

MARKETING CHALLENGE GRANT GUIDELINES (MCG) - 2015

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Office of Tourism (COT) Marketing Challenge Grant program provides tourism entities with matching marketing funds.

Grant Funding: \$7,500 Minimum; \$50,000 Maximum with a 1-1 Match Required

APPLICATION DEADLINE **MUST BE RECEIVED (NOT POSTMARKED) BY 4:00 P.M. ON OR BEFORE**
 January 12, 2015
Project Period: April 1, 2015 - May 31, 2016

Applicants will be notified of receipt of their application via e-mail within two (2) weeks from the deadline date.

PROGRAM TIMELINE	Application Deadline	January 12, 2015
	Award Notification	February 2015
	Funding Period	April 2015 - May 31, 2016
	Status Report	October 2015 (every 6 months a project is open)
	Final Report Due	Within 60 days of completion of the funding period
	Final Financial Report	
	Final Evaluation Narrative	
	State Single Audit (if applicable)	

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Office of Tourism (COT) Marketing Challenge Grant Program (MCG) assists non-profit tourism entities in their efforts to promote attractions and events that are open to visitors. The grant program creates a partnership between COT and its constituents, supports promotion of product development and extends statewide strategic marketing efforts. The Marketing Challenge Grant Program requires 1-1 match. (See page 4 for details).

The proposed projects considered for funding must have a definable impact on the tourism industry, encourage innovation, contribute to the State's vitality and economic health, as well as job development. The following types of projects will receive greater consideration: new or unique projects, projects that encourage tourism visitation to a region rather than a single community, projects that expand existing tourism marketing efforts and projects that promote extended stays.

All projects should work in synergy with the State's Strategic Marketing Plan for Tourism (SMP) and extend the Connecticut "still revolutionary" brand, including use of its logo which is required on promotional materials and websites. (the Executive Summary is available at www.cultureandtourism.org).

The SMP strives to extend the reach of the state's strategic marketing effort through collaboration and cooperative partnerships with the tourism industry. Projects must articulate compatibility with the SMP.

All project materials such as billboard creative, advertisement mock-ups, market research reports for distribution, strategic marketing plan drafts and copy content, etc. must be approved by COT prior to being produced or scheduled for final production. It is the grantee's responsibility to obtain approval prior to finalizing materials. If materials are not approved in advance and are later deemed unacceptable, then DECD may require that all grant funds or a portion of funds be returned. A minimum of five (5) working days is required for this approval.

WHO MAY APPLY

Eligible Applicants are Tourism non-profit 501(c)(3), 501(c)(5), 501(c)(6) and municipalities.

- Proof of non-profit status is required with the submission of the application.
- Projects involving partners must have a lead applicant with non-profit status.
- Applicants shall demonstrate a fiscal accountability system that insures that the monies will be spent in the manner indicated by the grant application.
- Applicants should have a marketing plan. Applicants without a marketing plan must complete the Strategic Marketing Questionnaire provided in place of the marketing plan.
- Applicants not incorporated in Connecticut but who do business in Connecticut must have a Certificate of Authority from the Office of the Secretary of State. A copy of this form must accompany the application.
- Applicants that are partners on the proposed project must submit one combined application per project.

Eligible applicants may partner with for-profits or other non-profit organizations.

Ineligible Applicants - See page 3 for details.

WHAT WE FUND

Eligible Project Expenses include new or expansion of existing marketing efforts in at least one of Following categories:

1. **Media Advertising:** Advertising through mass media including online marketing and social networking, digital, newspapers, magazines, out of home, radio and television. Media Strategy should be aligned with tourism targets as stated in the SMP.
2. **Direct Marketing:** Direct mail, email to targeted audiences, e-marketing for lead generation and engagement promotions.
3. **Promotional Pieces:** Promotional pieces include cost of designing, producing and printing of printed materials or deploying digital promotional pieces, such as brochures, inserts, newsletters, posters, calendars of events, or other promotional materials. Design and layout costs shall not exceed 25% of the budget. Distribution plan for the promotional piece must be outlined.
4. **Production Projects:** Production projects include the production costs of audio/visual video or film presentations to be used in approved advertising and marketing programs.
5. **Direct Sales:** Participation in trade shows and/or trade related exhibits to include booth space as outlined by the trade show contract, rental of furniture for booth space, registration fee and literature shipping cost. The registration fee includes the cost to admit one or more participants of the organization to staff a designated booth as outlined by the trade show contract. Travel expenses for one participant including transportation and hotel accommodations qualifies for grant funds. Hosting tour operators on familiarization tours or sponsoring trade industry events is an eligible expense.
6. **Public Relations:** Public relations projects include costs incurred for the production and distribution of press releases, preparing related materials, hosting travel writers on familiarization tours or media events.
7. **Social Media:** Building and engaging online communities to bring the destination closer to their visitors, and put social media in service of concrete business objectives while delivering measurable results.
8. **Research Programs and Strategic Marketing Planning:** Research programs, studies and strategic marketing plan development designed to stimulate and increase tourism visitation.

