

A gravel path leads into a forest. In the foreground, three large, smooth, light-colored rocks are stacked vertically on the left side of the path. The background is filled with tall, thin trees and dense green foliage.

# LIVCO

LIVINGSTON COUNTY  
— NEW YORK —

## **Visit LivCo** **Small Business Digital** **Marketing Grant**

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2024 Program Guidelines

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# Visit LivCo

## Small Business Digital Marketing Grant

**Intended Use:** Help businesses gain a stronger position online

**Accepting Applications:** Starting Monday, February 12th, 2024

**Applications Due:** Friday, April 19th, 2024

**Minimum Request:** \$1,500

**Maximum Request:** \$10,000

**Funding Match:** Up to 50% of eligible projects

### Program Description

The Small Business Digital Marketing Grant is offered by Visit LivCo, the official tourism promotion agency for Livingston County. The mission of Visit LivCo is to drive economic growth through travel and increase the annual visitors and number of overnights in the county. This grant opportunity is offered to business owners who desire to make improvements to the digital presentation of their business.

This grant program is funded by Livingston County Tourism and is not intended to be a sustainable source of funds.

### Who is Eligible?

To be eligible the business must:

- Be located within Livingston County, NY. A business owner with multiple businesses may apply for funds to improve each business.
- Be a business focused on:
  - Activities / Attractions / Tours / Guides
  - Dining
  - Event
  - Lodging
  - Retail
- Have fewer than 20 FTE employees at the time of applying for the grant.
- Show how the digital technology or service purchased will enhance the digital capabilities of the business and help them to be more competitive.

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## What is Eligible?

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- Funds are intended for future work to be performed.
- Eligible grant expenses may include improvement of business website, digital marketing advertising, e-commerce development costs (receiving payments or selling online), social media management, digital planning and advice/training.
  - Approved marketing grant funding expenditures include hiring vendors or agencies to conduct PR, marketing, advertising or digital campaigns, video or website production costs, external marketing, or public relations efforts.
  - Only business-related projects and social media platforms will be considered, not personal/owner accounts.
- Minimum spend of \$500/month for 3 months (\$1,500 minimum spend total) for projects and campaigns running through 12/31/2024.
- Ineligible grant expenses include:
  - Billboards, direct mail, print ads, radio ads, classified ads, hardware expenses (e.g., laptops or tablets).
  - Purchase of any items or services unrelated to the approved marketing grant activities.

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## Application Process

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- Submit grant application via [Google Forms](#)
  - Include uploads of the following items
    - “Before” screenshots/images if the project includes improvement to existing online presence
    - Estimates for proposed work
- All questions regarding this program should be submitted via email to [info@visitlivco.com](mailto:info@visitlivco.com) with the subject “Digital Marketing Grant Program”
- Starting Monday April 22, Visit LivCo will review all applications and presents recommendations to the Visit LivCo Board. The Board makes the final decision for the award of grants. Grant applicants are notified of the grant awards by May 3, 2024.

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## Evaluation Criteria

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This is a highly competitive process and applications will be reviewed and scored on rigorous criteria. Not all applications may be awarded funding fully or partially. Applications and requests for grant funding are approved at the sole discretion of Visit LivCo. We subjectively evaluate applications on the following criteria:

- **REACH**—Reach refers to the ability to engage a larger percentage of audiences.
- **BRAND AWARENESS**—Brand awareness involves how prominently and frequently your brand will be displayed during the proposed grant activities. Examples of brand awareness may include developing advertisements, videos, promotional items, or brochures that incorporate the official brand colors, logos, or emblem of your business.

- **GROWTH**—Growth refers to the extent to which the digital technology or service will enhance the digital capabilities of the business to make the business more competitive.
- **VALUE**—Visit LivCo will evaluate if the amount of grant funding requested seems appropriate for the proposed grant activities. Please send quotes or budget estimates with your application for consideration whenever possible.
- **FEASIBILITY**—Does the business have a detailed execution plan with clear deliverables, timelines, and measurable milestones for success? Does the business have its own marketing team/resource that will implement the program?

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## Commitment & Project Schedule

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- The applicant must agree to complete the project in a timely manner. Board approval of an application qualifies a project for reimbursement.
- The applicant has 30 days from the date of acceptance to retain services on the project. If services have not been obtained by that time, the applicant must notify Visit LivCo in writing of the delay.
- The project must be completed within 180 days of acceptance unless a time extension is approved. If the project will run past 180 days, the applicant must submit for a time extension in writing to Visit LivCo. This grant offering is not to be construed as a blanket offer of funds for any other project.
- Changing the application intent without Visit LivCo approval voids the agreement and leaves the applicant(s) liable for the cost of the project.

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## Post Report

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Within 30 days of the completion of the project, grant recipients must submit a detailed post report. Failure to submit a complete Post-Project Survey will result in disqualification for reimbursement.

Post reports consist of the following four sections

- **Project evaluation:** Provide a detailed overview of the completed grant-funded activities and if the goals of the project were achieved.
- **Project impact:** Share all relevant data from your grant activities. Data may include the number of new followers, audience impressions, website or social media visits, etc.
- **Project financials:** This is one of the most important elements of the post report, which requires a detailed accounting record of how the marketing grant funding was spent. All receipts and paid invoices must be submitted along with an itemized financial report in the provided accounting spreadsheet. In this section, you will also show evidence of the required 50% in matching funds.
- **Project creative:** Attach samples of any items produced with grant funds (i.e., links or screenshots of websites or social media content, proof of placement of digital advertising).

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# Reimbursement Procedures

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What is the 50% match?

- All marketing grant recipients must contribute a minimum of a 50% match to their grant award. The final post report must clearly document evidence of a 50% match.

How will I be reimbursed?

- Funds shall not be provided in advance of project completion or full payment for the project by the recipient. Once the applicant provides verification that the project has been completed and that all vendors have been paid in full, reimbursement will be processed.
  - To be eligible for progress draws (payments made for work completed up to a certain point based on specific milestones or stages of completion.), you must provide a written request for payment, including paid invoices including a canceled check/credit card statement, the amount requested, and any other information required by Visit LivCo.
- Applicants must document project expenditures and the required match to receive reimbursement. Proof of payment to the contractor/vendor is required in the form of an invoice and cancelled check or credit card statement. Cash payments are not an acceptable form of payment and cannot be reimbursed. Sales tax is not a reimbursable expense.
- Only those costs deemed to be reasonable and appropriate to complete the project which was approved and agreed upon will be reimbursed.

*Livingston County Tourism reserves the right to amend or change the Small Business Digital Marketing Grant Program, its rules or organization at any time without prior notice.*