

TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM (TPD) GUIDELINES

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Office of Tourism (COT) Tourism Product Development Grant (TPD) program provides tourism entities with matching funds for:

- creative innovative products that generate significant new visitation and spending;
- linking existing assets in new more powerful ways to attract greater visitation and spending;
- enhancing existing assets to ensure that they stay fresh and responsive to evolving consumer demands.

In essence the program creates new advantageous travel experiences and expresses Connecticut's sense of place with "mental mortar" rather than "bricks and mortar". The intent is to fund fewer larger iconic projects instead of smaller projects.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

First Round

MUST BE RECEIVED (NOT POSTMARKED) BY 4:00P.M. ON OR BEFORE MARCH 21, 2012*

Project period for one year: May 15, 2012 to May 31, 2013

- \$30,000 Minimum; \$100,000 Maximum with a 50 percent match

Project period for two years: May 15, 2012 to May 31, 2014

- \$30,000 Minimum; \$75,000 Maximum with a 50 percent match

Second Round

MUST BE RECEIVED (NOT POSTMARKED) BY 4:00P.M. ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 21, 2012*

Project period for one year: November 15, 2012 to November 30, 2013

- \$30,000 Minimum; \$100,000 Maximum with a 50 percent match

Project period for two years: November 15, 2012 to November 30, 2014

- \$30,000 Minimum; \$75,000 Maximum with a 50 percent match

PROGRAM TIMELINE

| DESCRIPTION | ROUND ONE | ROUND TWO |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Application Deadline | March 21, 2012 | Sept. 21, 2012 |
| Award Notification | April 2012 | Oct. 2012 |
| Funding Period | <i>One Year Contract:</i> May 2012 - May 31, 2013 | <i>One Year Contract:</i> Nov. 2012 - Nov. 30, 2013 |
| | <i>Two Year Contract:</i> May 2012 - May 31, 2014 | <i>Two Year Contract:</i> Nov. 2012 - June 30, 2014 |
| Project Period | <i>One Year Grant:</i> May 15, 2012 - May 31, 2013 | <i>One Year Grant:</i> Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 30, 2013 |
| | <i>Two Year Grants:</i> 1st Year: May 15, 2012 - May 31, 2013 | <i>Two Year Grants:</i> 1st Year: Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 30, 2013 |
| | 2nd Year: June 1, 2013 - May 31, 2014 | 2nd Year: Dec. 1, 2013 - Nov. 30, 2014 |

**PROGRAM
TIMELINE**

| DESCRIPTION | ROUND ONE | ROUND TWO |
|---|---|---|
| Status Reports | Every 6 months the project is open. | Every 6 months the project is open. |
| End of First Year Report | A second year grant requires approval of an End of First Year Report before the second year funds will be released. | A second year grant requires approval of an End of First Year Report before the second year funds will be released. |
| Final Report | Within 60 days of completion of grant period | Within 60 days of completion of grant period |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Financial • Final Evaluation Narrative | | |
| State Single Audit | If applicable | If applicable |

**PROGRAM
INFORMATION**

The COT’s Tourism Product Development Grant Program (TPD) assists non-profit tourism entities in their efforts to develop new tourism products or expand existing tourism products that build assets valuable in creating a tourism destination, a statewide initiative or theme-based experience to increase high value visitation.

The TPD grant program creates partnerships between COT and industry, spurs product development attractive to consumer, and enhances COT’s tourism statewide marketing efforts to increase visitation and overnight stays, grow jobs and contribute to the health and economic vitality of the state.

Proposed products considered for funding must have a definable impact on tourism and the tourism industry. All products must work in synergy with the state’s Strategic Marketing Plan for Tourism (the Executive Summary is available at our website (<http://www.ct.gov/cct/site/default.asp>) and extend the Connecticut brand and image. The Tourism Credit & Publicity kit will outline instructions regarding logo usage and COT required credit. The Kit can be found online.

Partners are encouraged but not required. Applicants that are partners in a proposed grant project must submit one combined application per product.

