

Policy Number 2027-001
Department of Tourist Development
Tourism Marketing Grant
Policy & Procedures for Grant Awards

I. Purpose.

The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (“department”) provides matching funds through the Tourism Marketing Grant (herein after referred to as “Marketing Grant”). The Marketing Grant provides eligible grantees with an opportunity to amplify their marketing reach, increase visitation to their communities, and generate additional travel-related revenue, while leveraging TDTD’s brand and marketing initiatives.

II. Definitions.

“Match” means for every dollar spent on an approved project(s), a contribution from the Department will be received. The organization must spend the portion of funds for which the match is being requested. The department will annually set out the Match categories, i.e. 1:1 match, being \$1.00 of state funds for every \$1.00 in approved organization funds.

“Destination marketing organization” means a nonprofit entity or government unit that: (a) Is responsible for attracting tourists through tourism promotion or tourism development efforts on behalf of one (1) or more municipalities; (b) Operates on a year-round basis; and (c) Utilizes a dedicated tourism marketing budget supported by a consistent funding source.

“Regional tourism organization” means either an entity confirmed in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-3-2207 or a nonprofit organization whose primary purpose includes the promotion, branding, or marketing of a statewide, regional, or industry-based tourism sector, network of destinations, attractions, experiences, or tourism-related businesses, with the objective of increasing visitor spending and travel within Tennessee.”

“Tourism” means attracting tourists to visit a particular area for day and overnight travel and encouraging those tourists to spend money in the area, which includes travel related to both leisure and business activities.

"Tourism promotion" means planning, conducting, or participating in programs of information, publicity, and advertising that are designed to attract tourists and foster economic activity through tourism.

"Tourist" or "visitor" means an individual who travels more than fifty (50) miles from their primary residence or travels from an out-of-state primary residence to a destination for the infrequent purpose of leisure, entertainment, business, or recreation, and whose spending contributes to this state's tourism economy.

III. Application Process.

The destination marketing organization or regional tourism organization must submit an application in accordance with the timelines and manner stated on the department’s grant management portal. The application must be completed in its entirety for submission to be successful.

A. Grantee Selection.

1. Considerations: Eligibility of the entity applying and whether the project provided on the application will be qualified for receipt of matching funds.

The following destination marketing organizations are ineligible grantees: 1) Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation; 2) Chattanooga Convention and Visitors Bureau, 3) Knoxville Convention and Visitors Bureau (aka Visit Knoxville); 4) Gatlinburg Convention and Visitors Bureau, 5) Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism, 6) Sevierville Chamber of Commerce; and 7) Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau.

2. Project Review.

Marketing Grant projects must promote their respective region of Tennessee which will include the marketing of Tennessee's rich and diverse music, history, scenic beauty and culinary experiences. Grantee may incorporate the Department's brand or other appropriate sub-brand in its marketing efforts to promote Grantee's region and the surrounding area in print, digital, radio, television or any other type of media, if space allows, whether now known or otherwise devised. Prior to Grantee's usage of a brand or sub-brand, Grantee must receive approval from the department. Failure to gain approval is considered trademark infringement and will result the following: 1) Issuance of a cease and desist notice with legal action; and/or 2) negative application result in subsequent years.

An application can contain more than one project for consideration for the grant award. If an application contains more than one project and one of the projects is not approved, it will not disallow the entire application, but the process will proceed regarding the approved project or the funding request for the approved portion of the request.

The department reserves the ability to create exceptions or additional eligibility criteria on a case-by-case basis at any time, in order to best achieve the goals of the grant program.

The following lists approved, past projects, but the listing is not inclusive:

- a. Production costs of promotional publications, i.e. brochures, visitors' guides, newsletters, etc.; the distribution must reach tourists/visitors and not merely the organization's members.
- b. Digital support programs such as paid media, social media or paid search.
- c. Website development which can include the enhancement of an existing website (not hosting fees), excluding web or email host fees.
- d. Booth and exhibit materials for tourism tradeshows.
- e. Promotional partnership opportunities offered by the tourism organization.
- f. Media buy that promotes tourism to the state of Tennessee.

The following lists of past, projects or project line-items determined ineligible:

- a. Agency time
- b. Reprinting of an existing brochure without any changes or updates made.
- c. Salaries or administrative expenses, such as travel reimbursement or equipment.
- d. Development or enhancements to infrastructure
- e. Entertainment, trophies, prize money or event supplies

B. Award Determination.

Grant amounts awarded are based on the availability of funds in each fiscal year, and the number of applications received. The department may establish a cap on awards each year. During each award period, the cap on funds will be reconsidered.

In determining the award of funds to each grantee, a team of no less than two (2) TDTD employees with knowledge of the program and metrics being considered will evaluate the merits of each project. Also considered, is the organization's ability to pay for the entirety of the project, prior to the receipt of the Match.

IV. Contracting Requirements and Reimbursement Process.

A. Signatory. Contracts to eligible grantees will be issued through the department's grants management portal. The contract must be signed by the person with the authority to bind the organization.

B. Reimbursement. The approved project must be completed in order to receive funding. Supporting documentation to validate payments along with any other requested documents must be provided by the grantee through the department's grants management portal. The department may withhold full or partial reimbursements at any time, if any of the required supporting documents are not provided.

1. Use of an Advertising Agency. If the project was completed using an advertising agency the funds cannot be directly distributed to the agency. Once the approved project or a portion is complete, documentation evidencing proof of completion, e.g. samples, tear-sheets, media affidavits, screen shots, campaign metrics, etc. must be provided through the department's grants management portal, along with the invoice and proof of payment documentation.

2. No Advertising Agency Use. If the qualified project was completed without an advertising agency, after a qualifying project (or portion) is complete, the vendor or media outlet will provide an invoice for the project, as well as proof of completion, i.e. samples, tear-sheets, media affidavits, screen shots, campaign metrics, etc.

Partners must issue payment to the vendor or media outlet to which funds for execution of the approved project are due. Examples of acceptable proof of payment include but are not limited to, bank/credit card statements, copies of cleared check backs or statements from the vendor evidencing payment received and a \$0 balance due. The department will not accept QuickBooks-type reports or the front of a check to evidence proof of payment. The department reserves the right to use their bank of choice to provide reimbursement.

C. Final Report. Each grantee must issue a Final Report to the department regarding the effectiveness of the approved project. The report will include analysis of the effectiveness through the agreed upon methods of measurement as well as proof of the deliverables identified in the Grantee's contract. The Final Report must be completed through the department's grants management portal by the due date required within the contract and include at minimum the following information: Grantee's name; Grantee's Edison Supplier ID#; Term of the project; Total amount of the project; A narrative section that describes the program's goals, outcomes, successes and any setbacks; and Any proposed activities that were not completed.

V. Revision Schedule.

Rev. #	Effective Date	Change
1	June 13, 2017	Developmental Coop Program – renamed Tourism Marketing Grant
2	March 29, 2021	Created flexibility to alter the amount and structure of the match annually.
3	July 1, 2022	Altered submission process and usage of co-branding.

4	July 1, 2026	Updated definitions to comply with changes to Tenn. Code Ann. §4-3-2204 and 4-3-2207 and clarification of submission/reimbursement process to align with the Department's new grants management program.
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