

Applicant Acknowledgment

I agree

- I understand this is a reimbursement program and no funds will be granted up front.

I agree

- I understand I need to use the Virginia is for Lovers logo on marketing and advertising materials where required as listed in the program Terms and Conditions and that I need to submit proof of marketing activities and proof of payment to qualify for reimbursement.

I agree

- I understand that this funding is for new initiatives, such as creating and distributing new ads, targeting new markets, running new social media campaigns, and obtaining new marketing content.

I agree

- I understand that this program is for eligible expenses incurred between December 1st, 2025 - October 31st, 2027, and that my reimbursement requests must be submitted no later than December 31st, 2027. I understand that I am permitted two reimbursements during the program period and that an interim and final report are required.

Program Information

DMO Name

Visit Outdoorland

EIN

54-90876544

Application Organization Street Address

1 Kayak Way
Cape Charles, Virginia 23463
United States

Town Name (if applicable)

Cape Charles

Applicant Locality

Northampton

Go Virginia Region

5

Virginia State House of Delegates District

99

Virginia State Senate District

7

U.S. House of Representatives (Congress) District

1

How many full-time employees does your DMO have?

5

How many part-time employees does your DMO have?

2

What is your DMO's annual operating budget?

\$100,000.00

Does any of your budget or matching funds come from a Tourism Investment District (TID)?

No

If no, are you interested in receiving more information about TIDS?

Yes

Amount of Requested Funds

\$15,000.00

Applicant Contact Information

Applicant Organization Contact Name

Staci Martin

Contact Email

staciwriter@gmail.com

Contact Phone Number

(757) 567-9745

Contact Mailing Address

1 Kayak Way
Virginia Beach, VA 23463

Marketing Initiative Focus

Outdoor Recreation

Marketing initiative Name

2026-2027 Hiking and Kayak Tour Season

Marketing Program Start Date - No earlier than 12/1/2025

12/15/2025

Marketing Program End Date - No later than 10/31/2027

09/30/2027

Goals and Partnerships (25 Points)

What do you want to accomplish with your requested funds?

We are looking to raise awareness of our outdoor recreation assets, hiking trails, and kayak tours from April 2026

through September 2027. With these funds, we want to book an average of 12 tours per week out of our Kiptopeke State Park and Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge launch points. We want to grow our social media reach. We also want to increase the number of views of our website videos of outdoor hiking and kayak tour videos. Our overall goal is to increase bookings of tours by 15% over the grant period using social media streaming and print media.

How will you measure your progress?

We will track social media follows and shares daily. We will review our tour bookings weekly with our outfitters and adjust marketing as needed to fill up all tour slots. We will track the number of tour video views on YouTube and the number of our website clicks. We will also track the amount of time unique visitors spend on our website and engaging with our outdoor-focused videos, pages, and blogs. We will track and count the number of visitors to our two welcome centers and harvest emails and mailing addresses for our e-news marketing campaigns and our direct mail marketing campaigns.

Performance Outcome #1

of Customers

Performance Baseline (now)

3478

Performance Goal (End of your program)

3890

Performance Outcome #2

of Website views

Performance Baseline (now)

23789

Performance Goal (End of your program)

26541

Hub & Spoke Itinerary

Lodging Partner

VacationLand Hotel

Partner #2

Trailside Brewery

Business/Organization Category

Craft Beverage/Wine

Spoke #3

Hilltop Winery

Business/Organization Category

Craft Beverage/Wine

Spoke #4

Waterside Restaurant

Business/Organization Category

Restaurant

Spoke #5

Kiptopeke State Park

Business/Organization Category

Outdoor Recreation

Spoke #6

Kayak Fun

Business/Organization Category

Outdoor Recreation

How will you and your partners work together to achieve your goals? Please list exactly what each partner and spoke is doing to support this marketing initiative.

These two partners and four spokes will partner with Visit Outdoorland to promote long weekend and weeklong itineraries featuring overnight stays at Vacationland Hotel, dinners at Trailside Brewery and Waterside Restaurant, and kayak tours and hiking tours at Kiptopeke State Park and Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge hosted by Kayak Fun. The partners and spokes will all be featured on the back of the Visit Outdoorland rack card, which will be in multiple Welcome Centers on the Eastern Shore, Hampton Roads, and Central Virginia. In addition, the restaurants will offer a 10% discount to visitors who show their Kayak Fun reservation receipt, and Kayak Fun will reciprocate with their guests. Vacationland hotel will link to all the partners in their guest reservation emails and place the rack card in each guest room's welcome packet. Both restaurants will also place the rack card in each guest's check folio. Kayak Fun will link to the partners in our reservation emails.

What marketing message will help you and your partners achieve your visitation/visitor spending goals? Think about how you will motivate travelers to come to your business, events, or destination.

We will use the campaign "Take Your Socks Off and Set Foot on The Shore" with the Virginia is for Shore Lovers logo. This message will resonate with people who live inland who may still be experiencing colder weather in spring and fall. Evoking a message of taking advantage of the first warm days and maximizing the fall tourism season, we want to persuade visitors to book multiple trips in the shoulder seasons as well as the main summer seasons.

