



## **DISCOVER BEDFORD COUNTY**

### **2026 Cooperative Marketing Grant Program & Tourism Growth Initiative (TGI) Grant Guidelines for January 1 – December 31, 2026**

---

#### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Discover Bedford County is committed to strengthening the region's tourism economy by track grant structure in 2026, we aim to boost visitation, elevate the visitor experience, and support the development of tourism-focused assets throughout the county.

#### **The 2026 program includes:**

##### **Cooperative Marketing Grant Program**

*January 1 – December 31, 2026*

Matching marketing funds for non-profit attractions, tourism events, and promotional campaigns.

##### **Tourism Growth Initiative (TGI)**

*July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027*

Competitive grants for larger marketing projects and destination development.

**Following the 2026 program year, the Cooperative Marketing Grant Program will be fully absorbed into the Tourism Growth Initiative (TGI), creating a single, unified tourism investment program moving forward.**

Funding decisions are guided by Discover Bedford County's 2025–2030 Strategic Tourism Development Plan and comply with the Pennsylvania Tourism Promotion Act.

---

## PROGRAM GOALS

Grants will be awarded to projects that meet the following objectives:

1. Generate measurable economic and tourism impact in Bedford County
2. Strengthen regional perception and awareness of Bedford County as a destination
3. Deliver clear, complete, and well-executed applications
4. Support overnight visitation and off-peak travel growth

---

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE & TIMELINE

PROGRAM PHASE	APPLICATION DEADLINE	FUNDING PERIOD	TOTAL AVAILABLE
Cooperative Marketing Grant	January 5, 2026	January 1 – December 31, 2026	\$50,000
Tourism Growth Initiative (TGI)	June 1, 2026	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	\$100,000

---

## ELIGIBILITY

**Applicants must:**

- Be a non-profit organization or municipality located in Bedford County
- Propose a tourism-related project, event, or initiative that targets visitors from outside the county
- Have an active Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
- Be in good standing with any prior Discover Bedford County grant obligations

---

## ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Cooperative Marketing Grant

- Paid media placements (print, radio, TV, digital, social media)

- Brochures, rack cards, event flyers
- Boosted social media content or paid campaigns
- Website and email advertising related to visitor outreach

Tourism Growth Initiative (TGI)

Includes all the above, plus:

- Signage or wayfinding for tourism assets
- Capital enhancements tied to visitor experience
- Video and photo production for destination marketing
- Digital tools (QR codes, self-guided tour platforms, apps)

## INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Operating costs (staff time, rent, utilities)
- Promotional merchandise (hats, mugs, etc.)
- Internal communications or membership lists
- Volunteer hours or in-house labor as an in-kind match
- Advertising that includes political, religious, or membership-driven content

## MATCH REQUIREMENTS

PROGRAM	REQUIRED MATCH	ELIGIBLE MATCH TYPES
Cooperative Marketing	50% cash match	Sponsorships, applicant funding
Tourism Growth Initiative	25% cash or in-kind match	Donated services, venue space, materials

Note: In-kind contributions must be formally documented and valued. Staff time and volunteer hours are not eligible.

## BRANDING & ACKNOWLEDGMENT REQUIREMENTS

All funded materials must follow Discover Bedford County’s brand guidelines and include the proper credit.

## Required Branding

- Print & digital ads: Clearly display the Discover Bedford County logo
- Radio: Must include the tagline:  
“Promotion in cooperation with Discover Bedford County.”
- TV/Video: Logo must appear on screen for a minimum of 3 seconds
- Social media: Follow logo placement and sizing rules. Avoid watermarks; use corner branding with the keystone mark if necessary

## Required Public Acknowledgment

“Funding provided through a grant made possible by Discover Bedford County.”

Logos and brand assets can be downloaded here:

[www.discoverbedfordcounty.com/grants/branding](http://www.discoverbedfordcounty.com/grants/branding)

---

## APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by the Tourism Grant Review Panel (TGRP), consisting of:

- One Discover Bedford County staff representative (non-voting)
- Two tourism-sector professionals
- One Bedford County hotelier (appointed by the Board)
- One at-large community member

Panelists will recuse themselves from any application with which they have a conflict of interest.

## Evaluation Criteria

- Tourism impact/room night generation – 30%
- Project clarity and execution – 25%
- Regional marketing reach – 20%
- Financial structure and match readiness – 15%
- Innovation or long-term impact – 10%

---

## REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

All awards are reimbursed after successful completion of the funded project. To receive payment, grantees must submit:

- Final marketing proofs or documentation (with Discover Bedford County branding)
- Paid invoices and receipts
- Completed final report

---

## FINAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

Final reports are due within 90 days of project completion, and no later than:

- Cooperative Marketing Grant: **March 31, 2027**
- Tourism Growth Initiative: **October 1, 2027**

### Reports must include:

- Narrative summary of outcomes
- Copies of funded ads, printed pieces, or media
- Metrics (media impressions, estimated visitation, reach)
- Estimated tourism impact (overnight stays, repeat visits, etc.)
- Itemized expense breakdown using the provided spreadsheet
- Supporting receipts and financial documentation

Final reports must be submitted through the template available at:

[www.discoverbedfordcounty.com/grants/report](http://www.discoverbedfordcounty.com/grants/report)

---

## ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Prior grantees must have submitted an approved final report before applying again.
- Discover Bedford County reserves the right to withhold or carry forward unused funds if proposals do not meet program standards.
- Grants are not guaranteed year to year and should not be considered recurring revenue.