

Program Guidelines

**New York State
EDA Tourism Partner
Sub-Awards**



State of New York

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I. Overview

As funded under the federal Economic Development Administration's (EDA) FY2021 American Rescue Plan Act Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation grant, the New York State EDA Tourism Partner Sub-Awards Grant Program (NYS EDA Sub-Awards or the Program) is being established to support the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation sectors in New York State as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of up to **\$14.25 million** of NYS EDA Sub-Awards will be competitively granted to marketing projects that aim to attract visitors to New York State by promoting tourism programs based on the New York State Division of Tourism's EDA areas of focus: outdoor recreation, international tourism, and travel trade including Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE), amateur sports and group travel. Funding is available for eligible projects that will create an economic impact by increasing tourism in their region and/or throughout New York State through the segments in the areas of focus.

II. Definitions

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO): is defined as a non-profit organization which promotes a location as an attractive travel destination that can include, but is not limited to: tourist boards, tourism authorities, tourism offices, tourism promotion agencies and convention and visitors bureaus.

III. Competitive Grant Program

The NYS EDA Sub-Awards are awarded under a formal grant process whereby the NYS Division of Tourism will accept applications from eligible candidates. Applicants will submit a tourism proposal through an online application system. The application is then reviewed and scored by the Division of Tourism's tourism scoring team. A Tourism Executive Review will be completed to determine final grantees. The grants are competitive in the sense that proposals are "competing" for the total of tourism grant dollars available through this grant program, and not every proposed program may be able to be funded.

The goal of this competitive process is to ensure that awarded grants are responsive to the needs outlined in these guidelines and are impact driven. The Division of Tourism's goal is to positively impact New York State's tourism industry by making strategic investments in programs and organizations that are working to improve and enhance the economic impact of New York State tourism regions and New York State tourism overall.

The Division of Tourism works to be responsive to the current needs of the tourism industry, while also anticipating statewide industry future needs.

IV. Eligible Applicant Qualification

All Eligible Applicants must:

- Be a DMO, as defined above;
- Apply for a grant request equal to or more than \$250,000;
- Be in operation in New York State as of the date of application;
- Be prequalified in Grants Gateway prior to execution of a contract;
- Be in substantial compliance with any NYS grants and program funding; and
- Be in substantial compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, codes, orders and requirements, including tax, labor, public health and environmental laws.

V. Eligible Use of Grant Funds

Project focus: Funding will be available for eligible applicants to execute potential tourism projects that amplify New York State’s tourism promotion efforts under the EDA grant.

New York State will concentrate on sectors most in need of help and/or representing the most promising opportunity for growth to restore New York State to its previous record tourism and help it reach new heights. Those three core areas of focus for New York State’s EDA work are:

1. **Engaging the travel trade:** Pursue MICE tourism, amateur sporting events and group tour business through sales and marketing efforts that encourage travel professionals to choose New York State for their clients and customers. Especially since New York State in recent years has spent billions of dollars to upgrade airports, convention centers and other infrastructure, now is an ideal time for the state’s Division of Tourism to present a strong and unified message—under the iconic I LOVE NY logo—that New York State is the best place for meetings and events of all types and sizes. Tactics include:
 - A marketing effort to promote New York State in the MICE, amateur sporting event and group travel segments including:
 - A strong, unified state presence at key business and events-based travel trade shows.
 - A dedicated web presence and other promotional material for meeting planners, tour operators, tournament organizers and others considering New York State for business and consumer events.
 - Advertising and PR in relevant trade publications and outlets.
 - Serving as a resource to meeting planners, tour operators, tournament organizers, event producers and others involved with booking trade, consumer and sporting events.

