

TOURISM CRISIS MARKETING GRANT GUIDELINES



EXPLORE MINNESOTA MISSION

To inspire consumers and facilitate their travel to and within the state of Minnesota.

TOURISM CRISIS MARKETING GRANT PURPOSE

Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in Minnesota have been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. With leisure travel restricted to help curb the virus's spread, they've seen dramatic declines in tourism revenue along with countless tourism-related business closures. Many Minnesota DMOs rely on the tax dollars generated by tourism as a source of funding for tourism marketing and the promotion of their communities. Without it, many now face massive budget shortfalls.

The Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant is designed to provide advertising dollars to individual, established non-profit DMOs and primary tourism promotion agencies so they can remain visible to customers during this difficult period, and continue to stimulate travel for the economic benefit of their destination.

ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

A private, non-profit Minnesota organization whose primary purpose is to promote its community or area as a tourism destination and/or has the promotion of its community or area as a tourism destination as a major part of its work, such as:

- Convention and Visitors Bureaus
- Tourism Bureaus or Visitors Bureaus
- Chambers of Commerce
- Civic and Commerce Associations
- Statewide Associations, Scenic Byway Organizations and similar organizations dedicated to tourism marketing that have participated in the Marketing Grant Program within the last three years.
- Native American tribes are eligible for projects focusing on Native American cultural heritage tourism.
- Qualifying border communities with Minnesota Tax ID numbers may apply with marketing directed toward their Minnesota product. The Explore Minnesota logo must be used exclusively (no other state logo) in this program's advertising efforts.

These organizations are referred to as Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs).

There can only be one eligible organization per community. If more than one eligible organization applies for the same community or area, requestors must decide which organization will be eligible for funding. There can only be one eligible application accepted for any community or area.

ELIGIBLE ADVERTISING TACTICS

Crisis Marketing Grant funds can be utilized for the following tourism marketing tactics **only**:

- Print advertising
 - » **Does** allow advertising in the 2021 Explore Minnesota Travel Guide, the 2021 Biking Guide and MN Explorer Newspaper (Fall 2020, Winter 2020 and Spring/Summer 2021 only)
 - » **Does** allow advertising in destination or community guides
- Digital advertising
- Television advertising
- Radio advertising
- Billboard advertising
- Paid social media advertising

No other activities qualify for Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant funding.

ELIGIBLE CAMPAIGN AUDIENCES

Crisis Marketing Grant funds can be utilized for the following audiences **only**:

- **Consumer advertising:** campaigns targeting individual consumers.
- **Trade advertising:** campaigns targeted to meetings, conventions, sports, group tour, travel agents and travel planners who influence and plan travel to Minnesota on behalf of their organizations, associations or clients.

ADVERTISING GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES

- There are no minimum or maximum geographical radius for advertising placement.
- There is **not an in-state/out-of-state requirement** as in previous marketing grants.
- Grant dollars can be used for promotion to local, state, regional, national or international audiences.

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

Program funding runs from July 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021.

Grant eligibility period for this program is between July 1, 2020* and April 30, 2021.

***Advertising prior to the date of a fully-executed contract between grant recipient and Explore Minnesota will not be eligible for reimbursement.**

ELIGIBLE ADVERTISING RUN DATES

- All advertising must be completed inside of the eligibility period and fully executed by April 30, 2021.
- No pre-payment of advertising is allowed.
- No post-dated invoices will be allowed.
- No advertising bundles or packages with dates outside of the eligibility period will be accepted. Eligible expenses must be separated **by the vendor** and presented as a separate contract and invoice for payment. Invoices or contracts for advertising buys separated by the grantee will not be allowed.

EXPLORE MINNESOTA LOGO REQUIREMENTS

1. All grantees are required to add a current Explore Minnesota logo with a link to exploreminnesota.com to the homepage of their website. It is recommended that the grantee place a current Explore Minnesota logo with link to exploreminnesota.com in the footer of their website.
2. A current Explore Minnesota logo must be used in all grant projects per listed below:
 - Print advertisements
 - Digital display advertisements
 - » Mobile ads sized 320x50 where the Explore Minnesota logo cannot be accommodated must link to a landing page where the Explore Minnesota logo is present.
 - » Native campaigns must include **#OnlyinMN** if the Explore Minnesota logo cannot be accommodated
 - Television
 - Billboards/Out of Home
 - The size of the logo must be legible and proportionate to the size of the ad.
3. Paid social media requires use of the **#OnlyinMN** hashtag (on Twitter and Instagram) and **@ExploreMinnesota** handle (on Facebook).
4. Explore Minnesota must be mentioned in any radio/voiceover scripts.