WHO MAY APPLY

Eligible Applicants:

- Tourism non-profit 501 (c)(3), 501 (c)(5), 501 (c)(6) and municipalities are eligible for the Tourism Product Development Grant program. 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 an initial marketing plan. Applicants without an initial marketing plan must complete the Strategic Marketing Questionnaire provided in place of the marketing plan.
- Applicants not incorporated in Connecticut but who are registered to 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.

Ineligible Applicants:

Refer to Tourism Overview Guidelines, page 2-3 for list

WHAT WE FUND

Items eligible for funding consideration include but are not limited to:

Types of Products Funded:

- Products that are **destination drivers** that truly stimulate the fundamental travel decision that can drive large levels of visitation;
- Products that are **driver accelerants** - products that are important additions to the travel experience and can help solidify the decision on where to travel;
- Products that enhance existing assets to ensure they stay fresh and responsive to evolving consumer demands (create, link and enhance).

Eligible Product Expenses:

Keep documentation of the expenses of this project as verification for the final report.

- **Proof of Market:** Funding market analysis research and testing, competitor analysis, intellectual property issues and planning costs associated with taking the product or service to market. Grant funding is eligible as long as this is not a significant percentage of overall budget.
- **Proof of Concept:** Funding feasibility studies, prototyping, testing, protection of intellectual property and analysis of like options. Grant funding is eligible as long as this is not a significant percentage of overall budget.
- **Development of Prototype:** Funding demonstration models, protection of intellectual property, any trials or testing (including market testing) required. Grant funding is eligible as long as this is not a significant percentage of overall budget.
- **Development of Product** including consulting fees.
- **Marketing:** Defining products brand, developing strategic marketing plan to promote product and/or executing marketing tactics. Grant fund is eligible as long as this is not a significant percentage of overall budget.

Ineligible Product Expenses

Refer to Tourism Grant Overview Guidelines, pages 2-3 for list.

HOW WE FUND

Grant Amounts

First Round

Project period for one year: May 1, 2012 to May 31, 2013

- \$30,000 Minimum; \$100,000 Maximum

Project period for two years: May 1, 2012 to May 31, 2014

- \$30,000 Minimum; \$75,000 Maximum

Second Round

Project period for one year: November 15, 2012 to November 30, 2013

- \$30,000 Minimum; \$100,000 Maximum

Project period for two years: November 15, 2013 to November 30, 2014

- \$30,000 Minimum; \$75,000 Maximum

Matching Funds

Grant awards must be matched on a 50 percent basis

- Matching funds must cover expenses considered eligible under this program
- Twenty percent (20%) of matching funds can be in-kind services. Organization cannot use materials or staff funded by State tax dollars for their in-kind service(s).
- Administrative Expenses: Up to a total of twenty percent (20%) of matching funds can be used for grant program related expenses.
- Travel expenses: Up to a total of twenty percent (20%) of matching funds can be used for grant program related expenses (transportation and hotel accommodations only) for one person.

Eligible and Ineligible Sources of Matching Funds:

REVIEW PROCESS

Applications are reviewed based on the following criteria

- **Organization and experience:** Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality of their application, history of organization & experience and financial stability. 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 describing the proposed project including examples of product development in other destinations similar to proposed project if examples exist. **Please clearly state the usage of the grant project dollars.** The applicant must clearly outline objectives and goals of project, including target audience. Strategies and action plan 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 identify appropriate resources and partners. Timelines must be clearly defined and reasonable.
- **Consistent with the state's Strategic Marketing Plan for Tourism:** The third section of the narrative must clearly articulate compatibility with the degree of enhancement and/or expansion of tourism in Connecticut. Project plans should exemplify creativity, innovation and quality to enhance Connecticut's image; signify economic growth and job development. Project must encourage tourism visitation. Greater consideration will be given to those projects that encourage visitation in a region rather than a single community, as well as those which promote extended stays.
- **Value of Product:** The fourth section of the narrative must clearly
 - (A) Identify the product and explain why:
 - *Destination Driver:* products that truly stimulate the fundamental travel decision, often identified with the destination itself and can drive large levels of visitation
 - *Driver Accelerant:* products that are important additions to the travel experience and can help solidify the decision on where to travel
 - (B) Articulate the value of the product including both long term and short term goals: projected visitation or percentage increase in visitation; lodging room nights generated; and job development. Include the funding growth of the project; what are the plans to financially sustain the product. Greater consideration will be given to new product initiatives that can play the role of new drivers for the state.
- **Budget:** (On a separate page.) The project budget must be detailed and complete. Applicants must demonstrate rational tactics in preparing the budget. Costs must be well researched and reasonable, receiving the best value for the proposed budget. Adequate 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. The budget must be in two sections: Revenue and Expenditures. Each section must be clearly defined. Grantee must use other revenue to fund ineligible expenses.

