

VISIT MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST



MARKETING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - POLICIES & PROCEDURES

WHAT DOES THE MARKETING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DO?

The Marketing Assistance Program is a matching grant program that is designed to stimulate well-defined tourism-oriented events or projects, by offering an up-to 50% match for applicable advertising efforts, to potential visitors outside of the six-county area (Harrison, Hancock, Jackson, Stone, George, and Pearl River counties). These funds are to assist qualified organizations with advertising of their event/project, striving to directly increase visitor spending, overnight stays, revenue, and jobs. The program is intended to help ensure success and encourage growth toward self-sufficiency. Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast reserves the right to decide on a per-application basis on which and to what degree they provide assistance.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Any for-profit or not-for-profit organization organizing an event in tri-county area, (Jackson, Harrison, Hancock).
- Those that have or will receive funding from any other tourism, economic development or governmental agency may not be eligible or benefits may be reduced.

WHAT ADVERTISING EFFORTS ARE CONSIDERED APPLICABLE?

First and foremost, the advertising must take place outside the before-mentioned six-county area.

Advertising through mass media:

- Radio
- TV
- Internet
- Print
- Direct Marketing (email, mail, telemarketing)
- Outdoor

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

STEP 1 - Schedule an individual meeting with the Marketing Director to determine eligibility.

STEP 2 - Fill out an application, including all needed proposed bids, tools of measurement and your anticipated advertising plan, including estimates, rough copy, mock-ups and comps.

STEP 3 - Turn in the completed application along with all required supplemental materials, a minimum of (6) months prior to project/event start date.

STEP 4 - Within approximately 45 days of submitting application, you will be contacted by the Marketing Director informing you if and to what degree Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast has approved advertising of your program/event.

STEP 5 - All funded projects/events must contain the following phrase, visible to the public:

- “This (project or event) is partially funded by “Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast”
- Also, all advertising and promotional material must include the Mississippi Gulf Coast Regional CVB logo and website URL, <http://www.gulfcoast.org>.

STEP 6 - During project/event, organizers must do one of the following:

- Survey a percentage of attendees on-site, using a form provided by Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast.
- Collect a percentage of attendee email addresses and Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast will survey attendees through an online program.

STEP 7 - When the approved project/event is completed, you will receive a checklist of items required for the final report. You will have 60 days to submit the final report for reimbursement. If the report is not submitted within the 60 days to, Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast, the agreement with your organization is considered null and void.

ALSO IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

- Partial pre-payment of up to 50% of the total approved funding can be issued against paid invoices for contracted media purposes.
- Previously awarded applicants can reapply the following year. To be considered for future funding, all previous requirements must have been met, including trackable and verifiable financial and attendance results from the prior year funded and survey results.
- The maximum amount that can be awarded per application is \$25,000.
- If your event/project is not awarded a Marketing Assistance Matching Grant, Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast, will work with you to provide potential marketing support through our existing media plan and resources.

CHECKLIST FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATION PACKET:

- Completed application submitted no less than 6 months prior to the event start date.
- Summary of budget/expenses for entire event.
- Detailed budget of how requested funds will be used, including media schedule and expected reach. Schedule should be broken in categories by advertising medium and market.
- Description of how requested funding will be used to expand pre-existing events.
- Event plan to include the following:
 - Past experience (if event is one with past performance, provide budget and actual data for each of the last 3 years)
 - Market analysis
 - Marketing Plan
 - Planned method of measuring the success of the event and the economic impact created by funding requested
- Summary of management and key event coordinators' past tourism and/or event experience.
- Current financial statement and 3-Year financial projection/forecast including projection of financial impact to be created by requested funding and assumptions used.

Completed application packets can be submitted one of the following ways:

EMAIL - karen@gulfcoast.org

MAIL - 2350 Beach Blvd., Suite A, Biloxi, MS, 39531