Research/Data (25 Points)**What research/data did you use to set your goals?**

We reviewed our social media insights and web analytics and realized that while we receive approximately 25% of our engagement from North Carolina, we only receive 2% of those bookings from the Charlotte, NC region. We also reviewed Arrivalist data and saw that Charlotte is in the Top 10 origin markets for the Eastern Shore in the summer months. Since we want to drive repeat visitation in the off-season, the data is showing us that Charlotte would be a good target market.

What research/data did you use to develop your marketing message?

We reviewed Vacationland Hotel's booking data with them and noticed a trend of last-minute reservations in early Spring and late Fall based on weather forecasts. Our marketing message of "Take Your Socks Off and Set Foot on The Shore" will resonate with people wanting to embrace early spring outdoor activities and get in one more beach vacation before fall starts. We plan to create a sense of urgency to motivate travelers to book last-minute trips by closely tracking weather forecasts and flooding social media 72-96 hours in advance of promising weekends. We also reviewed Arrivalist data for check-ins

and dwell time from Charlotte, NC visitors, and found that they tend to spend 2-4 hours in these outdoor locations, making them prime candidates to take one of our 3-hour kayak tours.

Target Markets

Out of State Target Market

Charlotte, NC

What research/data are you using to choose this target market?

We are using Arrivalist data, origin market, and dwell time data to target Charlotte, NC. We are also using VTC's outdoor recreation traveler profile data that shows outdoor recreation visitors tend to spend 2-4 days exploring destinations, which tells us that long weekend trip targeting Charlotte, NC, will be a good combination. We also reviewed U.S. Census income data, and Charlotte, NC's average household income is over \$110K per family, which leads us to believe that these families are more likely to engage in shoulder season travel in addition to summer vacations

In-State Large Metro Target Market

Hampton Roads

What research/data are you using to choose this target market?

We reviewed Longwoods research about visitors to Virginia Beach and found that 42% of the visitors engage in active outdoor recreation during their vacation in Virginia Beach. We believe we can attract visitors to Cape Charles while they are on their vacation in Virginia Beach and get them to take a day trip kayak tour with us as part of their Hampton Roads vacation plans. We also reviewed our web analytics, which tells us 25% of visitors to our website are in the Hampton Roads area, and we believe we can motivate Hampton Roads residents to book kayak trips with us.

Select Your Target Audience

Family

Looking at vatc.org/research, tell us what research you used to identify your target market audience.

We are targeting the family audience due to the high number of beginner hiking trails, tandem kayaks, and Stand-Up Paddleboards that our outfitters have available for family tours. We reviewed the 2018 Outdoor Recreation Participation study by the Outdoor Foundation, which showed 13% of outdoor recreation enthusiasts are in the Mid Atlantic region, and the study also indicates that families engaging with outdoor recreation activities have children 6 years or older. We also reviewed the Skift 2020 Destination Storytelling research that recommends telling local stories, and our videos feature local paddlers who grew up connected to nature, which will appeal to family travelers looking to create unique, inspirational experiences for their children.

Please tell us about any additional research you are using.

We are using VTC Points of Interest data provided by the Destination Development Management team that shows that 15% of people coming to our destination originate from drive markets at least six hours away from Cape Charles.

Marketing Plans (50 Points)

In-Kind or Cash Match Marketing Plan

Media Type and Description	Target Market and Demographic	Earned Media/Ad Placement Date	Amount/Value
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Print	www.southernliving.com/eastern shore Families, Charlotte, NC \$100K Household Income	December 15, 2026	1000
Social Media	Followers	As of Feb. 15, 2026	8000

Total In-kind Marketing Plan

9000.00

VTC Reimbursable Marketing Plan

Media Name/Description	Target Market/Demographic	Ad Placement Date	Amount
Social Media	Hampton Roads Families	February 2026 to September 2027	5000
Print Media	Charlotte, NC Families. HHI over \$110K	April 2026, Sept 2026, April 2027, September 2027	2000
Print Media	VTC Welcome Center guests 85/95/64	April 2026-April 2027	5000
Agency Services/Design	Charlotte, NC Families	April 2026	3000

Total Reimbursable Marketing Plan

15000.00

BONUS POINTS: VIFL Activation Type (5 Bonus Points)

How will you integrate the Virginia is for Lovers brand and Virginia Tourism Corporation services/opportunities in your marketing and advertising materials? The offering of booth space, press passes, and other opportunities for VTC content acquisition is encouraged. However, attendance cannot be guaranteed.

We will have Kayak Fun and Visitor Center staff wear co-branded Virginia is for Outdoor Lovers T-shirts on weekends in April, May, and September. We will also sign up for VTC PR Leads so we can try to earn editorial for our business and for Virginia. We will offer kayak tour dates for content acquisition by VTC/contracted photographers/videographers to capture content for tourism marketing.

Lodging Partner Letter of Support (Required)

- [Letter-of-Support-Sample.docx](#)

Save and Submit

Acceptance of Terms

I understand that by submitting this application that I am agreeing to the full program Terms and Conditions.

I have read and agree to the terms and conditions.

Submission Confirmation

I understand that my application is not fully submitted until I see the final submission screen and receive a .pdf of my application in my inbox (usually within 30 minutes.) If I do not receive the PDF of my application within 24 hours, I will contact VTC at

VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org.

✓ I understand.