2. **Promoting international tourism:** As borders reopen, keep New York State top of mind and maximize the pent-up demand for travel with international consumers from our key feeder markets: Canada, UK, Germany and Australia. In addition to New York State’s ongoing business-to-business work to have tour operators and travel agents in these markets add New York State destinations to their offerings, efforts will be made to increase interest by reaching out to consumers more directly. Tactics include:
- Paid consumer advertising in our key international feeder markets.
 - Paid marketing and partnership opportunities with companies like airlines and tour operators to promote New York State with international travelers.
3. **Promoting outdoor recreation destinations and activities:** Maximize the trend of increased outdoor tourism and convert first-time users of New York State’s outdoor recreational assets to regular guests. At the same time, create broader awareness of lesser known and visited outdoor destinations to help redirect visitors from more crowded assets, and improve the visitor experience with increased programming and staff support while ensuring the long term preservation of natural assets for continued, sustainable visitation.
- Tactics include:
- A targeted marketing strategy to promote New York State as a premier destination for outdoor recreation destination, including a strong state presence at key trade and consumer outdoor and adventure travel shows.
 - Education and outreach through the state’s Love Our New York Lands campaign which encourages sustainable use by inspiring a shared sense of responsibility and ownership of state lands. Utilizing channels like paid advertising, visitors and, in particular, audiences new to recreating in the outdoors are introduced to the principles of leave no trace, shown the importance of planning ahead and encouraged to show respect for one another while enjoying the outdoors.
 - Expand the state’s Ladders to the Outdoors program to increase access to outdoor recreational spaces with adaptive equipment, transportation, multilingual interpretation and skills development that make outdoor recreation more accessible to underserved populations.
 - Update and expand technology to improve the guest experience at state parks and historical sites with overhauled websites, an improved Parks’ Explorer mobile App and updating of the popular virtual tours of at least 100 state run properties.

VI. **Ineligible Use of Grant Funds**

Ineligible uses of NYS EDA Sub-Awards are as follows:

- Individuals and for-profit entities are not eligible to receive grants under this program;

- No grant funds under this program may be used to subsidize or defray the operating costs of for-profit businesses;
- Grant funds under this program cannot be used toward projects that are already funded in any way by the NYS Division of Tourism or by any other NYS agency;
- Projects that are not aligned with the Division of Tourism’s EDA areas of focus, as indicated above, will not be deemed eligible;
- Projects focused on primarily locally oriented events or activities that do not draw visitors from over 50 miles away will not be deemed eligible;
- Grant funds under this program cannot be used for any capital projects or capital costs;
- Grant funds under this program cannot be used for alcohol; and
- Grant funds under this program cannot be used for events or activities involving religious worship, instruction or proselytizing, nor political activities of any kind or nature.

VII. Application Document Requirements

ESD will make an on-line application available that will require the following information:

- Obtain a Unique Entity Identity Identifier (UEI)
 - For instructions on how to obtain a UEI visit <https://www.sam.gov>;
- Project proposal not to exceed three (3) pages that includes:
 - Scope of Work (See attachment 1)
 - Project Narrative including a list of tasks the grantee will undertake to implement the Scope of Work;
 - Expected Outputs and Outcomes of the project;
 - Evidence demonstrating the capacity and capability of the applicant to: achieve the expected outputs and outcomes of the project; and manage the grant and all its reporting and other administrative requirements;
- Project Timeline for implementing tasks identified; Project Budget including, if applicable, a Staffing Plan showing the individuals or positions that will charge time to the award along with salary, percentage of effort, and estimated total amount each individual will charge to the award; and
- Attestation that the Applicant is in substantial compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, codes, orders and requirements.

ESD reserves the right to request additional information that ESD, in its sole discretion, deems to be necessary to prove any grant requirements are being met. Additionally, all grants are subject to the EDA approval and at EDA’s request, grantees may be required to provide additional information and documentation as requested.

VIII. Scoring Process

Eligible applicants who have met the minimum criteria for the NYS EDA Sub-Awards will move forward to the competitive scoring process. The Division of Tourism's EDA areas of focus described above will serve as the context for the scoring criteria. Projects will be scored by a panel of at least 3 reviewers and those scoring the highest will be funded as determined by the Division of Tourism.

Overall Scoring Criteria (up to a total of 100 points):

1. *Area(s) of Focus Alignment/Project Relevance (up to 30 Points)*
2. *Project Plan(s)/Approach, including capacity and budget (up to 40 Points)*
3. *Project Impact/Metrics/ROI (up to 30 Points)*

IX. Grant Amounts

Minimum Funding Requests: requests must be more than \$250,000 in order to be eligible. Funding requests can be reduced based on factors, including, but not limited to, economic impact, regional distribution of funding, and past contract compliance with Empire State Development (ESD).