No exceptions to the above; there will be no hardship waivers granted for exclusion of the Explore Minnesota logo. Failure to include a current Explore Minnesota logo in grant projects will result in cancellation of that project and repayment of all received funds.

Current logos are available on the industry website, exploreminnesota.com/industry.

DETERMINATION OF AWARD

- Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant award levels are based on the applicant's average use of Tourism Marketing Grant program dollars (actual dollars consumed) over the past three years (2017, 2018, 2019).
- 2020 awards and a three-year historical consumption are not used as a determining factor, due to it being an incomplete grant cycle.
- Only years for which a grant was awarded will be factored into the determination of award levels.
- Grants are based on historical consumption and not on organizational budgets.
- Qualifying DMOs and primary tourism organizations that did not utilize the Tourism Marketing Grant program in 2017, 2018 or 2019 may receive up to \$1,000 as a first-time award.

AWARD LEVELS

Explore Minnesota will notify grantees of their Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant award level. Award levels were determined by grantees who have utilized the Tourism Marketing Grant Program in 2017 and/or 2018 and/or 2019.

Applicant 3-year average	May Receive up to
First Time*	\$1,000
Up to \$1,000	\$1,500
\$1,001 to \$2,000	\$3,000
\$2,001 to \$3,000	\$4,500
\$3,001 to \$4,000	\$6,000
\$4,001 to \$5,000	\$8,000
\$5,001 to \$6,000	\$10,000
Over \$6,001	\$14,000

MATCH DOLLARS

There are no grantee match requirements in the Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant Program.

CYCLE & TERMS

- Grant applications can be made until December 31, 2020.
- Grant funds may only be used from the date of executed contract through April 30, 2021.
- One application per eligible organization and one award per application.
- Organizations experiencing a financial hardship may apply for advance payments. The grantee must complete and submit an Application for Financial Advance along with a request for funding application. The request will be reviewed for approval.
- Invoices, statements, tear sheets of advertising and proof of payment equal or exceeding the amount of the grant award must be submitted to Explore Minnesota by or before May 31, 2021. Failure to submit adequate reconciliation documents will may result in repayment of received grant funds, and may impact eligibility of future marketing grants.
- Allow up to 30 days for application processing and receipt of funds.

INELIGIBILITY:

INELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

- Multi-community grant applications
- Private, for-profit businesses
- Local units of government
- Any organization that is not the designated Destination Marketing Organization for its community
- Statewide associations not previously funded under the Marketing Grant Program (years 2017, 2018, 2019)

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The following expenses are **not eligible** for Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant funding*:

- Google AdWords and Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- The following Explore Minnesota programs:
 - » co-op advertising
 - » partnerships
 - » advertising on *exploreminnesota.com*
- Internal staff time, social media management, graphic design or contractor time for creative, management or implementation
- Any creative and production fees
- Agency fees
- Development, printing, fulfillment or distribution of community brochures/literature or response pieces
- Direct mail projects
- Tradeshow
- Sales calls
- Display materials
- Public relations projects and tactics
- Research projects
- Travel expenses
- Entertainment
- Purchase of food or alcoholic beverages
- Tourism development or infrastructure projects
- Promotional products
- Website development, design, consultancy, maintenance or hosting
- Ads or content that appear on a political or unsavory website or publication, at the discretion of Explore Minnesota

***This is a partial list of ineligible expenses. Please consult with Explore Minnesota prior to implementation if you have questions about eligibility of expenses.**

