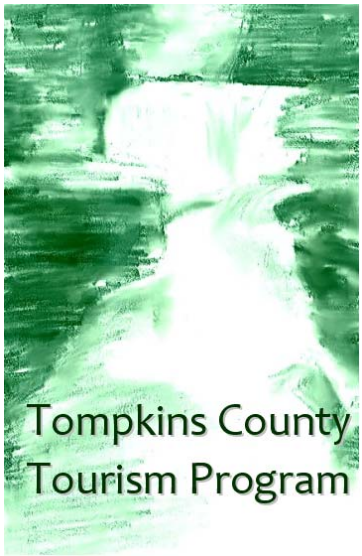
GRANT GUIDELINES – FALL 2016

Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants



Deadline

Submit a final application ONLINE
by 11am, Monday,September 19th, 2016
Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a draft application in advance. Email or call the grant administrator by 10 days prior to the deadline to ask for review of your draft application.

Contact – Grant Administrator

Tom Knipe, Princial Planner / Tourism Program Director
tknipe@tompkins-co.org, 607-274-5560
Applications forms and instructions to access the online application form are available here:
www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/tmagrant

Summary of Funding Opportunity

Successful applicants will describe a strong marketing campaign that uses all or the majority of the grant funding for marketing and advertising expenses that target potential visitors who reside outside of Tompkins County, and whose visit is likely to result in an overnight hotel or B&B room stay. The funds being distributed in the form of grants are a portion of the hotel room occupancy tax collections administered by the Strategic Tourism Planning Board, an advisory board to the Tompkins County Legislature.

$10,648 is available in the Fall 2016 grant round for Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants.

Successful applicants will work with the Ithaca / Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau CVB) and the Tompkins County Tourism Program to refine their marketing strategy and geographic targets in order to align their program with the overall goals and targets of the CVB. 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 & layout
- Procurement of targeted mailing lists

Marketing and advertising programs resulting from this grant program will need to be made in cooperation with the CVB in order to maximize integration of message delivery.

This program requires a 1:1 cash match. Grant recipients will be required to document that they have made a deposit to an account for the purposes of the marketing campaign before receiving payment. **This minimum 50% cash match requirement applies to the portion of the marketing campaign that is spent on an out of county audience.** In other words, if you have a $3,000 marketing budget, with $1,000 spent on local marketing and $2,000 spent on out of county marketing, the maximum grant request for this project is $1,000 (or ½ of the total designated for marketing to an out of county audience). Your application must document which portions of your marketing budget will be spent on out-of-county marketing vs. local marketing.

For the purposes of this calculation, "out-of-county marketing" will mean marketing and advertising investments for which the target audience is visitors to Tompkins County. Applications for marketing investments targeting visitors living 90 miles and more from Tompkins County are especially encouraged because visitors from 90 miles and more from Tompkins County are more likely to stay overnight.

The minimum stand-alone grant request is $1,000, with the applicant's matching funds bringing the total minimum out-of-County marketing budget to $2,000. However, if the applicant is simultaneously applying for a Tourism Project Grant or a New Tourism Initiative Grant for the same project, the minimum grant request is $500. The maximum grant request is $5,000; however in limited circumstances, a request for up to $10,000 may be considered. An applicant must receive prior approval from the grant administrator to request more than $5,000.

Applicants for a Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grant who wish to apply for general project support for the same project may apply simultaneously for a Tourism Project Grant or a New Tourism Initiative Grant using the same application. Please read the separate grant guidelines for these programs at: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/projectgrants. **All applicants in any of these three grant categories must use the Apricot online grant application which is being hosted through a partnership with the United Way of Tompkins County.** See below and the Tourism Program website for technical details about how to access and complete the online application.

Eligibility

Under New York State Law, not all entities are eligible to receive funding from a County government. For example, a County government may award a grant to another municipality or certain not-for-profit agencies. Before completing the application, please consult an attorney or the grant administrator to confirm that your organization is eligible to receive grant funding from a County government.

