

State partners with public and private entities to promote tourism

Written by By Holly Bradshaw Eakes Finance New Mexico
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New Mexico attracts more visitors every year, but the state wants to further boost tourism and related revenue by expanding on successful programs like New Mexico True and the Cooperative Marketing Program.

New Mexico True is a brand that businesses, governments and nonprofit organizations can use by partnering with the New Mexico Tourism Department. The partnership involves demonstrating how the organization expresses or evokes the state's distinctive landscapes, cultures, food, art or history.

The Co-Op program gives local nonprofits, municipalities and tribal governments a financial incentive to market what's uniquely New Mexican about their event or location, and even participate in existing advertising campaigns.

Through the Co-Op program, state money is leveraged with money from other public entities to amplify media buying power for all involved parties. Private businesses can contribute up to 50 percent of a public entity's total Co-Op investment.

The Tourism Department awards Co-Op funds every year, and the application cycle for fiscal year 2020 is scheduled to open this spring. Applicants must participate in a March 5 webinar that outlines the rules and provides tips for a successful application.

The two funding tracks are the Media Menu Program, which lets participants piggyback on the department's existing marketing relationships, and flex grants, which cover complementary marketing efforts. An organization can apply for both at once, but all marketing must conform to

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the New Mexico True Brand, and ads must be approved before release.

Successful applicants to the Media Menu Program may advertise on indoor and outdoor billboards, digital venues and publications, including some where the department already advertises, and split the cost 50-50 with the state.

Members of the Co-Op team collaborate with successful Media Menu applicants to create high-quality advertisements, videos and marketing collateral that is consistent with the New Mexico True brand. They negotiate with and pay vendors and place all orders.

Flex grants cover advertising or other costs for independent, though complementary marketing. For example, a grant might cover website development or exhibit fees and booth rental at a trade show that is not part of the Media Menu Program. Successful applicants pay all costs, provide proof of placement, report ad performance, and apply for reimbursement.

In fiscal year 2018, Co-Op partner governments, event organizers, MainStreet entities and industry associations contributed nearly \$380,000 to a total \$760,000 Media Menu Program expenditure. Their ads ran in the department's annual adventure guide; in magazines like *Texas Monthly*

, *Outside Magazine*

, and

New Mexico Magazine

; in digital ads on platforms like TripAdvisor and Expedia; and on billboards in New Mexico and Texas.

New Mexico Wine, the nonprofit winegrower's association, has participated in the Co-Op program for several years. One year it spent flex grant money to purchase wine glasses embossed with the New Mexico True logo.

"We have leveraged their matching funds to help propel our brands into the consumers' hands, with specialty glassware that has shelf life in consumers' homes," said Chris Goblet, the association's executive director. The association also leveraged funds to produce videos that showcase the country's oldest wine growing region in the country.

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The Tourism Department is available for one-on-one consultations throughout the year.

Send questions to coop.marketing@state.nm.us .

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