



Explore Georgia Tourism Recovery Marketing Grant Program

Applicants should thoroughly review the FY22 guidelines before preparing the application.

Grant Description: Grants provide funding for marketing programs for recovery of the tourism industry in Georgia.

Deadline: May 15, 2021 at 11:59 PM

Link to application: <https://industry.exploregeorgia.org/recovery-marketing-grant-co-op>

Grant Request: The maximum request is \$100,000 and the minimum request is \$5,000

Requirements:

- Georgia-based DMO organization
- Online application
- Program description, budget and timeline
- Hotel-Motel Excise Tax collections for FY2019 and FY2020

If you have questions about your City, County, or Consolidated Government's Hotel-Motel Excise Tax Report, please contact Tyler Reinagel at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs: 404-679-4996 or Tyler.Reinagel@dca.ga.gov

If you have any questions about the guidelines or the application process, please contact your Explore Georgia Regional Tourism Marketing Manager. You can find out your organization's regional assignment with the [Partner Marketing Map](#).

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People with disabilities requiring assistance with this information or information in a different format, please contact:

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Grant Overview

As part of the FY2021 amended budget, Governor Brian P. Kemp and the Georgia General Assembly allocated \$1 million to Explore Georgia, the tourism division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development, to support marketing efforts to bolster the recovery of Georgia's tourism industry from the COVID-19 pandemic. Half of those funds (\$500,000) have been allocated to create the Explore Georgia Tourism Recovery Marketing Grant Program.

The Explore Georgia Tourism Recovery Marketing Grant Program is designed to provide relief to areas of the state most dependent on tourism and will fund promotional efforts during the recovery of the travel industry in 2021. The grant will prioritize organizations and communities that have experienced the greatest impact from the loss of visitors and subsequent tourism spending during 2020.

According to the latest Longwoods International tracking study of American travelers, 88% of travelers now have travel plans in the next six months, which is the highest level in more than a year. This grant is focused on funding marketing programs that can be quickly activated and placed in-market to capture the anticipated increase in domestic travel and take advantage of this recovery opportunity.

Grant Criteria:

- Applicant must be a qualified Georgia-based tourism DMO/CVB/Tourism Authority (see list below)
- Grant must be used for an approved tourism marketing program/campaign (see list below), details for program/campaign are required with application
- Grant funds must be used and the marketing program completed no later than December 31, 2021
- Minimum grant awarded \$5,000 per recipient and the maximum grant awarded will be \$100,000 (final award amount may be less than request)
- Proof of payment and proof of performance reports are required no later than 60 days after program completion. If not submitted, grant must be repaid in full.

Grant Review:

Final awarding of grants is determined based on need, and will be quantified by the year over year loss in Hotel-Motel Excise Tax collections for your organization as well as the change in unemployment in your county.

Despite the fact that the deadline for reporting FY2020 Hotel-Motel Excise Tax has been extended for some jurisdictions, the City, County, or Consolidated Government where your property is located will need to complete the FY2020 Hotel-Motel Excise Tax report due to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (accessible at <https://www.dca.ga.gov/local-government-assistance/research-surveys/hotel-motel-excise-tax>) for your application to be



verified. This report is typically completed by the local government's Manager/Administrator, Finance Director, or Clerk, in conjunction with the DMO(s) receiving restricted funds.

If your organization receives restricted HMT funds from multiple jurisdictions, all jurisdictions must complete the FY2020 reporting in order for your application to be verified.

If you have questions about your City, County, or Consolidated Government's Hotel-Motel Excise Tax Report, please contact Tyler Reinagel at 404-679-4996 or Tyler.Reinagel@dca.ga.gov

Unemployment figures can be found on the Georgia Department of Labor website at: <https://explorer.gdol.ga.gov/gsipub/index.asp?docid=418>

These measurements speak to both your organization's funding level and to the broader economic impact of the pandemic. Both measures will be ranked equally.

- Loss of Hotel-Motel Excise Tax revenue (FY2020 vs FY2019) - provided by applicant and verified by Georgia Department of Community Affairs as required by Explore Georgia
- Change in unemployment rate in county (CY2020 vs CY2019) – provided by Georgia Department of Labor

Grant Timing:

1. Grant Applications must be submitted by May 15, 2021.
2. All applicants will be notified of their award status with an email from Explore Georgia the week of May 31, 2021. Letters will also be mailed to the mailing address provided on your application.
3. All grant acceptance paperwork must be completed and submitted to Explore Georgia no later than June 10, 2021.
4. Grant funds will be issued between July 15, 2021 and August 15, 2021.
5. Proof of payment and proof of performance, are due to Explore Georgia no later than 60 days after campaign/program completion.
6. Campaigns/programs must be completed no later than December 31, 2021.

Eligible Marketing Program Tactics:

To allow for quick activation, eligible marketing program tactics will be confined to paid advertising efforts, limited to:

- Digital display & rich media advertising
- Paid social advertising
- Search engine marketing
- TV/connected TV/over-the-top advertising
- Video/pre-roll advertising
- Print advertising
- Out-of-home advertising



- Radio advertising
- Streaming audio advertising
- Third-party sponsored website content
- Third-party sponsored emails or third-party email advertising

Examples of tactics that are ineligible include, but are not limited to:

- Promotional items
- Signage or kiosks
- Website development or enhancements
- Logo or brand development
- Research
- Printing or production of collateral or guides
- Influencer programs
- Media or sales FAM trips
- Trade show registration or attendance
- Any and all paid Explore Georgia media/advertising opportunities (ex: VIC activations, website featured listings, sponsored emails, etc.), and any Explore Georgia sponsored co-op opportunities

Qualified DMO/CVB/Authority List:

Only Georgia-based tourism organizations that have the contracted responsibility for marketing a region/area's tourism industry are eligible for this grant. These organizations may be known by names such as DMO (destination marketing organization), CVB (convention and visitor's bureau), Tourism Board, or Tourism Authority. In some cases, a Chamber of Commerce will serve as a DMO if they have a dedicated tourism department.