GRANT PROCESS

GRANT APPLICATION

1. Explore Minnesota will notify previous grantees by June 15 with a Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant award letter and grantee request for funding application for financial advance.
2. Grantee must fill out and return a Tourism Crisis Marketing Grant application no later than December 31, 2020.
3. Requests are reviewed for compliance and accuracy by Explore Minnesota. Once approved, available funds are allocated to eligible grantees.
4. Grant contracts are generated, funds are encumbered and required signatures are secured. Projects may not begin until the contract is fully executed, the date the last signature is obtained. Commitments (i.e. ad space reservations) may be made prior to this date, but grantee's Request for Reimbursement will not be paid if attached vendor invoices are dated prior to the fully executed grant contract.
5. Explore Minnesota sends grantee the following reconciliation materials:
 - Executed grant contract
 - Grant Completion Checklist form
 - Project Summary and Evaluation form
 - Request for Reimbursement form, if applicable

GRANT RECONCILIATION

1. Grant reconciliation materials and all supporting documentation must be e-mailed or postmarked to Explore Minnesota no later than May 31, 2021. Only one submission per grant; no partial reimbursements will be accepted.
2. The following items are required for reimbursement:
 - Grant Completion Checklist form
 - Completed Request for Reimbursement form
 - Completed Project Summary and Evaluation forms
 - Copies of all vendor invoices or statements with dates of service
 - Proof of payment
 - » Proof of payment includes vendor statements showing a zero balance, receipts, canceled checks or credit card/bank statements showing payment with account information redacted
 - Screenshot of grantee's website homepage displaying EMT logo linkable to *exploreminnesota.com*
 - For each type of campaign, the following must be submitted:
 - » Print – Original copy or tear sheet with Explore Minnesota logo
 - » Digital – Screenshot of advertisements with Explore Minnesota logo
 - » Television – Link to video with Explore Minnesota logo
 - » Radio/voiceover – Copy of script and audio file recognizing Explore Minnesota
 - » Billboard/out of home – Photo or screenshot with Explore Minnesota logo
 - » Social media paid advertising and boosting – Screenshot of posts with **#OnlyinMN** hashtag or **@ExploreMinnesota** handle.

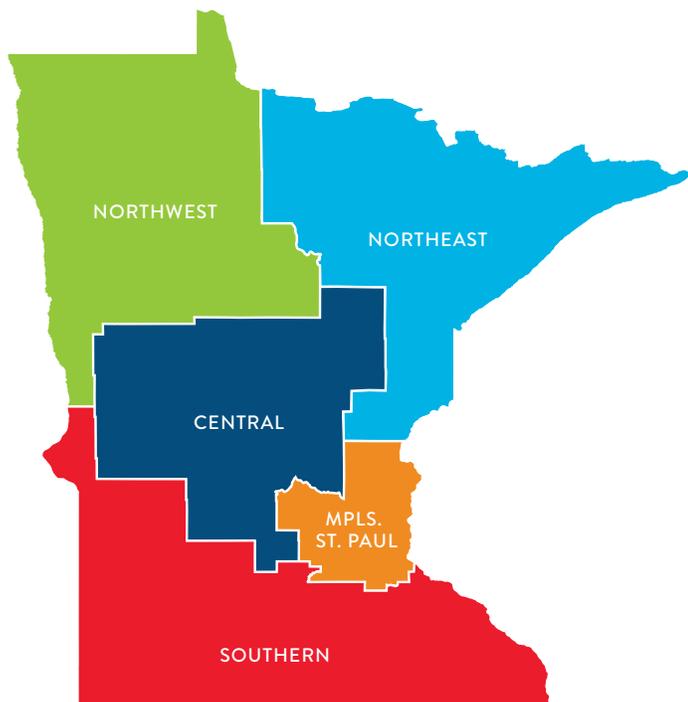
3. If no financial advance was awarded, Explore Minnesota will reimburse for funds within 30 days after the State determines that the grantee has satisfactorily fulfilled all the terms of their grant agreement, and has received all reconciliation materials.
4. Failure to meet the requirements of the grant program will result in full repayment of the advanced grant funds.
5. IRS rules require government entities to file 1099-G forms for certain government payments. Minnesota Management and Budget will be issuing 1099-G forms for these contracts. Please check with your organization's tax expert to determine what effect this may have on your IRS filing.

For clarification or to determine eligibility please contact your Regional Partner Relations Representative.

RECORDS RETENTION

Under Minnesota law, grant records must be kept available for a period of six years.

EXPLORE MINNESOTA TOURISM PARTNER RELATIONS



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