Virginia Sports Tourism Grant Program

Guidelines Document

PURPOSE:

The Virginia Sports Tourism Grant Program is administered by the Virginia Tourism Corporation. The purpose of the program is to provide funding to bring high-quality youth, amateur, collegiate and select other sporting events which will bring a positive economic impact to the Commonwealth.

The Virginia Sports Tourism Grant Program is established in the Code of Virginia § 2.2-2320.3.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: (Must be based in Virginia)

- Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs/CVBs or Chamber of Commerce)
- Nonprofit sports support organization – 501 (c)
- Sports Venues – i.e. convention center, college/university, event venue, sports venue, hotel with sports venue.
- City, Town or County local government agency or department – i.e. parks & recreation department
- Sports Commissions and Sports Authorities

QUALIFING CRITERIA FOR FUNDING:

- Event must be held in Virginia.
- Youth, amateur, collegiate and select other competitive sporting events or tournaments only.
- Must be a competitively bid sports tournament or event.
- Must bring a majority (51% or more) of athletes from outside the state.
- Minimum size of the event must be 100+ athletes/participants.
- Event must be multi-day. Single day events will be considered if they bring at least 75% of athletes/spectators from outside of the state.
- Event must take place within 3 years of the date of application window closing date.
- Event must take place no sooner than 120 days after application period closing date.
- There is a 1:1 cash match requirement.
- For multi-year contracted events, applicants must apply for funding each year.

- Event organizer must have at least a 2-year established event management history.
- Applicants must enter into a performance agreement with VTC which will include provisions for disbursement, use of funds and reporting responsibilities. Awards may be reduced based on performance.

GENERAL AWARD GUIDELINES:

Submitted applications will be evaluated on the following factors:

- Event must show a positive return to the Commonwealth as measured by Direct State Revenues for the amount sought in grant funding.
- Events will be scored based on the projected return to the Commonwealth as measured by Direct State Revenues, for the amount sought in grant funding.

Suggested Event Size Guidelines for Sample Grant Amounts

Recommended Grant Size	Recommended Total Attendance	Recommended Overnight Attendance	Recommended Hotel Room nights
$5,000	800	400	300
$10,000	1,500	800	600
$25,000	3,800	1,900	1,400
$50,000	7,700	3,800	2,800
$75,000	11,500	5,800	4,200
$100,000	15,300	7,700	5,600
$125,000	19,100	9,600	7,000
$150,000	23,800	11,500	8,400
$175,000	26,800	13,500	9,800
$200,000	30,600	15,400	11,200

NOTE: Lesser or larger amounts may be awarded.

- The above guidelines are suggested amounts to help right-size the amount requested relative to size of your event.
- Amounts ultimately awarded through the Grant Program will differ and will depend on the eligibility of reimbursable items, as well as the financial return to the Commonwealth through projected state revenues.
- Your event is not required to exceed all the above three guidelines. As these are only guidelines, your event should fall within the vicinity of one or more of the guidelines; either (1) total attendance, (2) overnight attendance, or (3) hotel room nights.
- Different events might qualify in different ways across the three metrics depending on the length or type of the event. All the below examples would be sufficient, provided the application is complete, the items to be reimbursed are eligible, and there is a financial return to the Commonwealth for the amount applied for:
    - A *shorter* event of only one overnight might meet the overnight attendance threshold but not the room nights threshold.
    - An event with *many spectators* compared to participants might qualify on total attendance but not hotel room nights.
    - A *longer* event might not meet the total attendance threshold but might exceed the room nights threshold for a given amount.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES: (FOR REIMBURSEMENT & MATCHING FUNDS)

Below are the only eligible expenses, anything not listed will be considered ineligible and will not be funded.

- Site/venue rental usage fees (venues are ineligible for reimbursement for this expense)
- Rights / Sanction / Bid Fees (only for successful bids awarded to the destination)
- Rental of equipment - furniture, fixtures and AV (i.e. portable toilets, fencing, sport court flooring, stage, chairs, tables, speakers, tv's, golf carts, scoreboards etc.)
- Shuttling cost for event (athletes, staff and spectators)
- Contracted and Invoiced Event Services Staff Wages – (i.e. officials, referee, timing, scoring, third party staffing and athletic trainers)
- Event-specific signage & printed marketing materials
- Event production and technical rental expenses (i.e. sound and light techs)
- Equipment rental and production cost of live streaming
- Wifi/internet service cost for sports facility or wherever the event is taking place
- Catered meals for athletes/event staff provided by the event organizer or host (no individual meals or alcohol)

FUNDING AWARD & REPORTING GUIDELINES:

- Funding will be reimbursed to applicants after the event has taken place and a post event report is submitted and reviewed by VTC.
- A post event report and receipts must be submitted together within 120 days following the conclusion of the event. Failure to do so will result in funding award being null and void.

Post event reporting requirements:

- Proof of the event taking place i.e. website with competition results, photos of the event etc.
- Actual event data with number of participants, spectators and updated economic impact.
- Invoices and additional proof of payment must include receipts, credit card statements, bank statements, and/or copies of cancelled checks for eligible expenses
- All VTC expenses and matching expenses must include copies of third-party contracts
- Your reimbursement may be reduced and is contingent based on meeting performance metrics.
- All proof of payment, proof of the event taking place, event data and post event report must be submitted at the same time.

IMPORTANT DEADLINE INFORMATION:

- The Sports Tourism Grant webinar will take place on **December 7, 2026, at 2:00 PM**
- The application window will open on **January 4, 2027**, and will close on **February 16, 2027**.
- Awardees will be notified via email by the end of April.
- All Awardees MUST attend the Awardee Webinar, which will take place on **April 21, 2027**. *Date is subject to change.

- A copy of the signed contract (Venue, host organization or hotel) must be sent to VTC within 180 days of application submission and at least 30 days prior to event start date.
- A reimbursement request must be made no later than 120 days after the last day of the event.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO NOTE BEFORE APPLYING:

- State/Federal agencies are not eligible to apply for this funding.
- Applicants must be Virginia based. Out-of-state entities will not receive funds.
- Only one application will be approved for an event. DMO and venue can't apply for the same event.
- Applicants cannot apply for another VTC Grant to cover the same event.
- Applicants who are not DMO's/CVB's or a Sports Authority need to provide a letter of support from their local DMO/CVB or Sports Authority.
- Only online submissions will be accepted.
- Applicants can submit documentation for application approval prior to contracting; however, applicants will not receive funds until after the event and a copy of the contract (within 180 days of application) and proof of payment (s) are submitted.
- Please do **NOT** send – via regular mail – any attachments or supplemental materials. All documents must be submitted through the proper VTC directed channels.
- A copy of the RFP/Bid must be included in the application.
- VTC reserves the right to request permission to take photo/video content at the event for marketing purposes.
- If signage is a VTC expense and/or matching expense, you are required to include *Virginia is for Sports Lovers* logo on signage during event. Proof of logo placement is required at the time of reimbursement.
- Applicants MUST notify VTC within 30 days if the event is not going to be confirmed and contracted in Virginia.
- Applicants MUST notify VTC immediately if the contracted event is canceled, rescheduled or downsized through proper form of documentation.
- Events canceled due to weather or public safety issues will be considered on a case-by-case basis for reimbursement.
- Up to 10% of the funds may be reserved for the bottom 20% of localities measured by visitor spending.