

Tourism Marketing & Advertising Grant

2020 Guidelines



Funding Purpose + Overview

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

- Award Range: \$1,000 to \$5,000¹
- Deadline: February 27, 2020
- 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. A total of \$20,000 was budgeted for this grant in 2020.

Please Note: all applications must be submitted online through Common Grant Application. Please see the section titled "Prepare and Submit Your Application" for details.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

- Non-profit organizations designated as 501(c)3
- Two or more non-profit organizations may prepare a **joint application**. One organization must be designated as the lead applicant to receive grant funding. (The maximum award for a joint application is equal to \$5,000 per applicant.)

Eligible Activities

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

- Print, radio, and television advertising

¹ Joint applications are eligible for additional funding.

- 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 eligible* 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
 - Is the application clear and well written?
 - Is the proposal's budget clear?
- 2) Organizational Capacity
 - Is the proposed project clear and technically feasible?
 - Does the project team have the right skills and experience to deliver?
 - Does the project team have a demonstrated history of success in carrying out similar projects?
 - Does the applicant's organization demonstrate the appropriate level of financial security to carry out the project?

- Does the project description demonstrate understanding of the specific steps that will be taken to deliver a successful tourism marketing campaign?
- 3) Project Benefits
- How significant is the potential for direct, measurable tourism impact in Tompkins County?
 - If developed, will there be economic benefits in Tompkins County in the form of additional hotel/B&B room nights and visitor spending?
 - Will the campaign support tourism growth in the winter, on soft weekends, or during the mid-week?
 - Are the expected economic benefits likely to be realized, given other constraints or barriers?
 - Are there additional significant quality of life benefits?
 - Do projects with longer life spans (such as website enhancements) demonstrate measurable benefits for up to five years?
 - Does the application describe how diverse populations will participate in this project?
- 4) Project Outcome and Cost
- Are the overall project cost and requested grant funds justified based on the expected benefits?
 - Relative to the project cost, how significant are the potential benefits?
- 5) Alignment with Strategic Tourism Plan
- Does the project show strong alignment with the values, goals, and actions of the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Plan?
- 6) Marketing Plan
- Does the application contain a clear, well-thought-out marketing plan that identifies target visitor groups?
 - Does the marketing plan demonstrate efforts to attract a diverse audience?
 - Does the plan align with the marketing strategies of the CVB, and/or demonstrate coordination 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 events can appeal to diverse audiences and reflect the diversity of our community. You can review the Diversity Statement online at: <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/board>

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

Tompkins County will prioritize projects that hold potential to draw visitors during the mid-week and/or from mid-November through April.

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.

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, including major cities and small towns. **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 and set specific goals for future visitor attendance, as well as to outline strategies for collecting this data.

Required Attachments

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

- 1) 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.)
- 2) Returning Tourism Marketing & Advertising Grant 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 a detailed project budget. (A template budget spreadsheet can be downloaded in the application. All major categories of expenses should be listed along with all types of revenue and donations.)

Applicants may also submit letters of support from key partners, qualifications, drawings, or ancillary supporting information (including video and/or audio files). The primary focus of the review committee will be on the information in the online application and the project budget. [budget worksheet, previous grant reports, 501c3 proof]

Award Decision Process

- o Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability (DPS) staff review applications for completeness and eligibility. Complete and eligible applications are shared with the appropriate grant review committee.

- The review committee makes funding recommendations for each application to the STPB.
- The STPB makes funding recommendations to the Tompkins County Legislature.
- The Legislature votes on the grant awards.
- DPS staff send emails to all applicants with funding decision and a contract.

Applicants can appeal the decision of a grant award. A denial of funding, or dissatisfaction with the amount of the award, is not justification for an appeal. An appeal may only be made due to improprieties in the grant selection process. You may appeal the decision based on misrepresentation of information; non-presentation of information; or improper procedures. To appeal a funding decision, send a letter stating the reason for the appeal to the grant administrator or STPB chair within 14 days of receiving written notification of the grant decision.

Grant Recipient Responsibilities

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 recipients are expected to document that matching funds have been deposited for the purposes of the marketing campaign before receiving payment.

Grant funds are disbursed upon the approval of the marketing plan, proof of matching funds, 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, which can be downloaded from the Tourism Program webpage: <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/recognition>

Grant recipients are expected to submit a grant report no later than 60 days after their event. 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 this link to sign up for an account and start an application:

<https://www.commongrantapplication.com/register.php?refOrgId=70636&refProgId=686&refProgType=grantsNew>

All Tompkins County Tourism Program grant applications are available online:
<https://www.commongrantapplication.com/grantmakers/70636/Tompkins-County-Department-of-Planning-and-Sustainability.html#gmkProgGrants>

The deadline for applications is February 27, 2020.

For additional assistance, please contact Nick Helmholdt – tourism@tompkins-co.org – 607-273-5560.

Resources

The **CVB** is available to provide technical assistance related to promoting your event. For more information contact Peggy Coleman, VP Tourism & Community Relations, peggy@visitithaca.com.

The **Tompkins Festivals Program** is available to help event organizers with:

- Annual event management workshops
- Technical event assistance to support: budgeting, fundraising, site planning and permitting, volunteer management, site management, succession planning, etc.
- Event equipment loan service
- Tompkins County event vendor lists
- Tompkins County event planning manual

For more information, visit the Tompkins Festivals website at <http://www.tompkinsfestivals.com> and contact Scott Rougeau at the Downtown Ithaca Alliance scott@downtownithaca.com.

Additional funding opportunities are listed on the following websites:

- Tompkins County Administration: <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/Grants/index>
- Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County: <https://hsctc.org/funders/>
- Community Foundation of Tompkins County: <http://www.cftompkins.org/resources/funding-opportunities-from-other-tompkins-county-funders/>