Disbursements

Up to 25% of the total award will be advanced to the Grantee to be used for eligible project costs. The Initial Advance will be determined upon execution of a contract and a completed Claim for Payment 1, and other documentation as required.

If no expenditures are made within the first year of the sub-award, the grantee may be required to submit an interim report with a justification as to why no spending has occurred. Awards may be rescinded if the justification is, in ESD's sole determination, insufficient.

Subsequent Advances (Payments 2 - 4) to be used for eligible project costs will be disbursed in increments of 25% of the total award, no more frequently than quarterly. Grantee shall spend at least 75% of project expenditures from the previous disbursement and 100% of all earlier disbursements, as demonstrated by documentation including invoices and proof of payment, before ESD provides for the subsequent disbursement. Grantee will submit a completed Claim for Payment with each request, and other documentation as required.

Within six (6) months of the final advance, full documentation of eligible expenditures including invoices and proof of payment of 100% of the fourth advance (cumulative expenditures totaling at least the amount of the total grant), as well as a final project report with metrics as outlined will be required. Failure to submit a final report with other required documentation can result in a recapture of funding up to the full award amount.

Grantees will be required to comply with all of the Specific Award Conditions for the specific EDA award, including but not limited to the Standard and Specific Award conditions and the Uniform

Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 C.F.R. part 200). Terms and conditions can be found at www.commerce.gov

X. Project Requirements

If awarded, a grantee must:

- Execute a contract;
- Successfully complete the US Department of Commerce’s *Compliance with EDA Rescue Plan Program Requirements Fraud Awareness Training* and submit the signed completion certificate within 60 days of the grant award;
- Be prequalified in Grants Gateway prior to execution of a contract; and
- Be in compliance at all time with the reporting and all other requirements established and communicated at the time of or prior to contracting.:
 - Grantees must submit all reports digitally on the forms supplied Adherence with Federal Contractual Requirements
 - When entering into contract with the Department grantees must adhere to the principles of 2 CFR Part 200.

Failure to comply with any requirements of this grant may result in a finding of non-compliance with the terms and conditions of your award, and result in an award being reduced, rescinded and/or clawed back.

XI. Program Timeline

- Applications will be available online Q2 2022
- Projects will be required to be completed no later than 09/1/2025
- Final Project Reports due no later than Q1 2026

XII. Additional Information

Eligible Applicant must provide evidence, acceptable to ESD, that the Eligible Applicant is operational and that the Eligible Applicant is not restricted by any state, local or other agency mandate.

All New York State tourism grant opportunities are posted on <https://esd.ny.gov/>. New York State’s Division of Tourism continually works with industry partners across the state to utilize various resources to promote tourism opportunities including the NYS EDA Tourism Partner Sub-Awards.

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Attachment 1

Authorized Scope of Work for the NYS EDA Tourism Partner Sub-Awards Program

All projects supported under the NYS EDA Tourism Partner Subawards program must support the travel, tourism or outdoor recreation sectors and be consistent with federal, state and local guidelines for safe travel. Projects that do not support these sectors or are intended to support diversification away from the sectors are not permitted.

Eligible uses of State Tourism Grants include:

- State, county, city, or community/regional tourism marketing and promotion campaigns, including through nonprofit Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO). Messaging must be consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 and state and local guidelines.

- o Note: Due to statutory restrictions, advertising on behalf of private companies is not permitted.

- Workforce training that supports the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries, to improve the skills and job opportunities for workers, including Registered Apprenticeship Programs and other work and learn models. Grant recipients and their partners are encouraged to make connections with the American Job Centers that connect individuals to workforce training.

- Short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to respond to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the regional travel, tourism and outdoor recreation industry.

- Technical assistance projects to assist regional economies to recover from damage to the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation industries, including technical assistance to businesses, entrepreneurs and small and rural communities to respond to changes to those industries brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.

Other uses to support the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries, as approved by the New York State Division of Tourism and the EDA.