**WHAT WE FUND
CONT'D**

9. **Web:** Design and development, including search engine optimization of a website promoting destination and Connecticut tourism, software related to project, domain names (10 year maximum), mobile versions, CMS and content development.

COT's Tourism Marketing Opportunities may or may not qualify as an eligible expense for this grant program (see grid below for details)

Eligible Expenses Chart for COT Marketing Opportunities			
<i>Expense</i>	<i>Grant Funds Qualify</i>	<i>Match Funds Qualify</i>	<i>Funds Outside Grant Projects Qualify</i>
Visitors' Guide	No	No	Yes
Newspaper Free Standing Insert (FSI)	Yes	Yes	Yes
COT Cooperative Advertising Projects	No	No	Yes
Market Research VISION Visitor Intercept Tracking	Yes	Yes	Yes
CT Open House Day	No	No	Yes

**FUNDING
RESTRICTIONS**

The COT does not fund the following: (Applies to grant funds and matching funds).

- Whose membership and participation policies do not comply with non-discrimination laws.
- Organizations acting solely as fiscal agents for individuals or groups.
- State or federal agencies.
- Brick and mortar and capital improvements.
- Specific activities or projects that are already funded by another COT program during the same fiscal year.
- Activities that have already been completed.
- Activities to eliminate or reduce existing deficits.
- Activities funded by or which generate revenue for COT.
- Activities that directly compete with COT's marketing or cooperative revenue generating efforts.
- Religious programming and activities.
- Benefits, fundraisers, social events.
- Interest expenses paid on loans or debts.
- Scholarship assistance for academic or non-academic programs.
- Lobbying activities.
- Political contributions.
- Legal fees.
- Individuals.
- Service organizations and/or clubs.
- For-profit applicants.
- Saleable items: production of sale items or production of items to be sold for profit or fundraising purposes.
- Materials or staff funded by state tax dollars as part of their in-kind services.
- Administrative Expenses: Salaries, rent, phone, supplies, postage, photocopying or other overhead associated with the on going normal administrative function(s) of any organization and partners.
- Feasibility Studies.
- Select COT Cooperative Tourism Marketing Opportunities (see table above).
- Entertainment, honoraria, scholarships, artists fees, tournament awards or grants, prizes or gifts for participants or volunteers.

Exceptions:

- **Matching Funds-Marketing Challenge:** Entertainment and artists fees cannot exceed 20% of match

**FUNDING
RESTRICTIONS
CONT'D**

- Ineligible project expenses cannot be included as project costs; therefore, they can not be included as part of the grant and match, but grantee may use other revenue to fund these expenses.
- Food and Beverages:
 - Exceptions:*
 - **Grant Funds-Marketing Challenge:** Direct expenses related to host tour operators and/or travel writers on familiarization tours or media events.
- Alcoholic Beverages cannot be funded.
- Travel Expenses (including lodging for salaried personnel or volunteers of applicant).
 - Exceptions:*
 - **Grant Funds- Marketing Challenge:** Direct Sales expenses relating to trade shows to include transportation and hotel accommodations for one person.

Important Note for FY16: Organizations that have received Tourism Marketing Challenge Grant funds for three (3) consecutive years for the same project are not eligible for funding until the following grant year.

HOW WE FUND

Grant Requests:

The minimum Marketing Challenge Grant amount is \$7,500 and the maximum is \$50,000.

An approved contract must be in place prior to expending state grant funds. Keep documentation for sources of matching funds and all expenses relating to this project for required verification in the final report.

MATCHING FUNDS

Grantees shall adhere to the matching requirements of this particular grant program. State funds cannot be used as a match. A match of 1-1 is required.

The grantee has sixty (60) days after completion date of the project to submit proof of matching funds. If the grantee has not raised the matching funds, within the prescribed time, all the funds shall be returned to DECD/COT.