Eligibility and Funding Details for Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants

1. Requests are accepted from 501(c)3 not-for-profit entities, only for non-sectarian projects.
2. Proposed campaigns must demonstrate the strong likelihood of significant visitor attendance/participation and overnight stays in County hotels, motels and B&Bs.
3. Applications may be made annually. There is no guarantee of multi-year support.
4. The following types of investments are eligible for support from this program:
    a. Print, radio and television advertising

   b. Direct mail
   c. Permission based email campaigns
   d. Website enhancements that are likely to increase tourism
   e. Web and social media marketing that increases traffic of potential visitors
   f. Production and or distribution of collateral material
   g. Other types of targeted tourism marketing investments
5. A minimum 50% cash match on the portion of the marketing campaign that will reach an out of county audience is required. If applying simultaneously for a Tourism Project or New Tourism Initiative Grant, the TOTAL request from both grant sources must not exceed 1/3 of the project budget.
6. The maximum request is $5,000. The minimum stand-alone request is $1,000; if jointly applying for a Tourism Project Grant or New Tourism Initiative Grant the minimum request if $500. Large requests for up to $10,000 may be considered with prior approval.
7. Large capital requests (for the purchase of property, the construction of a facility, remodeling, or expansion of a facility) are not eligible under this program but may be eligible under the Tompkins County Tourism Capital Grants program. For more information about Tourism Capital Grants, contact Martha Armstrong at Tompkins County Area Development, marthaa@tcad.org or 607-273-0005.
8. Requests for general operating support will not be accepted.
9. Requests for retroactive support will not be accepted. Any expenses accrued on a project before a grant award is made by the Tompkins County Legislature will be considered ineligible.

Limitations

Fundraising Events. Applications will not be accepted for marketing support for general fundraising events where the primary purpose of holding the event is for participants to actively raise funds for a specific cause.

Events Only Open to Members and Faith Congregations. Membership in an organization must not be required in order to participate in or benefit from the project.

Conferences and Gatherings for a Specific Interest Group. Groups offering conferences or gatherings in Tompkins County targeting very specific and limited interests should work through the Convention and Visitors Bureau to obtain conference services. These gatherings are not eligible for support from this program.

Considerations

Consider the following when putting together your application for a Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grant.

2020 Strategic Tourism Plan. All applications must demonstrate alignment of the project with the aims and policies of the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan. In addition, applicants are

encouraged to document how their marketing program will advance strategies related to one or more of the focus areas for tourism development that are identified by the Plan.

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

Marketing. Preference will be given to organizations and projects that outline a strong marketing strategy. The best way to demonstrate this is by providing a detailed marketing plan for the project. The marketing plan should include a description of your intentions regarding placement for the **Tompkins County Tourism Program** on advertising and collateral materials**.** 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 which will be for non-Tompkins County residents.

Reporting on Past Grant Awards. Applicants who have previously received a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program and whose project is complete prior to the current application deadline are required to submit a complete grant report before another grant request will be considered.

Tourism Development. 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.

Collecting Survey Data. Tourism Marketing and Advertising grant recipients are invited to collect survey data to estimate the impact of their project on tourism (and this is a requirement for Tourism Project and New Tourism Initiative Grant recipients). We have prepared a questionnaire template with questions which successful applicants will be requested to ask of participants/attendees/customers, along with an overview about how to conduct effective market research using surveys. Visit the project grant webpage to access these resources: http://tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/projectgrants

Grant Application Process

Applicants are encouraged to attend a Tompkins County Tourism grant workshop, generally held about four weeks before the application deadline, to learn about current requirements of the Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grant program. Workshop schedules are announced in Tompkins County newspapers and can be obtained by contacting the grant administrator, who will also be available to answer questions and provide technical assistance upon request.

You are strongly encouraged to submit a draft of your application to the grant administrator for review and comment. To have a draft reviewed, call or email the grant administrator at least 10 days or more before the deadline to request a review.

