

## **2022 Fall Highland Tourism Council Marketing Assistance Grant Guidelines & Application Deadline: October 31, 2022**

The goal of the Highland Tourism Council (HTC) is to increase sustainable tourism to benefit and improve the quality of life for current citizens, future residents, and visitors. Highland County is a destination that is welcoming to visitors and provides opportunities to experience its culture, traditions, history, and natural beauty.

HTC has established the Marketing Assistance Grant to provide funding for local organizations and businesses with an emphasis on attracting visitors to Highland County. Funding for these grants is secured through a Transient Occupancy Tax collected quarterly by short-term lodging facilities within the county. HTC has appropriated up to \$8,000 (\$4,000 twice a year) in available assistance for this program.

Program grants will be awarded for projects and marketing expenses **after** approval of the application. The project must be completed within 18 months approval, and funds will be awarded to the applicant in the following ways:

1. In the form of reimbursements upon completion of a marketing effort
2. In the form of payment directly to a vendor upon the presentation of an invoice for a specific marketing initiative.

Expenditures must be made in accordance with the approved application and within the guidelines of the program. Recipients must submit copies of all paid invoices/receipts and copies of all promotional materials used. If a recipient relocates outside of Highland County within two years of being initially awarded the grant, they will be required to repay 50% of all grant funds provided. Recipients agree to a short follow-up interview with the Highland Tourism Council within 6 months after the project is completed. Grant award winners will not be eligible to apply for a new grant for 18 months. Applicants that do not receive grant funds may apply again during the next grant cycle.

### **Guidelines**

- The goal of the Marketing Assistance Grant is to increase visitation and tourism in Highland County.
- Projects must be in Highland County and benefit the area through:
  - Increased revenue for local businesses
  - Increased visitation to Highland County
  - Promotion of initiatives that support the culture, traditions, or natural beauty of the county.
- Up to \$4,000 will be made available biannually (twice a year) by the HTC for marketing assistance.
- Applications will be accepted biannually. First applications of the year will be due April 30 to be reviewed by HTC in May. Second applications of the year will be due October 31 and be reviewed by HTC in November.
- Grants will be made for no less than \$250 and up to \$4,000 per application period. A grant could be for total amount to one project or for smaller amounts to more than one applicant.
- Only one application is permitted per organization per project.

- Applicant's business or organization must be physically located in Highland County, Virginia or relocate to Highland County within three months of grant approval.
- Grants are not open to government entities.
- Application **MUST** be made using the Marketing Assistance Grant Application Form and must be complete in all respects.
- Recipients of funding **MUST** meet with HTC to report on their program within 6 months of completion. HTC is looking for a return on investment for funding and want to hear of your successes, challenges, and suggestions.
- Recipients of funding, upon request, **MUST** submit a photo for Press release.
- During the evaluation process the Highland Tourism Council may need to meet with you for clarifications on your application.
- Applications can be processed online at or in print. Physical copies must returned to the office of The Highland County Chamber of Commerce, located at The Highland Center at 61 Highland Center Drive in Monterey, by the end of the day on April 30 (Spring) or October 31 (Fall). If The Chamber Office is not open, please leave your application on the Visitor Center's desk across the hall from the Chamber Office and contact the Chamber at 540-468-2550 to notify them that you have done so. Applications may be emailed to [director@highlandcounty.org](mailto:director@highlandcounty.org).

#### **What the Marketing Assistance Grant WILL Fund**

- Printed Materials: Brochures, ads, media kits, group tour publications, and other printed information materials
- Website Development: Development of websites to promote the applicant's areas are eligible. Maintenance fees for websites are NOT eligible.
- Digital Marketing: Search engine optimization, banner and website advertising, and other electronic marketing initiatives are eligible expenses.
- Social media marketing initiatives, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, etc.
- Production of video footage and high-resolution photography.
- Travel and Trade Show Booth Rental/Participation Fees: Fees associated with registration at travel and trade shows are eligible.
- Tradeshow Displays: Design and production of display units that will be used in conjunction with travel promotions at travel and tradeshow are eligible.
- Signage.

#### **What the Marketing Assistance Grant WILL NOT Fund**

- Projects that do not contribute to increased visitation to Highland County will not qualify.
- Administrative expenses including office space, salary and personnel costs, office supplies, office equipment, normal office postage, other administrative costs, and overhead costs, are not eligible expenses.
- Facility improvements and additions, such as appliances.
- General hosting or maintenance fees for websites.
- Projects sponsored by government agencies and HTC members, or their families.

## Scoring

There are limited funds for this program; therefore, funding will be awarded on a merit scale. Awarding of funding is based upon information contained in the application and will be scored based upon the Highland Tourism Council's Marketing Assistance Grant Scoring Guidelines (shown below). If a member of the HTC is associated with a grant application, they will be ineligible to vote on the application. Since awards are determined from these scores, the application must be as complete as possible. Do not assume that the review team is familiar with your program or marketing efforts and be sure to include all requested information.

The following points are assigned to sections to determine your application score.

**Title and Project Narrative** **20 points**

*What do you plan to do with the funds if awarded?*

**Projected Audience** **20 points**

*Who is your target audience and how will you reach them?*

**Impact on Highland** **20 points**

*How will your project benefit the local economy and community?*

*How will you measure the number of people expected and/or the impact of your initiative?*

**Partners** **10 points**

*Will you be partnering with other organizations to achieve your goals?*

*Who? When? How?*

**Marketing Program, Timeline, and Budget Amounts** **30 points**

*What are your specific ways, costs, and anticipated deadlines?*

**Past examples of successful projects supported by the Marketing Assistance Program include:**

- Big Fish Cider's Wassail ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgb7dWbrq70](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgb7dWbrq70))
- Highland Arts Academy ([www.highlandartsacademy.com](http://www.highlandartsacademy.com))
- HighlandCountyVA Blog
  - Compensate local writers and photographers for local content
- Tol'able David 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ([www.highlandcountyhistory.com/tol-able-david-movie](http://www.highlandcountyhistory.com/tol-able-david-movie))
  - Creation of a brochure, media advertisements, exhibit enhancement, and copyright permission for film

**Highland Tourism Council Marketing Assistance Grant  
Application Form**

**Business or Organization Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Physical address (Must be in Highland County):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Name & Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title and Project Narrative (20 points)**

*What do you plan to do with the funds if awarded? Please give us the title of your project and the what, when, where, and why.*

**Projected Audience (20 points)**

*Who is your target audience and how will you reach them?*

**Impact on Highland (20 points)**

*How will your project benefit the local economy and community?*

*How will you measure the number of people expected and/or the impact of your initiative?*

*Please give specific examples.*

**Partners (10 points)**

*Will you be partnering with other organizations to achieve your goals?*

*Who? When? How?*



I hereby confirm that my project and business/organization is or will be located in Highland County, Virginia. I acknowledge that if the business/organization is not currently located in the area, I must purchase or lease and relocate the business/organization to Highland within three months of grant approval in order to receive grant funds. If my business relocates outside of Highland County within two years of being initially awarded the grant, I must repay 50% of all grant funds provided. I also agree to a follow-up interview to the Highland Tourism Council within six months after the project is completed. I agree to follow my application to accomplish my goals within the guidelines of this grant, including completing the project within 18 months if funding is awarded. If there are any changes to my plan, I will notify the Highland Tourism Council immediately. I attest that my application is accurate and true.

Applicant Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**To be filled out by the Highland Tourism Council:**

**Date Reviewed by Council:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Decision:** \_\_\_\_\_