Twenty percent (20%) of matching funds can be in-kind services. Organizations cannot use materials or staff funded by state tax dollars for their in-kind service(s).

Matching Funds can only cover expenses considered eligible under this program.

Eligible Sources of Matching Funds:

- Direct grants
- Monies raised through memberships
- Sales of promotional items
- Fund Drives
- Corporate sponsorships
- Money raised through ticket/admission sales
- Registrations or admission fees directly associated to the grant program
- Private donations
- Net profits

Ineligible Sources of Matching Funds:

- State Funds

REVIEW PROCESS

Applications are reviewed based on the following criteria:

Organization and Experience: Quality of application, history of organization, level of past and current state funding support, and results of previously awarded Tourism Marketing Challenge Grant(s). Please depict the credentials of the organization and the pertinent experience points. Place this information in the first section of the narrative.

Technical Approach: The second section of the narrative is for defining the proposed project. **Please clearly state the usage of the grant project dollars.** The applicant must clearly outline objectives and goals of project, including target audience, job development, projected audience,

**REVIEW PROCESS
CONT'D**

including anticipated measurable results, percentage increase in attendance and lodging room nights impacted by the project. Strategies or messages must be clearly articulated and based on sound research. The project plan must exhibit balance, integration, conciseness, correct approach, be thorough and clear as well as exemplify accurate resources for the grant funded project. Timelines must be clearly defined and reasonable.

Value of Project: Value of the project including both long-term and short-term goals and return on investment.

Greater consideration will be given to new project initiatives that play the role of new drivers for the State.

Support the Connecticut “still revolutionary” brand and State’s Strategic Marketing

Plan for Tourism: Applicants must clearly articulate 1) how the project will expand tourism in Connecticut and 2) integrate with the State’s branding and marketing efforts. Project plans should exemplify creativity, innovation and quality to enhance Connecticut’s image; and signify economic growth and job development. Projects must encourage tourism visitation. Greater consideration will be given to those projects that encourage visitation in a region rather than in a single community, as well as those which promote multiple day stays.

Budget: The project budget must be detailed and complete. Application must demonstrate rational tactics in preparing the budget. Costs must be well researched and reasonable, receiving the best value for the proposed budget. Other sources of income must be indicated with a clear delineation of grant and matching dollars. The identified matching funds must be from eligible sources and the expenses must also be eligible.

HOW TO APPLY

The application deadline is Monday, January 12, 2015. Applications must be received (not postmarked) in the Constitution Plaza office of DECD/COT by 4:00 p.m. If hand-delivered, applicants must request and retain a receipt from the DECD/COT front desk staff person accepting the application, regardless of the delivery date. No application or parts will be accepted after the deadline. E-mail or fax submissions will not be accepted.

All applications shall be sent to:

Rena J. Calcaterra, Project Manager
 FY15 Marketing Challenge Grant Program
 Connecticut Office of Tourism
 Department of Economic and Community Development
 One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor
 Hartford, CT 06103

When mailing an application, we strongly suggest using express service or 1-day delivery and retaining the receipt. Applicants will be notified of receipt of their application via e-mail. If you have any questions please contact Rena Calcaterra at rena.calcaterra@ct.gov / 860-256-2744 or Jennifer Haag at jennifer.haag@ct.gov / 860-256-2765.

**APPLICATION
MATERIALS**

Applications for MCG consist of several required forms along with a narrative of two (2) pages, budget, timeline, strategic marketing plan (or completed questionnaire) and support materials (if applicable).

All applications must:

- Be copies of the signed original. The original must be signed in blue ink by an authorized official of the organization.
- Be assembled as directed on the Application Checklist.
- Be single-sided on 8½” x 11” white paper with margins no less than ¾” on all sides with a font no smaller than 11 point.
- Include the organization in the upper right hand corner of all pages where not provided on forms.

**APPLICATION
MATERIALS
CONT'D**

Narrative :

The narrative is an essential part of the application and provides the most complete picture of the applicant and proposed project. The narrative must be no more than two (2) pages. Address the criteria in the sequence in which they appear. Be sure to address every question; failure to do so will impact the assessment of your application. Include your organization name at the top of each page.

Budget (on separate page - sample is shown on page 7)

A detailed budget is required. Applicants must demonstrate a fiscal accountability system that insures the monies will be spent in the manner in which the grant application package indicates. The budget shall be one to two pages and must be shown in two sections: Revenue and Expenditures.

