



Visit Elizabeth City Tourism Expenditure Grant FY2020-2021 Matching Marketing Grants GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

Visit Elizabeth City (the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Tourism Development Authority) allocates a portion of its occupancy tax appropriation from its adopted annual budget for support of the Matching Marketing Grant Program. Marketing Grant applications must be consistent with Visit Elizabeth City's mission, vision, and marketing strategies.

Visit Elizabeth City is allocating \$25,000 toward its Matching Marketing Grant Program for FY2020-2021, July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

OBJECTIVE

The intended use of these funds is to increase tourism and enhance the visitor experience in Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County. The purpose of the Matching Marketing Grants is to support and stimulate the growth of new and innovative tourism products that help create new reasons for out-of-town visitors to want to experience Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County by providing funding for the marketing, advertising and promotion of a new, enhanced or expanded event, activity, attraction, exhibit or thing to do. Room tax revenue, fueled by overnight stays in Pasquotank County, sustains this grant fund. Thus, preference is given to applications for initiatives likely to attract visitors from outside of Pasquotank County who are inclined to stay overnight.

**For 2020-2021, to assist with recovery efforts from the COVID-19 crisis, the Authority will relax the guidelines seeking new, enhanced, or expanded projects. However, in all cases, the project must encourage tourism and create economic impact from visitor spending.*

ELIGIBILITY

Applications may be submitted by area organizations, both for-profit and non-profit, for marketing, advertising, and promotion.

MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The Matching Marketing Grant Program requires a 1:1 match on all awarded marketing dollars, thus doubling the amount of advertising and marketing for the winning event, activity, or attraction. Please explain in your application the source of your matching funds. For each source of matching funds, indicate if the funding is secured at time of application.

Allowable Matching Fund Sources

- Admission ticket sales
- Sponsorships
- Applicant/Vendor fees
- Donated ad space or printed collateral
- Leveraging another grant
- Organization operational funds

APPLICABLE PROJECTS

Projects that are funded under this program should draw at least 50% of the attendance from at least 40 miles away; must be open to the public; be spectator friendly, “walk-up” friendly, or have a reasonable number of tickets available for purchase. Below is a list of examples of projects that will and will not be considered. Please note this is not a comprehensive list, rather it is to help point you in the right direction.

Examples of projects that may be considered. Remember, this grant provides marketing dollars for the promotion of:

- New, substantive exhibits
- New events that are related to tourism and of interest to the traveling public
- New attractions or things to do
- Existing events, activities or attractions with a new feature, change or enhancement that has the potential to drive new and increased visitation
- Festivals
- Concerts and musical events featuring regional or national acts (not local acts)
- Meetings and conventions
- Sporting events
- Other events and activities that draw tourists to Elizabeth City & Pasquotank County

***Preference will be given to new and unique events or projects or the expansion / enhancement of existing items.**

*Examples of projects that will **not** be considered*

- Family reunions
- Fundraising events such as banquets, annual galas, etc.
- Church community functions
- Local school programs
- Community-specific programs
- Existing exhibits, galleries, activities, etc.
- Political events
- Reimbursement for previously incurred expenses
- Expenses typically considered to be overhead
- Or any event not open to the public

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

- The event, activity or attraction must be located within the borders of Pasquotank County.
- Events, if a single day, must demonstrate a large overnight draw to be considered.
- Event or promotional period must begin a minimum of 60 days* after the scheduled grant award date to allow sufficient time to implement effective marketing. I.e. if the grant award date/ approval by the TDA board is January 1, the Project should start on or after March 1.
**Unless alternate timing has been recommended by the Visitor Experience Committee*
- Coordinators should partner and /or package with a Pasquotank County lodging property to encourage the generation of room nights.
- There is no limit to the number of applications per entity or organization submitted, but submissions are limited to one application per Project. Winning Projects will not be awarded funding in consecutive years.
- No single project or entity shall exceed 30% of our annual budget for this Matching Grant program.
- Applicants must adhere to all state and local regulations required for their Project.
- These guidelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Tourism Development Authority.