When to apply. Apply in the spring grant round for projects with major activities being held or beginning anytime between May of the year that the application is due and April of the following year. A fall grant round may or may not be offered based on availability of funds.

Grant Review Process

The review process takes approximately two months from the application deadline for final decisions to be made. There are several steps in the approval process:

Staff Review. Once your final application has been received, the grant administrator will check it for clarity and completeness. If your application is ambiguous or incomplete, you may be contacted for clarification. The grant administrator serves as an impartial coach to potential applicants and coordinates the application review and evaluation process. At no point in the review process will a staff member advocate for any applicant during the review process or request or respond to questions that do not permit an objective answer, based on available facts.

Review Committee and Award Process. A grant review committee will review, score and rank proposals based on evaluation criteria and recommend awards to the STPB. The initial results of the review process become public at the point when the STPB receives the review committee's recommendations. The final decision regarding grant awards will be made by the Tompkins County Legislature. Applicants are strongly discouraged from soliciting support from review committee members, STPB members or members of the Legislature outside of this application and review process. In accordance with STPB bylaws, the chair of the STPB will appoint review committee members.

Letting Contracts. After awards are approved by the Tompkins County Legislature, funds will be disbursed pursuant to a contract with the County. Awards are not intended to be on a reimbursement basis; they will generally be made up-front once the requirement for documentation of matching funds being set aside is met. Contracts with awardees will be written for a period not to exceed twelve months; the funds typically must be used within a year of the start date of the contract. Please note that the County's requirements for insurance coverage for your event or organization may be sizable. The County may require proof of insurance prior to the grant award funds being released. For information regarding the insurance requirements, please contact the grant administrator.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on how well they respond to the criteria below:

Cohesiveness of Proposal. Is the application clear and well written? Does the proposal lend itself well to financial evaluation?

Organizational Capacity. Is the proposed project clear and technically feasible? Does the project team that has been assembled 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 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?

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? Measurable benefits may occur in a short time frame, such as for a large event, or over a long period of time such as for a long-term marketing investment like a new mobile-optimized website. For the latter type of project, if it is a one-time grant investment, measurable benefits should be projected for up to five years.

Project Outcome and Cost. Are the overall project cost and tourism grant request justified based on the expected benefits? Relative to the project cost, how significant are the potential benefits? How appropriate are the applicant's cost share contributions (sources and amounts) with respect to the degree of risk, potential to benefit from the work, and financial status of the proposing organization and project team?

Alignment with Strategic Tourism Plan. Does the project show strong alignment with the aims, policies, goals and actions of the Tompkins County 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan?

Marketing Plan. Does the application contain a clear, well thought-out marketing plan that identifies target visitor groups? Does the marketing strategy align with the marketing strategies of the Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB), and/or demonstrate coordination with the CVB?

Other Considerations. Proposals will be reviewed for eligibility and to determine if they reflect the Tompkins County Tourism Program's overall objectives, including: encouragement of diversity and sustainability, coordination with similar ongoing or completed tourism projects, the general distribution of tourism projects among organizations and among focus areas identified by the strategic tourism plan, and the geographical distribution of projects within Tompkins County.

Appeals Process

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 have the right to appeal the decision based on any of the following criteria:

1) Misrepresentation of information
2) Non-presentation of information
3) Improper procedures

Please note that these criteria refer to potential failure on the part of the County, not the applicant. For example, if the County loses a part of your application or a crucial letter of support, or if a staff member misrepresents answers to follow-up questions, an appeal may be made. To appeal a funding decision, send a letter stating the reason for the appeal to the Chair of the STPB within 14 days of receiving written notification of the grant decision.

Application Directions

Grant applications are ONLYaccepted through the online Apricot grant management system. Applications will not be accepted by any other method. Tompkins County has partnered with the United Way of Tompkins County to provide this browser-based application in order to increase the Tourism Program's capacity for program evaluation and streamline our grant-making processes. Details on how to create a user account and how to access the tourism grant application are below. A version of these instructions which includes screen shots is available on the grant website: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/tmagrant.Technical assistance is also available by contacting the grant administrator.

