



**CALIFORNIA PANDEMIC RECOVERY
TOURISM GRANT GUIDELINES**

October 2022

[Industry.visitcalifornia.com](https://industry.visitcalifornia.com)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Visit California is a 501(c)6 nonprofit organization formed in 1996 to market California as a desirable tourism destination. Our mission is to develop and maintain marketing programs – in partnership with the state’s travel industry – that inspire travel to, and within, California.

Visit California promotes and markets California as a premier tourist destination. From the mountains to the beaches, the redwoods to the deserts, and from our metropolitan cities to our unique small towns, we strive to inspire travel to this amazing state, one visitor at a time.

Visitors traveling throughout and to California represent an essential component of the state’s economy. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic brought economic disruption to the travel, tourism, and recreation industry. The purpose of this request for proposals is to encourage counties whose tourism industry has been the most severely harmed by the pandemic to detail their losses and the impact on their communities. Visit California encourages counties/DMOs that have been the hardest hit destinations by the pandemic to apply for federal EDA funding to speed economic recovery. The program prioritizes funding for counties with the greatest number of impacted businesses that could use additional tourism marketing dollars to provide the broadest benefit.

Grant applications must be submitted to Visit California to be considered for funding. Applicants must describe the economic impacts of the pandemic on tourism, detail how additional funding would be used to mitigate those impacts and explain the expected benefits of those programs on the area’s tourism economy.

Program Funding

As part of the American Rescue plan signed by President Biden in March 2021, investments were included to build more equitable, competitive, and resilient local economies. Through the Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation program, the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) is focused on accelerating the recovery of communities that rely on the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors.

Funding for the project described in this RFP has been awarded under Federal Grant Award 07-79-07802 by the EDA under §703 and 209 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3149 and 3233. As a result, any vendors awarded contracts under this RFP must be willing to abide by all required provisions of federal laws and regulations, including without limitation 2 CFR §§200.326 and 200.327. Applicants submitting proposals are strongly encouraged to consult with their legal counsel to determine how federal contracting rules might relate to their application or the ability to perform under agreements potentially executed thereafter. The total funding available for this program is \$20,000,000. Funding will be reimbursed upon submission of receipts and backup documents per terms of the grant agreement.

II. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Applicant Eligibility

An EDA approved Spend/Economic Loss Index to evaluate impacts among the state's 58 counties has been developed. The model uses two inputs, both derived from the California Travel & Tourism Commission's annual economic impact report prepared by Dean Runyan Associates:

1. 2019 Total Direct Spending (to establish pre-pandemic size of tourism economy as determined by visitor spending)
2. 2021 Total Direct Spending minus 2019 Total Direct Spending (pandemic-related change in visitor spending)

The Spend/Economic Loss Index will be used to determine award eligibility. Each county's score is listed below.

Visit California holds the right to approve or deny any or all applications for funding.

County	Spend/ Economic Loss Index Score
Alameda	13
Alpine	0
Amador	0
Butte	1
Calaveras	0
Colusa	0
Contra Costa	6
Del Norte	0
El Dorado	2
Fresno	3
Glenn	0
Humboldt	1
Imperial	1
Inyo	1
Kern	3
Kings	0
Lake	0
Lassen	0
Los Angeles	100
Madera	1
Marin	3
Mariposa	1
Mendocino	1
Merced	1
Modoc	0
Mono	1
Monterey	8
Napa	4
Nevada	1

County	Spend/ Economic Loss Index Score
Orange	37
Placer	3
Plumas	0
Riverside	15
Sacramento	12
San Benito	0
San Bernardino	11
San Diego	38
San Francisco	52
San Joaquin	2
San Luis Obispo	4
San Mateo	15
Santa Barbara	5
Santa Clara	25
Santa Cruz	3
Shasta	1
Sierra	0
Siskiyou	0
Solano	2
Sonoma	4
Stanislaus	2
Sutter	0
Tehama	0
Trinity	0
Tulare	1
Tuolumne	1
Ventura	4
Yolo	1
Yuba	0

Counties with scores in the first, second and third quartile are eligible for a grant. Counties with scores in the bottom quartile are not eligible.

Spend/Economic Loss Score	Quartile	Award Eligibility
76-100	1	Up to \$7.5 million
51-75	2	Up to \$5.5 million
26-50	3	Up to \$3.5 million
1-25	4	Not eligible

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a grant award from Visit California under this program, proposals must meet all the following criteria:

1. Applicants must be a not-for-profit or nonprofit organization located in a California county with a Spend/Economic Loss Score of 26 or higher.
2. Only one application per region will be accepted. Multiple proposers are recommended to partner together for one submission.
3. Proposals must demonstrate the ability to develop and execute programs that benefit and feature tourism in the entire county in which they are located.
4. Proposed programs must demonstrate support for the economic recovery of the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors.
5. Applicants agree to feature a Visit California executive in a general session keynote speech at their annual tourism conference. If the winner does not plan to host an annual conference, they must create an ad hoc business roundtable featuring Visit California. The content of the speech or roundtable is intended to drive community engagement and detail the strategy behind programs funded with the subgrant.
6. Applicants agree to feature Visit California's consumer logo and consumer website link (visitcalifornia.com) prominently on the home page, header or footer of their consumer website(s).
7. No grant funds shall be used for construction projects.
8. Applicants must register in the System for Award Management to receive a unique entity number. You can register at <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.
9. **Individuals and for-profit entities are not eligible to receive subawards.**

Please see Appendix I for a flowchart to see if you qualify.

