

Attractions Marketing Program Guidelines

The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) will annually accept, review and process funding requests from tourism-related, non-profit organizations on behalf of the Tourist Development Council (as qualified per Florida State Statute 125.0104).

Goal

The program provides financial assistance for marketing initiatives to 501c3 not-for-profit arts and attractions organizations, and arts and cultural departments of municipal government that enhance tourism opportunities in Lee County. These site-based attractions and organizations provide a different level of service to visitors than events, with year round programming that attract visitation to the region and/or offer reasons for visitors to extend their stay in the destination.

VCB partners funded through this program are expected to:

- Assume a leadership and advocacy role in the community to advance tourism.
- Develop unique visitor experiences that encourage repeat visitations through promotions and dissemination of information regarding arts and cultural offerings available in Lee County.
- Participate in marketing workshops and cooperative promotional efforts with the Lee County VCB, wherever applicable.
- Submit requests for reimbursement and a final report to Lee County VCB by September 1, 2021. (see page 4 for additional information).

To be eligible for this program, an organization must meet the following minimum criteria:

- The organization must be: a) legally organized as a nonprofit, holding a federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status OR b) a government organization that is incorporated in Lee County.
- The Organization must have their financial statements compiled or reviewed annually by a third party reviewer and provide results upon request of the VCB.
- The organization must provide a current IRS form 990.
- The tourism-based organization's facilities, programs or services must be available to visitors throughout the year. While an organization's major program(s) or service(s) may occur primarily during a specific time of year, other services and programming should occur and benefit visitors throughout the remainder of the year.
- The organization must have a dedicated administrator responsible for managing the organization.
- *It is the responsibility of the applicant to show proof of eligibility. Applications should also show how the organization brings visitors to Lee County throughout the year. Organizations must be able to show results of grant dollars spent (i.e. increased out of town visitation, increased website traffic, etc.) with specific data.*

Additional information:

- Partners funded through this program will be required to outline specifically how funds will be spent before the beginning of the Fiscal Year in which funds are awarded.
- Change requests regarding usage of grant funds require prior approval and should be made in writing to the VCB Program Manager.
- Partners will be required to submit a detailed final report, including specific information about marketing placements and results, additional dollars spent, copies of invoices and proof of payment.
- Applicants must share attendance of out-of-county vs. local visitation from the organization's most recently completed fiscal year.
- Partners will be required to provide specific information about how out-of-county visitation data is collected. Partners may use admission, ticket sales, etc. to track visitation, and should survey a representative sample of visitors at events/programs that are not ticketed. This can be done via brief on site interviews, via email or website questionnaires post event.
- Funds may be used solely for marketing projects intended specifically to bring visitors from out-of-county (see fundable items). Any use of grant money for items not listed or approved will result in requiring non-complying recipients to pay back the previously awarded money within one year of contract end date. Failure to comply with the required grant reporting will impact future funding decisions and allocations.
- Funding is for projects that occur within the designated fiscal year only and should be spent by September.
- All project printed materials, signage or advertising must contain the words and/or logo where applicable, "Funding provided by Lee County Tourist Development Council."
- Applicants are encouraged to have marketing plans reviewed by VCB marketing staff prior to submitting.
- To be considered for funding through the TDC, applicants must attend an Attractions Marketing Application Workshop prior to submitting application.
- Funded attractions must have a listing on the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau website.

Fundable and Non-Fundable items:

Grant funds MAY only be used for...

- The design, production and placement of print, television, radio and billboard ads.
- Digital marketing efforts such as online advertising, social media campaigns, search optimization and e-marketing.
- The design and construction of a new website or enhancements to an existing website.
Note: See below regarding Website hosting fees.
- Photography and video projects that support an approved marketing campaign.

Grant funds MAY NOT be used for...

- Seasonal brochures, playbills & member newsletters
- Printing and mailing/distribution costs for travel guides, attraction maps, rack cards, and any direct mail project
- Capital investments, asset development or product enhancement
- Salary support, personnel
- Strategic plan development
- Lobbying
- Public Relations/press releases
- Tradeshaw registration fees, booth rentals/educational conferences, membership dues
- Travel costs (food, lodging, entertainment)
- Database development
- Market research to identify target markets
- Facility rental/insurance
- Purchase or rental of equipment or supplies
- Food or alcoholic beverages
- Items for resale and promotion items
- Operating costs (including web hosting and domain registration)
- International Marketing – contact the Lee County VCB for assistance in pursuing international marketing

Funding Limit

Eligible organizations may request a maximum of \$20,000. Note: Effective fy20/21, this program will be by reimbursement effective December, 2020.

Reimbursements

All items that are submitted for reimbursement must be submitted with a reimbursement request that includes the organizations name, project name, and reimbursement amount.

Reimbursements must be submitted with proof of payment, a copy of the original vendor invoice, and a copy of the ad or material (if applicable).

Reimbursements may be submitted intermittently throughout the planning process or in one package at the end of the event. All reimbursements must be submitted to Lee County VCB by September 1, 2021.

General instructions:

Requesting agencies must attend an application workshop, review the attached guidelines and submit the application and all supporting information electronically by deadline.

- [Click here](#) to register for the application workshop.
- [Click here](#) to access the grant application AFTER application webinar on April 23

Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Application Timeline:

April 23, 2020	VCB Attractions Marketing Application Workshop/cycle opens
May 14, 2020	Committee Review Prep Workshop (follows TDC meeting).
June 1, 2020	Application Deadline
June 3-7, 2020	VCB review of Requests
June 10-July 10, 2020	Committee Review of Requests
July 13-17 (date tbd)	Committee Review Workshop
August 13, 2020	TDC formalizes funding recommendations at their regular meeting
September, 2020	BoCC budget approval
October 10, 2020	VCB issues purchase orders
June 1, 2021	Post Grant Report due
September 1, 2021	Final report due with request for reimbursement