- Revenue must be broken down by earned income, grants and contributions and identified source of matching funds.
- Expenses must be broken down by item (e.g. media costs, consulting fees) and the expense of each item shown under the appropriate category of revenue: Marketing Challenge Grant Funds, matching funds and other revenue. The expense section must clearly denote which funding source is utilized for each item.

Note: The Total Cost of Project refers to grant and matching funds plus other project related expenses. The Total Marketing Budget includes the Total Cost of Project and all other marketing efforts.

Timeline (on separate page)

Timeline must be detailed, clearly defined and reasonable. Please indicate significant stages of implementation and approvals for the project. All project materials related to funding and match must be approved by COT prior to being produced or scheduled for final production. A minimum of 5 working days is required for approval.

Strategic Marketing Plan

Include copies of your strategic marketing plan. If you do not have a strategic marketing plan then you must submit the Strategic Marketing Questionnaire.

Applications must include one original (marked original) and six (6) sets of material in the following order:

Original

1. Application (must be signed in blue ink and dated, with an original signature)
2. Application Narrative (no more than two (2) pages with no smaller than 11 point font)
3. Project Budget (on a separate page)
4. Timeline (on a separate page)
5. Strategic Marketing Plan or Strategic Marketing Questionnaire
6. Promotional Materials (optional)
7. Sponsorship Opportunities Package (if applicable)
8. Tax Exempt Verification (select what applies; examples listed below)
 - o IRS Tax Exempt Letter (Determination Letter)
 - o Affirmation Letter
 - o Instrumentality Letter

Six (6) Copies of Application Materials

1. Application (with copy of original signature)
2. Application Narrative (no more than two (2) pages with 11 point font)
3. Project Budget (on a separate page)
4. Timeline (on a separate page)
5. Strategic Marketing Plan or Strategic Marketing Questionnaire
6. Promotional Materials (optional)
7. Sponsorship Opportunities Package (if applicable)

Seven (7) sets are required in total to be considered a complete application package.

Marketing Challenge Grant Budget Sample (XYZ Festival)

Revenue		CT Tourism	Other	Total
Item Description	Challenge Grant	In-Kind	Revenue	Total
State Grant				
CCT Challenge Grant	\$10,000			\$10,000
Corporate Pledges				
XYZ Company	\$3,500			\$3,500
M&M Company	\$2,500		\$800	\$3,300
Membership				
Proceeds from Gift Shop & Admission Fees	\$1,200			\$1,200
Graphic Company		\$2,000		\$1,500
Graphic Design of Brochure		\$2,000		\$1,500
Total Revenue	\$10,000	\$7,200	\$800	\$20,800
Expenses		CT Tourism	Other	Total
Item Description	Challenge Grant	In-Kind	Expenses	Total
<i>Brochure ABC</i>				
Graphic Design for Brochure	\$1,000	\$1,000		\$2,000
Printing, Inc.				
Printing 20,000 copies 4-color	\$2,500			\$5,000
CTM				
Distribute Brochures	\$2,300			\$3,600
Travel Expenses to trade show	\$900			\$900
Postage	2,000 @ .55			\$1,000
Entertainment	\$500			\$500
Artist Fees	\$600		\$180	\$780
<i>Advertising</i>				
Graphic Company				
Graphic Design of 2 ads	\$500	\$500		\$1,000
Yankee Magazine&w,”	\$2,100	\$620		\$3,820
May/Sept., 2/14 page, 2 color		\$1,100		
Travel Journal 1/4” Ad 3@ \$765	\$1,100	\$1,100		\$2,200.00
Total Expenses	\$10,000	\$8,500	\$800	\$20,800

**ADDENDUM TO
GRANTEE
RESPONSIBILITIES**

The guidelines outline what is required of applicants by law and by the Connecticut Office of Tourism (COT), Department of Economic and Community Development. This section will help applicants understand the requirements before entering the COT funding process. Because all COT programs are competitive, meeting these requirements does not ensure activities will be funded. All applications are objectively reviewed according to how well they meet the criteria stated in the guidelines under each program area. Should you have any questions regarding any of the guidelines or applications, please call the program manager.

**AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION AND NON-
DISCRIMINATION**

Applicants receiving COT funds must comply with all governmental regulations concerning non-discrimination. Grantees are prohibited from discrimination in employment and the provision of services because of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, marital status, national origin, sexual origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, learning disability, physical disability or blindness, present or past history of mental disability, mental retardation, genetic history or criminal record.

