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**VisitErie Tourism Matching Funds for Cooperative Marketing
2017-2018 Guidelines and Application**

**Deadline: 4:00 pm Friday, April 28, 2017**

**Mission Statement:**

VisitErie is the leader for marketing Erie’s tourism industry and promoting its economic growth.

**Purpose:** The dollars from VisitErie are to be used as a match fund for cooperative advertising initiatives by VisitErie partners for the purpose of increasing tourism’s economic impact in Erie County, Pennsylvania. The program goals are to encourage cooperative programs between local tourism-related businesses (accommodations, restaurants, attractions, retailers, festivals/events, performance/cultural arts, sports and conventions) that will nurture relationships and broaden the message to potential visitors. It will also serve to attract tourists and visitors from outside Erie County encouraging overnight stays and day trips. Awards are granted on the basis of merit as determined by the established criteria.

**Funds Available:** A total of $75,000 is available for the program which runs July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018. Fund requests ranging from $2,000 to $15,000 will be considered. Funded Cooperative Marketing applications will receive a dollar for dollar match from VisitErie.

***Example:*** If two or more tourism related properties develop a campaign that promotes overnight stays and day trips in Erie County costing $10,000; VisitErie will provide $5,000 for the campaign with the other $5,000 coming from the other cooperating partners.

**Eligible Applicants:**

* 1. Applicants must be a Business ($250), Corporate ($1,000) or Executive ($5,000) level partner of VisitErie.
	2. In addition to VisitErie, the proposed program must involve no less than two (2) participants (current VisitErie partners) directly related to the travel industry.

**Workshop**: A matching funds workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, March 15, 2017 from 3 to 5 pm at the Intermodal Center, 2nd floor meeting room, 208 East Bayfront Parkway. This is an opportunity to meet VisitErie partners who can become co-op partners. RSVP to Emily Beck by Friday, March 17 at ebeck@visiterie.com or 454-1000 ext. 124 if you plan to attend.

**Guidelines:**

* 1. The maximum amount of a request accepted for a co-op program is $15,000.
	2. The minimum amount of a request accepted for a co-op program is $2,000.
	3. Only one proposal per applicant will be accepted.
	4. If the application is approved, a Tourism Matching Funds for Cooperative Marketing Agreement will be signed by VisitErie and participating partners to allow the applicant to move forward with the program.
	5. NEW - 80% of the Cooperative Marketing Funds shall be paid to the applicant within 10 days after the creative (print, radio, TV, online, outdoor, etc.) portion of the program has been approved by VisitErie. The remaining 20% shall be paid to the applicant after the Final Report is received by VisitErie.
	6. A for-profit business that receives a grant may be required to treat the grant as income and is responsible for paying any necessary taxes applicable thereto.
	7. Once approved, programs must be completed and dollars spent as specified in the Matching Funds Agreement.

**Criteria:**

* 1. Funds may be used for marketing purposes only. Advertising including radio, television, online, email, social media, print advertising, printing, outdoor, public relations, direct mail, production and trade show participation are eligible program activities and expenses. The dollars may not be used for administration, web site design, overhead or brick and mortar projects.
	2. The program being funded must involve no less than two (2) participants directly related to the travel industry, in addition to VisitErie (accommodations, restaurants, attractions, festivals and events, performance and cultural arts and sports). All participants must be current VisitErie partners.
	3. Programs must be geared to overnight or day trip target markets outside of Erie County. Any program with a primary target market of Erie County will not be considered.
	4. Total production costs should not exceed 20% of the budget. Examples: ad design, radio and TV commercial production etc. If production costs exceed 20% of the budget explanation in the narrative is required.
	5. Co-op programs within VisitErie’s current advertising campaigns or publications will not be considered. Dollars for this program will not be allocated toward advertising in any existing VisitErie publications or any other VisitErie cooperative advertising program. Examples include, but are not limited to: Erie Adventure Guide, Sales Missions, familiarization tours, site inspections, PGLR Group Tour Guidebook.
	6. Participant contributions must be in cash, not trade. In-kind expenditures are not eligible.
	7. Programs must be completed before 4:00 p.m. Thursday, May 31, 2018.
	8. Priority will be given to applications that:
		1. Best complement VisitErie’s marketing plan.
		2. Have the potential to generate the greatest overnight business.
		3. Have the potential to generate off-peak business (e.g., midweek, non-holiday, and off season, e.g., Jan-April business).
		4. Impact the greatest number of tourism -related businesses.
		5. Are ready for implementation.

**Creative:**

* 1. All creative (print, radio, TV, online, outdoor, etc.) must be approved by VisitErie in order to receive funds. Creative must contain the following:
		1. VisitErie.com web site logo on print, outdoor, TV ads and other appropriate media outlets.
		2. Matching fund recipients must put a link to VisitErie.com utilizing the VisitErie logo in a prominent location on their website, preferably the homepage for the duration of the applicant’s program. Continued use of VisitErie’s logo and link are encouraged.
		3. Exceptions to the aforementioned requirements such as online banner ads must be approved by VisitErie prior to publication.
	2. Failure to comply with this requirement will impact future funding assistance.

