

## **Support Inclusion of C-6 Non-Profits Like Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) Like Hamilton County Tourism In the Next Phase of Federal COVID-19 Pandemic Relief**

Hamilton County tourism industry will likely suffer up to a 50% loss in visitor spending in 2020 due to the pandemic. That means up to \$500 million fewer dollars spent at local restaurants, attractions, entertainment, lodging and stores this year.

*This is as if each household in Hamilton County reduced its local spending by \$4,000 this year above and beyond what it has already cut due to economic conditions caused by the pandemic.*

Hamilton County Tourism, Inc., the county's destination marketing and management agency, will see a 48% decline in lodging tax revenues – dollars that fund its operations. HCT cut its staff by almost 40%, cut its budget by almost 40% and will deeply into its operating reserves this year.

None of the original first three phases of the CARES Relief act legislation included destination management organizations or organizations with a 501-c-6 (non-profit association) status.

- The only relief it has received is the \$10,000 Small Business Administration grant. Associations were not eligible for the SBA's loan program.
- The first two Payroll Protection Programs (PPPs) that allowed for-profit businesses and charitable non-profits to receive up to 8 weeks of overhead and payroll reimbursements through a 75% forgivable loan, did not apply to Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.

However, the U.S. Senate's HEALS Act released July 27 does include non-profit associations in PPP legislation along with our colleagues at local chambers of commerce.

As the US House of Representatives and Senate begin working on Phase 4 of the pandemic relief/economic stimulus package, it is important that Hamilton County's community and local leaders support inclusion of destination managers like Hamilton County Tourism and our local chambers of commerce in that legislation.

### **Why Support inclusion of Hamilton County Tourism into the Next Legislation?**

- The county's eventual recovery will depend on a vibrant tourism market, the sixth largest industry in Hamilton County.
- Hamilton County's tourism industry is the third largest in the state as measured by visitor spending.
- Hamilton County's tourism industry supports work for almost 10,000 county and central Indiana residents – with almost 4,000 of them currently unemployed due to the pandemic.
- It will likely take more than two years for the tourism market to fully recover, which means the ability to promote and market the county post-pandemic will be critically important, and Hamilton County Tourism must be ready.
- Throughout the pandemic, Hamilton County Tourism has served as a local resource for the hospitality industry partners and county government. Its marketing and communications skills will not only help with economic recovery, those skills also will help our community recover.

- Hamilton County Tourism serves as the management association for Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation – Invest! Hamilton County. HCEDC has partnered with the local chambers of commerce and HCWin to support workforce recovery throughout the pandemic.
- Hamilton County Tourism operates the Hamilton County Sports Authority office supporting the recovery of youth and family sports and stimulating local business from tournament travel. This is the group market most likely to recover first, and we need to be ready.
- Hamilton County annually commits 20% of its budget to operating and debt service support for more than 50 non-profit organizations in our community – non-profits hit hard by the pandemic. We want to begin supporting these organizations again as quickly as possible.

### **How Can You Help?**

#### **Email Our Congressional Representatives**

Take a moment and send emails to your Congressional representatives with the following message or your own words:

*Hamilton County's local economy depends on a healthy tourism agency. Hamilton County Tourism provides marketing and communications support, hundreds of thousands of dollars in much-needed local grant support to non-profits and supports our county's government in communicating important messaging. Please include 501-c-6 non-profit associations in your next round of pandemic relief funding to ensure our valuable destination management and marketing team can help our community in economic recovery.*

You can find their contact portals by googling:

**Representative Susan Brooks, Indiana's 5<sup>th</sup> District**  
**Senator Todd Yung**  
**Senator Mike Braun**

For more information, contact:

**Brenda Myers, President/CEO**  
**Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.**  
[bmyers@hamiltoncountytourism.com](mailto:bmyers@hamiltoncountytourism.com)

or check out:

**VisitHamiltonCounty.com/Industry**  
**US Travel.org**

Thank you for your support.