Ineligible Projects

Examples of ineligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Grants to service or repay loans
- Construction projects
- Projects dictated by a legal settlement or mandated to address a violation of, or an order (citation) to comply with, a law or regulation
- Any projects that do not meet the program priorities described in these guidelines

This list is not exhaustive and is offered only as guidance to potential applicants. Visit California will make determinations of eligibility on a project-by-project basis. If an applicant has questions about the eligibility of their project, they should contact rfps@visitcalifornia.com.

Eligible Costs

Direct Project Costs

Direct Project Costs include all expenses directly related to the project, including staff time. For project costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the costs must be within the scope of the project, supported by appropriate documentation, and completed by the required deadline, as identified in the grant agreement. All costs must be identified in the grant agreement's project budget to be eligible for reimbursement.

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are shared overhead expenses rather than direct costs. Administrative costs may not exceed 10 percent of the project's direct cost. In the event of an audit, projects with budgets that include administrative costs must be able to document the appropriateness of these expenses. Visit California strongly recommends that recipients consult with an accounting professional to develop an appropriate method for calculating the overhead rate.

Ineligible Costs

All costs must be allowable, reasonable, and allocable. Examples of ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing or increasing a legal defense fund or endowment
- Monetary donations to other organizations
- Alcoholic beverages and tobacco products
- Travel costs in excess of standard GSA rates ([Per Diem Rates | GSA](#))
- Costs associated with fundraising
- Grant writing expenses
- Any expenses incurred before a grant agreement is executed or after the project completion deadline, as identified in the grant agreement

Additional Considerations

Period of Performance

Recipients of this grant must complete all grant funded activities between 1/1/23 – 12/31/23. Any unspent funds at the end of the period of performance will be reallocated by VCA. There will be no extensions to this period of performance.

Noncompliance

Recipients of this grant must abide by all federal rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, procurement and reporting as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200. In order to familiarize yourself with procurement standards, visit www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200. If the Recipient of this grant fails to comply, Visit California may remedy the noncompliance as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.339. Possible remedies include, but are not limited to, withholding disbursements, or terminating the award.

Record retention

Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to this award must be retained for three years from the submission date of the final expenditure report.

Procurement

The Recipient agrees that all procurement transactions shall be in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317–200.327.

Travel Costs

Travel costs, if in an approved subgrant budget, must follow federal lodging and per diem rates as outlined in the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website for the location of travel. Travel costs must adhere to the Federal Travel Regulations as outlined in 41 C.F.R.

Reimbursements

This is a cost reimbursement grant. Funding will not be awarded in advance. Subrecipients will be reimbursed for cost incurred upon submission of receipts and backup documentation.

Examples of these documents include but are not limited to:

- Procurement Records
- Contracts
- Purchase Orders
- Invoices
- Proof of Payment

Supplanting of Funds

The applicant can use the award to supplement rather than supplant funds otherwise available. These funds should not be used for existing funded projects or staff time.

Any additional requirements or restrictions will be communicated through updated program guidance documents.

Grant Awards and Agreements

Visit California will draft individual grant agreements with detailed requirements and provisions specific to that award. All awarded grants will have the following provisions:

- Federal grant requirements.
- Administrative costs are limited to no more than 10 percent of the actual direct project costs.
- Grant-eligible costs may be incurred by the recipient only after the recipient has entered into a fully executed agreement with Visit California and must adhere to the period of performance.
- All recipients will be required to provide regular progress reports and a final report for the entire project timeline as described in the reports and performance measures sections below.
- Grant funds must be spent per the approved grant budget. Budget amendment requests will not be allowed.

Performance Measures

Performance measures and reports are used to track progress toward project goals and desired outcomes, as well as report financial data. They provide a means of reliably measuring and reporting the outcomes and effectiveness of a project. The recipient will report on program performance measures and program outcomes in such form and at such intervals as may be prescribed by Visit California in compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 and the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010.

Two performance questionnaires will be sent out to recipients:

1. Program Outputs Questionnaire
2. Annual Capacity Outcomes Questionnaire

Reporting

Progress reports

Progress reports for all projects will be done semiannually per the terms of the grant agreement. Reports shall be in a clear format, not exceeding six pages, and shall:

- v. Provide a concise overview of the activities undertaken during the semi-annual reporting period;
- ii. Document accomplishments, benefits, and impacts of the project. The Recipient should identify activities that have led to specific outcomes that had a positive influence on economic development;
- v. Identify any upcoming or potential press events or opportunities for collaborative press engagements to highlight the benefits of the investment;
- iv. Compare progress on the project with the targeted schedule, explaining any departures, identifying how those departures will be remedied, and projecting the course of work for the next semi-annual reporting period;

- v. Outline challenges impeding, or that may impede progress on the project over the next semi-annual reporting period and identify ways to address those challenges;
- vi. Outline any areas in which assistance is needed to support the project; and
- vii. Provide any other information that would be helpful for Visit California to know.