If applying for a two year grant, you must submit a proposed budget for each year noting matching funds for each year.

All applicants will be notified of grant approval or denial in writing via e-mail.

HOW TO APPLY

The deadline for TPD application is:

- Wednesday, March 21, 2012 for the first round
- Friday, September 21, 2012 for the second round

**HOW TO APPLY
CONT'D**

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

All mailed applications shall be sent to:

Rena J. Calcaterra, Project Manager
FY12 Tourism Product Development Grant Program
Connecticut Office of Tourism
Department of Economic and Community Development
One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

When mailing applications, 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 within two weeks of the deadline.

**APPLICATION
MATERIALS**

Only complete applications will be reviewed. (Please see Tourism Grant Overview Guidelines.)

You may download the application packet from www.cultureandtourism.org website and digitally fill out the application. Save a copy for your records.

All applications must be received (not postmarked) on or before 4 p.m.

- First Round: Wednesday, March 21, 2012
- Second Round: Friday, September 21, 2012

No application or parts thereof will be accepted after the deadline. Faxed or electronic submissions will not be accepted.

Applications must include one original (marked original) and seven (7) 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 three (3) pages with 11 point font)
3. Project Budget(s)(on a separate page)
4. Timeline(s) (on a separate page)
5. Strategic Marketing Plan or Strategic Marketing Questionnaire
6. Drawings needed to illustrate proposed product
7. Supplemental material (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

Seven (7) Application sets of Materials (Copies)

1. Application (must be signed and dated, with a copy of the original signature)
2. Application Narrative (no more than three (3) pages with 11 point font)
3. Project Budget(s) (on a separate page)
4. Timeline(s) (on a separate page)
5. Strategic Marketing Plan or Strategic Marketing Questionnaire
6. Drawings needed to illustrate proposed product (if applicable)
7. Sponsorship Opportunities Package (if applicable)

Eight (8) sets are required in total to be considered a complete application package.

CONTRACTS

Due to the extensive nature of developing a tourism product, we are introducing the option of applying for a two year grant.

One year grant: Please refer to Reporting Requirements on page 5 of the Tourism Overview Grant Guidelines.

Two year grant: proposal must articulate in detail, the justification for up to two years through the narrative sections for Technical (timeline), Consistency with the state's Strategic Marketing Plan for Tourism, Value of Product and Budget. Goals and measurements must be clearly defined for each year.

Grantees receiving approval for a two year grant must at the end of the first year provide and receive approval of a End of First Year Report before the second year funds will be released. Approval will be based on grantee meeting established goals, securing the first year matching funds and demonstrating commitment of second year matching funds. If grantee meets these requirements, grantee will receive an allotment of 75 percent of first year approved grant funds. A second year 50 percent match is required.

All approved contracts must be in place prior to expending State grant funds. **Keep documentation for sources of matching funds and all expenses related to this grant (grant funds and match) for required verification.**

Note: Applicants receiving a one year grant may not apply for the same project in the subsequent year. Applicants receiving a two year grant may not apply for the same project in the subsequent year.

GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to these guidelines, applicant must read COT's Tourism Grant Overview Guidelines, as all guidelines are strictly enforced. Please refer to the following sections on pages 4 and 5.

- Grantee Responsibilities
- Credit & Publicity Responses
- Grant Cancellations

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Refer to the Tourism Overview Guidelines, page 5.