MARKETING REQUIREMENTS

- The Visit Elizabeth City logo must be included in all project executions. Logo usage on print materials must be pre-approved by Visit Elizabeth City staff.
- Successful applicants will be required to provide on their website a graphic/link to the www.VisitElizabethCity.com website.
- Marketing must support Visit Elizabeth City's goals for 2020-2021 as follows:
 - Expand awareness of Visit Elizabeth City as a destination brand
 - Create desire for visitor experiences and drive demand for overnight lodging
 - Alignment with the Visit Elizabeth City 2020-2021 Marketing Plan
- Applicants must adhere to integrity in marketing values, ensuring messaging is clear and no false promises are made.
- Marketing dollars should be spent for advertising in the identified top feeder markets for our destination:
 - Top States
 - North Carolina
 - Virginia
 - Top Metro Regions
 - Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News-Hampton Roads
 - Raleigh-Durham, NC
 - Charlotte, NC
 - Washington, DC
 - Charlottesville, VA
 - Greenville-New Bern-Washington, NC
 - Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem, NC
 - Roanoke-Lynchburg, VA

ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

In order to help drive increased overnight stays, the grant dollars shall only be spent on marketing and advertising to potential visitors at least 40 miles outside of our destination. Additional details follow.

**For this fiscal year only - due to the effects of COVID-19, it is allowable to spend no more than 50% of your marketing budget locally.*

Examples of expenses that DO qualify:

Note: all expenses must be geo-targeted to exclude our region, or the majority of production is outside our region

- Print ads
- Google pay-per-click ads
- Social media ads and boosted posts
- Public relations
- Hosting an influencer
- Brochure distribution
- Radio ads
- Our State magazine – digital or print

Examples of expenses that do NOT qualify:

- Purchase of promotional items such as pens, magnets, bumper stickers, water bottles, etc.
- Rental fees for operational items
- Speaker fees
- Purchase of lodging for speakers/ VIPs

REIMBURSABLE PROGRAM

The Visit Elizabeth City Matching Marketing Grant Program is funded on a **reimbursable basis**. Requests for payments must be sent after the Project has concluded and must include:

- Submit materials within 45 days upon completion of the Project **or** no later than June 5, 2021, whichever is sooner.
- Samples of marketing materials with the Visit Elizabeth City logo
- Receipts for marketing and advertising purchases
- Analysis of overnight stays / out of town visitation at the event or during the promotional period

GRANT APPLICATIONS WILL BE SCORED BY THE COMMITTEE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

- Ability to serve substantial overnight visitors and generate Pasquotank County lodging stays
- Strength of the marketing plan
- Financial stability of the organization
- Ability to match funds
- Sustainability and growth of the event or project
- Ability to self-sustain without funding
- Is it open to the public?
- Ability to provide a positive economic impact on the community
- Preference will be given for a new visitor attraction, event exhibit, or substantial expansion of an existing item

OTHER

Any proposed change to the project scope and funding disbursement schedule after grant approval must be submitted to the Authority as a written request and must be approved by the Tourism Development Authority Board.

Selection of projects for funding shall be based on the impact to the tourism industry within Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County. The Authority shall review and evaluate all completed applications in accordance with the guidelines and objectives established in this policy.

The Authority reserves the right to:

- evaluate the applications submitted
- waive any irregularities therein
- select applicants for the submittal of more detailed or alternate proposals
- modify the requested grant amount
- choose to approve or deny any application
- cancel or modify the grant program entirely

DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2020-2021 FISCAL YEAR

Please email completed applications and all required documents in PDF format OR submit eight (8) complete physical copies no later than 3:00pm on:

FIRST ROUND: Wednesday August 12, 2020 (Committee will review on August 20, send to Board for approval on August 27)

SECOND ROUND: ~~Wednesday January 13, 2021~~ (Committee will review on ~~January 21~~, send to Board for approval on ~~January 28~~)

NEW DATES: Application due Wednesday, March 10, 2021. (Committee will review on March 18, send to Board for approval on March 25.)

- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Late applications will not be considered.
- The Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Tourism Development Authority DBA Visit Elizabeth City reserves the right to refuse any applications.
- The Visitor Experience Committee will review all applications and forward recommendations to the Tourism Development Authority Board. The TDA Board makes all final decisions and awards.
- If you are a past awardee, you will be asked to justify success or failure of previous Matching Marketing Grant awards in the application.

For additional information or if you have questions on the Matching Marketing Grants Application, contact Susan Hartley | 252.335.5330 | Susan@VisitElizabethCity.com

Submit Applications to

Visit Elizabeth City
501 South Water Street
Elizabeth City, NC 27909
Info@VisitElizabethCity.com