Complete list qualified organizations can be viewed here:

<https://industry.exploregeorgia.org/recovery-marketing-grant-co-op>

If your organization is not on this list and you believe it should be based on the criteria above, please contact Director of Partner Marketing Brittney Gray at bgray@georgia.org.



Explore Georgia Recovery Marketing Grant FAQ

If I do not qualify for this grant, are there other recovery marketing opportunities available? Yes, Explore Georgia has dedicated the other half of the \$1 million in recovery funding to a new dedicated co-op program. We have partnered with Trip Advisor and Northstar Meetings Group to offer a 100% matching co-op. Details for the two co-op programs can be found here: <https://industry.exploregeorgia.org/recovery-marketing-grant-co-op>

Does receiving this grant make my organization ineligible to participate in the recovery marketing co-op programs? No, you may participate in both. However, this grant cannot be used to fund either the co-op program or any Explore Georgia owned or sponsored programs.

Is there a required match from the Applicant to receive this grant? No, a match from the applicant is not required for this grant.

Will you publish a list of Applicants who receive grants? Yes, a list will be published on the Explore Georgia Industry Portal and issued in an Explore Georgia press release. Only grant recipients will be listed, not the amount of the grant awards.

What is the submission deadline for applications? The application submission deadline is May 15, 2021.

When will we be notified of award status? All applicants will be notified of their award status with an email from Explore Georgia on May 31, 2021. Letters will also be mailed to the mailing address provided on your application. Grant funds will be issued July 15, 2021 through August 15, 2021. See full timing in grant overview above.

Once I have been awarded a grant, what is the next step? Explore Georgia will issue a grant agreement for electronic signature that outlines the terms and conditions of the grant. An executed agreement must be returned to Explore Georgia no later than June 10, 2021.

Should the budget for my marketing program be a complete budget of the project, or only the portion that will be funded with grant funds? The budget should only include the budget for the portion of the marketing program that will be funded by this grant. If this grant-funded program is part of a larger campaign or initiative, please include this information in the detailed description submitted in your application. Include only expenses that will be incurred during the actual grant period of July 15, 2021– December 31, 2021.

Must the grant be used towards expenses incurred within the same time frame as the grant, July 15, 2021 – December 31, 2021? Yes, all expenses must be incurred and funds spent within the grant time frame only, to be eligible for this grant.



Can marketing efforts include Explore Georgia co-op/advertising programs? No, grant funds cannot be used to purchase any Explore Georgia owned or sponsored programs; including, but not limited to: state-run Visitor Information Center marketing programs, Explore Georgia sponsored social media posts, Explore Georgia email program, ExploreGeorgia.org retargeting, display banners, or promoted listings, advertising in the Explore Georgia Official State Travel Guide, Explore Georgia trade show participation, and Explore Georgia sponsored co-op programs, including recovery programs with Trip Advisor and Northstar Meetings Group.

What is proof of payment? The following are considered proof of payment documents, depending on how the payment was made:

- Copies of bank-issued cancelled checks (front & back)
- Credit card receipts with the credit card statement showing matching dollars of expenses
- Copy of your bank statement (or debit card statement) showing the vendor's name, and dollar amount matching the invoiced amount

What if I don't have an invoice, but only have a receipt? A receipt must include the vendor's name, details of what was being purchased, along with a total amount for the purchase. Proof of payment must still be provided to comply with grant requirements.

If identical ads run in the same publication at different dates, do all copies of the publication need to be submitted, or is one copy sufficient when submitting my proof of payment? Copies of EACH of the executed ads must be submitted showing the publication name, date, and ad placement in the final publication. Creative is NOT acceptable as proof of performance for ad placement.

What is proof of performance? Proof of performance is documentation--including written, screenshots, photos, videos, audio, and actual items-- that show the item/designs/ads/etc. in market and, if applicable, related key performance metrics, such as impressions or click through rate (CTR).

What must be provided for proof of performance?

- Digital display & rich media advertising: A screenshot of the webpage showing the ad. DO NOT send the link to the website only. Include CTR and total impressions.
- Paid social advertising: A screenshot of the webpage showing the ad. DO NOT send the link to the website only. Include CTR and total impressions.
- Search engine marketing: A screen shot showing the Google AdWords ad. Include CTR and impressions.
- TV/connected TV/over-the-top advertising: Time log from the station/vendor of when the advertising took place. Include total impressions.
- Video/pre-roll advertising: A screenshot of the webpage showing the ad. DO NOT send the link to the website only. Include CTR and total impressions.



- Print advertising: A physical copy of the publication must show the publication name and date and display the advertisement. Include total impressions.
- Out-of-home advertising: A picture of the billboard and location. Include total impressions.
- Radio advertising: Time log from the station/vendor of when the advertising took place along with MP3 copy of the radio ad. If the broadcast is a live read on radio, include a copy of the script. Include total impressions.
- Streaming audio advertising: time log from the station/vendor of when the advertising took place along with MP3 copy of the radio ad. If the broadcast is a live read on radio, include a copy of the script. Include total impressions.
- Third-party sponsored website content: A screenshot of the webpage showing the content. DO NOT send the link to the website only. Include CTR and total impressions.
- Third-party sponsored emails or third-party email advertising: A screenshot of the email showing the date displayed. DO NOT send the link to the email only. Include total distribution, open rate and CTR.