ADA COMPLIANCE

Applicants receiving COT funds must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 by making appropriate and reasonable accommodations to ensure that people with disabilities have equal physical and communications access to services and programs, as defined by federal law. If an applicant's facilities or activities do not meet the standards of the ADA, the applicant may be ineligible for COT funding.

OWNERSHIP

COT does not own, collect royalties on or hold copyrights to artistic products resulting from its grants nor will it take any action on behalf of the grantee's to protect the grantee's intellectual property rights. COT does, however, have legal authority to reproduce and use documentation of such products for educational, promotional, official or noncommercial purposes, both electronically and in print. COT will retain possession of all materials submitted in support of a grant application or a final report.

**APPLYING
TO MULTIPLE
PROGRAMS**

Applicants should consult the appropriate program manager when applying to multiple DECD programs within a fiscal year. COT does not accept applications to multiple grant programs for the same project and activity.

**GRANT
SUBMISSIONS**

Applicants must follow all instructions and provide accurate and complete information in all sections and supporting materials as stated in each program's guidelines. Failure to do so will render the application ineligible for review.

All COT applications must be received (not postmarked) on the due date. No application or parts thereof will be accepted after the deadline. E-mail or fax submissions will not be accepted.

If hand-delivered, applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the due date. Applicants must request and retain a receipt from the staff person accepting the hand-delivered applications, regardless of delivery date.

**FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT**

Applications and all information submitted will become public records under the Freedom of Information Act, C.G.S. §1-200, et. seq., unless specifically exempted by the Act. Applicants may request that information contained in the application which are not exempt by the Act, C.G.S. §1-210, be exempt from public disclosure. Such requests will be taken under consideration by the Department of Economic and Community Development.

**AWARD
NOTIFICATION/
GRANT PAYMENT**

COT will notify all applicants of funding decisions via email. Successful applicants will receive award notification and grant contracts which must be signed and returned within 30 days before grant payments will be processed, unless noted otherwise in the contract page.

Every COT grant contract issued to an organization shall be accompanied by a certification (a.k.a. "certified resolution") indicating that the grantee has passed a resolution authorizing the named individual to sign the contracts on behalf of the organization and that the resolution is in effect as of the date of the contract signing.

**AWARD
NOTIFICATION/
GRANT PAYMENT**

After the signed contract and certification is returned to COT, contingent upon availability of funds, payment will be authorized in one or more installments as indicated in the contract.

Grant funds, however, will not be disbursed if the grantee has an overdue final report from any prior DECD grants in place.

**GRANTEE
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Grant recipients are required to expend all grant funds within the specified funding period for the purposes indicated in Section 1 of the contract.

Any request for changes or modifications to a contract, including a request for an extension of the funding period, shall be made in writing to the Director of the Office of Tourism. Submission of such a request does not authorize the change or modification.

All requests for extension of time shall be made no later than 90 days prior to the expiration of the contract.

Grantees shall honor all legal requirements as specified in the contract.

**CREDIT AND
PUBLICITY
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Grant recipients shall credit the Department of Economic and Community Development's Office of Tourism in print, A/V and electronic materials and publicity materials (such as press releases, brochures, posters, advertisements and web sites) related to the funded project or activities or comparable credit approved by COT. Please consult the Connecticut Office of Tourism Credit & Publicity Kit, which will be sent to grant recipients at the time of award notification. This document is also available online at www.cultureandtourism.org.

**REPORTING
REQUIREMENTS**

COT grant recipients shall submit Status Reports and a Final Report. Status Report(s) are required by the grantee every six months a grant file is open. Status Report forms are available on COT's industry website www.cultureandtourism.org.

Final Report is required and must be submitted within 60 days of the completion of the funding period specified on the contract. Final reports must include projected measurable results of the project as stated in the original application and the actual results of the project. A listing of activities does not qualify as an acceptable final report unless accompanied by pre & post measurable results. Future COT funding is contingent upon submission of final reports. Forms and instructions are available on COT's industry website www.cultureandtourism.org.

**GRANT
CANCELLATIONS**

COT has the right to withhold, reduce, or cancel grants if a grantee:

- Cancels, suspends or significantly changes the scope and activities of a funded project;
- Fails to comply with the terms of the grant contract;
- Owes a final report (past due) for a previously received COT grant;
- Is unable to raise the required match;
- Demonstrates inadequate financial management or oversight.