Electronic applications as attachments are due **Friday, April 28, 2017 by 4:00 pm** and must be submitted to Emily Beck at ebeck@visiterie.com . Applications will be reviewed by VisitErie’s Matching Funds for Cooperative Marketing Review Panel for consideration.

If the funds are not exhausted for the Cooperative Marketing application period ending April 28, 2017 additional applications will be solicited.

Requests for extensions of the Cooperative Marketing Program must be submitted via email to Emily Beck at ebeck@visiterie.com and will be accepted on or before May 31, 2018. Extensions may be granted up to a completion date of Thursday, August 30, 2018 (90 days after May 31, 2018).

**VisitErie Tourism Matching Funds for Cooperative Marketing
2017-2018 Guidelines
Deadline: Friday, April 28, 2017 by 4:00 p.m.**

Please follow this outline when submitting your Cooperative Marketing fund request. The application should be typed on your business/organization’s letterhead and is not to exceed one page for Matching Funds Program Cover Sheet, no more than two pages for the narrative and one page for the budget.

Applications are to be submitted electronically to Emily Beck at ebeck@visiterie.com by **4:00 p.m. Friday, April 28, 2017.** Incomplete applications will not be accepted for consideration. Applicants are encouraged to meet with Emily Beck in advance of due date to discuss your program.

**Matching Funds Program Cover Sheet**

**Applicant**Business name:

Contact person/coordinator:

Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone: Fax:

Web Address:

Email Address:

**Collaborating Partners/Business Name:** The program being funded must feature no less than two (2) participants directly related to the travel industry that are partners of VisitErie. Include with your application a letter of commitment from each collaborating participant.

**Program information:**

Project Name

Start Date: Completion Date:

Amount Requested: $ Total Project Cost: $

**VisitErie Tourism Matching Funds for Cooperative Marketing cont.**

**Narrative**

* 1. **Target Market**What geographic markets would your program target*? (Example: Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Eastern Ohio, Ashtabula, Western New York, Jamestown, Southern Ontario, Niagara Falls, Hamilton.)*
	2. **Regional Promotion**

How will your marketing/advertising program promote Erie County as a destination to bring more overnight or daytrip visitors to the region?

* 1. **Program Goals**What do you hope to accomplish? Please be as specific as possible and use numbers whenever possible. (Example; “generate 1000 additional room nights”, “increase paid admissions by 40%”, “increase number of packages sold by 500”.)
	2. **Program**How will you spend the money to achieve your goals? Explain the elements of your program.
	(Example: ad creation, advertising, media plan/placement, program activities, public relations activities).
	3. **Timetable**Provide a timetable for the proposed program including anticipated start and end dates.

**Budget**

Provide a total revenue and expense budget. Include your sources for all revenue/co-op partner contributions and the amount you are requesting from VisitErie. Include your projected expenses and supporting documents to justify your projected costs. Total production costs should not exceed 20% of the budget, examples: ad design, radio and TV commercial production etc. At least 80% of the expenses should be designated for promotion. Your total program budget may exceed the amount of your eligible request; however, VisitErie will only match up to $15,000.

**VisitErie Tourism Matching Funds for Cooperative Marketing**

***Review Criteria:***

*The form below is used by the Matching Funds Review Panel to score each application. VisitErie has included this Matching Fund Review Criteria and Assessment Scoring form for sample purposes only. Upon receipt of the application VisitErie first does an internal check to assure the applicants and the applications are complete and adhere to the criteria. If any adjustments are needed VisitErie contacts the applicant so adjustments can be made to the application prior to panel review. Poor scores may result in no matching funds awarded to the applicant.*

***Matching Fund Review Criteria and Assessment Scoring – SAMPLE***

Program Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Review committee partner: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Priority should be considered for applications that:

* + Best complement VisitErie’s marketing plan.
	+ Have the potential to generate the greatest overnight business.
	+ Have the potential to generate off-peak business (e.g., midweek, non-holiday, and off season, e.g., Jan-April business).
	+ Impact the greatest number of tourism -related businesses.
	+ Are ready for implementation.

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| **PROGRAM CRITERIA** | **Excellent: 21-30 points** | **Average:** **11-20 points** | **Weak:** **0-10 points** |
| **TARGET MARKET** Clearly identifies target audience outside of Erie County. | . |  |  |
| **REGIONAL PROMOTION** Clearly defines how program brings more overnight or daytrip visitors. |  |  |  |
| **PROGRAM GOALS** Clearly identified and specific. Includes an explanation of how data will be gathered and measured |  |  |  |
| **PROGRAM** Clear and specific explanation of all elements with details (ad creation, advertising, media plan/placement, program activities, public relations activities). |  |  |  |
| **TIMETABLE CLEAR** and specific on when program begins and ends within VisitErie’s deadlines |  |  |  |
| **BUDGET** Accurate, itemized and realistic budget that reflects what is discussed in the narrative with at least 80% devoted to marketing, 20% maximum to production. |  |  |  |
| **Sub Total Points** |  |  |  |
| **Total Points** |  |