Creating a New Account in Apricot:

- Copy and paste the following address into your web browser: https://goo.gl/YVTqV6
- Complete the required fields (marked with an asterisk *) and click "Save Record"

Accessing Your Tourism Grant Application(s):

**Please see above instructions to create an account. You can then log in and begin your application.

- Go to: https://ctk.apricot.info/auth
- Log-in using your email and your existing password (typically the Executive Director's email).
- To update your Agency Intake form, click "Agency Intake" along the left-hand side. Click your agency name and then "Edit Agency Intake."
- To start an application, click "Application Overview" along the left-hand side and then click "Apply" next to the grant you are applying to.

- You can edit an application you started from the "Application Overview" page under "Applications in Progress" by clicking "Access." From the Document Folder, click "Edit" along the right hand side.
- To submit your application, from the Document Folder, click "Submit Application" under "Grant Actions."

Helpful Hints:

- You can access historical records on the left-hand side of the "My Apricot" page.
- You may return to the Application Overview page by clicking on "Application Overview" on the left-hand side.
- You may return to your homepage by clicking "My Apricot" on the top of the page.
- You may access the Document Folder from the application by clicking "View Folder."
- Remember to save often. Forms do NOT auto-save.
- Apricot is recommended for use with Google Chrome or Firefox. Internet Explorer is not compatible.

Attachments. There are up to two required attachments:

1. Proof of nonprofit status in the form of a 501c3 determination letter
2. For returning applicants, your grant report for the most recently completed project, and

You may also attach any qualifications, drawings or ancillary information that is necessary to support your proposal, but keep in mind that the primary focus of reviewers will be on your answers to the questions in the online application and your marketing plan. Applicants are also encouraged, but not required to attach letters of support/commitment from key partners who are critical to the success of the project. There is no page limit for attachments.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to file a grant report in a format to be provided. In addition, grant recipients will be required to provide the following upon completion of the campaign, project or event.

1. Any unspent funds that remain upon completion of the contractual agreement must be returned to Tompkins County.
2. Copies of canceled checks drawn from the account detailing expenses associated with the marketing campaign must be submitted upon completion of the contractual agreement.
3. Copies of any collateral produced, tear sheets of any print advertising, samples of any audio, video or web advertising purchased with these funds must accompany the grant report.
4. Survey results, statistics or compiled data obtained in conjunction with this marketing campaign.
5. Evidence of acknowledgment.

Standard Acknowledgment

Project advertising, collateral and promotional materials must recognize the Tompkins County Tourism Program with one of these two phrases: "**This program was made possible by a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program",** or **"This program was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Tomkins County Tourism Program.**

Assistance

Grant Administrator. Please call or email the grant administrator if you have any questions or need help putting together your application. Submission of a draft for review and comment is strongly encouraged. Drafts received at least 10 days before the final grant deadline will receive comments.

Tom Knipe, Principal Planner/Tourism Program Director
Tompkins County Planning Department
121 E. Court St; Ithaca, NY 14850
tknipe@tompkins-co.org, 607-274-5560

CVB. The Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is available to provide technical assistance related to your marketing campaign. Applicants, both new and returning, are invited to review their marketing plans with Livia Isaacson, Marketing & Public Relations Manager of the CVB, livia@visitithaca.com, 607-272-1313.

Tompkins Festivals Program. Applicants requesting support for a festival or event are encouraged to take advantage of resources provided by the Tompkins County Festivals Program:

- Annual event management workshops – various topics. Led by the Downtown Ithaca Alliance.
- Technical event assistance. Topics of individualized technical assistance include, but are not limited to: budgeting and 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 www.tompkinsfestivals.com or contact Allison Graffin or Tatiana Sy at the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, allison@downtownithaca.com or tatiana@downtownithaca.com.

Tourism Marketing Tips and Tactics - pointers from the Ithaca Tompkins County CVB to help you get the maximum results from your tourism related marketing investments are available on the project grant website: http://tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/projectgrants