendar year of the award. An event must occur within the calendar year of the award and have a report submitted no later than 90 business days following the event.
 - d. The Tourism Operating Board reserves the right to fund projects/events at an amount less than the amount requested.
 - e. The Tourism Operating Board reserves the right to require additional information to show compliance with the standards described within these guidelines.

Application Review Criteria:

The following shall be considered by the review committee upon reviewing and granting awards:

- a. The type and scope of the project/event
- b. The ability to maximize impressions for the Montgomery County Tourism Brand both onsite and through organization's communication and promotion of the project/event.
- c. The similarity of the target audience for the project/event and the target audience of the destination.
- d. The degree of potential positive impact on the local economy through increased visitor spending through overnight stays, day trips, dining, shopping, attractions.
- e. The projected timeline for the project/event.
- f. The financial amount requested
- g. Other local government support
- h. The financial capacity of the organization.
- i. The organization's ability to sustain the project/event through other revenue streams after initial grant funding has expired.
- j. The uniqueness of the project/event and overall merit of the project/event request.

Reimbursement Requirements:

- a. Approved funds are dispersed as reimbursements. The organization shall invoice and provide a W-9 to the Montgomery County Regional Tourism Office and submit receipts and artwork outlining expenses incurred with invoices and receipts for payments made.
- b. To be reimbursed for the required grantee match, detailed receipts of eligible expenditures must be submitted along with a final report within 90 business days following the event or one calendar year after project completion.
- c. Approved expenses will be reimbursed for up to the amount of the award, not to exceed 50% of the event/project marketing budget.
- d. **Should the requirements of the award and/or the reimbursement not be met, the Tourism Operating Board may deny the reimbursement or award a partial reimbursement.**

Final Report Requirements:

This report shall be submitted no later than 90 business days following the event or one calendar year after project completion. The report shall include:

- a. A schedule of marketing activities including advertisement placements (where, when, & what) should be provided after the event or project has occurred.
- b. Tear-sheets, screen shots, copies of programs, etc. should be used as evidence of award requirements.
- c. List of approved expenses, with receipts for each, submitted for reimbursement.
- d. Performance measures sheet including information such as: ticket sales, registration, room pick-up, publicity, etc.
- e. Report summary and/or data from survey results gathered at the event.

All promotional material shall include the approved Montgomery County VA tourism brand logo, failure to include may result in zero or partial reimbursement.

List of Eligible Expenses Includes:

- Design, printing and distribution of printed materials
- Design and development of digital promotion including banner ads and websites (does not include hosting, domain registration or any other ongoing operational expenses)
- Advertisement design and placement
- Radio/TV/Internet spot production and media buy
- Photography services essential to marketing collateral