Final Project Report

A final project report will be done at the end of the project. This report should concisely communicate key project information and should:

- v. Provide a high-level overview of the activities undertaken;
- ii. Explain how the project activities have responded to the coronavirus pandemic and advanced economic development;
- v. Document the expected and actual economic benefits of the project as of the time the report is written;
- iv. Detail lessons learned during the project that may be of assistance to Visit California or other communities undertaking similar efforts; and
- v. Provide any other information necessary to understand the project and its impacts.

Financial reports

Financial reports for all projects will be done semiannually per the terms of the grant agreement. This report should include, but is not limited to, direct costs, indirect costs, amount disbursed, and cash on hand. A final financial report must also be submitted no later than 60 days after project completion.

All reports may be posted on EDA's and Visit California's websites at their discretion.

III. EVALUATION PROCESS

Evaluation Process

All grant Proposals will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility following submission. Any proposal determined to be incomplete and/or ineligible may not be considered for funding. Visit California holds the right to approve or deny any or all applications for funding.

After a submitted Proposal is determined to be complete and eligible, Visit California will initiate the following evaluation process:

1. Proposals will be reviewed by the Evaluation Team.
2. Proposals scoring 80 or more points may be eligible for a recommendation for award.
3. After completing the evaluation process, the Recipient will be notified of the award.

Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Team will score the proposals based on the evaluation criteria described below. Submissions scoring 80 or more points may be eligible for a recommendation for award:

1. Project Design and Budget (30)

Clarity on the project goals, tasks, deliverables, schedule, purpose and budget. Are the proposed deliverables appropriate for the project? Is the budget adequate and reasonable to complete the project, with costs clearly defined and supported?

2. Statistics (20)

The narrative clearly shows the economic impact of the pandemic and provides examples of the areas hardest hit by the pandemic. The narrative includes all requirements as stated in section 1 of the Content and Form of Application Submission section below.

3. Expected Benefits (20)

Explanation of the expected benefits of these plans on the area's tourism economy.

4. Likelihood of Success (30)

The degree to which the project is ready to proceed promptly and can meet funding expenditure requirements. Does the applicant have the necessary experience, sufficient capacity, and a successful track record implementing and maintaining similar projects? Are all funds secured, or is there a plan in place to obtain funding to complete the planning or implementation project?

IV. APPLICATION & SUBMISSION PROCESS

Address to Request Application Package

The application template, forms, and resource materials will be available at <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/request-for-proposals>. Application packages may also be requested in writing and mailed to 555 Capitol Mall #1100, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Application forms will be available on Visit California's website. Applications should be no more than 6 pages long. Applications should include the following:

1. Supply a narrative of no more than 2 pages that describes how the pandemic decreased visitor spending and the subsequent impact on tax revenue in the county.
 1. Detail the importance of tourism on brick-and-mortar retail in the county.
 2. Provide documentation of the impact on the hospitality industry, including:
 - a. Business closures
 - b. Accommodations Key Performance Indicators, including occupancy, ADR and RevPAR
2. Supply a narrative of no more than 2 pages of the proposed programs to be carried out with the funds, including marketing and non-marketing plans to mitigate the pandemic impacts.
 1. Detail how funds will be used across the county to uplift all sectors of tourism.
 2. Describe how these programs will accelerate tourism's recovery in the county.
 3. Create a timeline for how funds will be spent.

Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by December 2, 2022, at 5:00PM PST. No late submissions will be considered. Should your application be awarded funding, you will receive an email at the email address provided. Should no email address be provided, a notice will be sent to the address provided on the application.

The tentative timeline is as follows:

DEADLINE	EVENT
10/31/2022	Grant announcement (documents will be posted on industry.visitcalifornia.com)
12/2/2022, 5:00PM PST	Applications due
12/5/22-12/9/2022	Applications will be scored
12/12/2022	Selected applications will be submitted to EDA for approval
1/6/2023	Selected application will be notified of award

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Visit California.

Funding Restrictions

No construction projects shall be funded through this grant. Please see the ineligible costs section included in these guidelines. All other federal procurement rules and regulations apply as stated in Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317–200.327.

Other Submission Requirements

Applicants must also submit the following forms, which can be found on Visit California’s website:

- Pre-award questionnaire

Appeals Process

Applicants are allowed to appeal program decisions related to the following activity:

- A program assistance award determination.

A written appeal must be provided to Visit California within 15 days of award notifications. Appeals can be submitted by email to rfps@visitcalifornia.com or via postal mail to the following address:

Visit California
555 Capitol Mall #1100
Sacramento, CA 95814

V. APPENDIX I- SUBGRANT ELIGIBILITY FLOWCHART

EDA SUBGRANT ELIGIBILITY

