

LIFE
UTAH
ELEVATED

Cooperative Marketing Grant

Round 2026 Guidelines





Table of Contents

PREPARATION

1. Background
2. Eligible & Ineligible Applicants
3. Eligible & Ineligible Projects
4. Matching Funds
5. Deadlines

APPLICATION & SCORING

6. Application
7. Interview
8. Scoring Parameters & Process
9. Helpful Hints
10. Funding Decision

NEXT STEPS

11. Project Start and End Process
12. Grant Revisions & Memorandum of Understanding
13. Payment & Reporting
14. Final Report Requirements
15. Utah Logo Guidelines



PREPARATION

1. Background

Purpose - Utah's Cooperative Marketing Grant is a collaborative initiative designed to leverage both state and partner funding to enhance the visitor economy and increase tax revenue. The grant supports destinations and non-profits in maintaining or expanding their market position through strategic marketing efforts.

History - Established in 2005, Utah's Cooperative Marketing Grant has funded 1,147 applications with a total of \$69,655,365.46, boosting the state's brand to \$139,310,730.92 in marketing dollars. This program partners the Utah Office of Tourism (UOT) with local tourism organizations, Destination Marketing Organizations, convention and visitor bureaus and non-profit events, to enhance visitor spending through competitive match marketing grants.

New Tier 1 and Tier 2 Application Process - Due to application length and process, the Cooperative Marketing Grant is now split into two mutually exclusive categories based on the applying entity. This allows the application to be tailored specifically for Tier 1 applicants conducting area-wide marketing, versus Tier 2 applicants focusing on a specific attraction, event, or localized promotion.

2. Eligible & Ineligible Applicants

Please note that Tier 1 and Tier 2 are mutually exclusive; an entity can only qualify for one tier.

Tier 1: Eligible Applicants - Tier 1 is solely for entities doing area-wide marketing, including area wide event marketing. To qualify, applicants must be:

- Counties in Utah
- Non-profit Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)
- Ski Utah

Applicants must be exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 of the IRS Code for at least one year.

Tier 2: Eligible Applicants - Tier 2 is for non-profit entities or municipalities focused on promoting a tourism-based attraction or event. To qualify, applicants must be Utah-based:

- Attractions
- Events
- Cities
- Federally recognized tribes



Applicants must be exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 of the IRS Code for at least two years. Previous Cooperative Marketing applicants must be in good standing (all prior rounds completed, except the open round 2025).

Ineligible Applicants (Both Tiers) - For-profit events, for-profit attractions, for-profit organizations, and individuals are strictly ineligible and are kindly requested to refrain from applying. Out-of-state entities hosting in-state events are also excluded from this grant. Furthermore, eligible entities cannot act as fiscal agents for non-qualified groups.

TMPF Funds Available - \$4,064,560

2026 Funding Breakdown -

- **Tier 1:** \$3,414,560
- **Tier 2 capped at:** \$650,000

In-State vs. Out-of-State Marketing - To ensure the Cooperative Marketing Grant effectively drives out-of-state visitation while supporting local awareness, limits are placed on how much funding can be dedicated to in-state marketing based on your application tier.

- **Tier 1 (Counties, DMOs, & Ski Utah)** - Entities in Tier 1 can apply for up to \$215,000 for round 2026. They may apply 25% or \$50,000 TOTAL (whichever amount is greater) of their total project budget (Co-op Award + Exact Match) to in-state marketing efforts.
- **Tier 2 (Non-Profit Attractions, Non-Profit Events, Cities, & Tribes)** - Entities in Tier 2 can apply for up to \$100,000 for round 2026. They may apply 15% or \$35,000 TOTAL (whichever amount is greater) of their total project budget (Co-op Award + Exact Match) to in-state marketing efforts.

Expenses exceeding these in-state caps will reduce the total award amount and may negatively impact your score. All applicants are required to explicitly identify the amount of their total project dollars to be spent in-state versus out-of-state on their required Budget Worksheet and their final report. Please note: This classification is based strictly on the target market (the geographic location of the audience seeing the ad), not the physical location of the hired vendor or agency.

Partnering with DMOs & Notification of Intent - Non-profits, cities, and events are strongly encouraged to partner with their local DMO to be included in the DMO's overall grant request (if it fits within their strategy and they haven't already maxed their financial ask) or to be referred to other applicable grants. **For Tier 2 applicants, this collaboration requires a formal "Notification of Intent."** Tier 2 applicants must notify their local DMO (in the case of no tourism director a County Commission) of their application and will be required to upload proof of this communication in the Salesforce portal. See UOT's [partner directory](#) to find the contact information for all DMOs.



One Application per Organization - Effective 2025, each organization may submit only one Co-op application for funding consideration. However, joint applications involving two or more Co-op applicants will be permitted to submit an additional application. Organizations wishing to propose multiple marketing campaigns are strongly encouraged to consolidate them into a single "umbrella" proposal.

Note for joint applications: For applications involving multiple partners, the largest financial contributor must be the primary contact, and the qualified entity must match this contributor's amount. Partnership applications count toward each entity's funding cap.

3. Eligible & Ineligible Projects

Eligible Projects - With the Utah Cooperative Marketing Grant, applicants can select the type of marketing that best suits their area. All marketing projects funded with Co-op dollars plus the exact match must feature the official Utah-Life Elevated logo.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- **Digital Media:** PPC, email marketing, connected TV, banner ads, social media
- **Print:** Fliers, direct mail
- **Broadcast Media:** Spot and/or Cable TV & radio
- **Publications:** Magazines, newspapers, guides, playlists
- **Website:** Design or redesign and launch, updates, native content & photography (hosting is not eligible)
- **Out-of-Home:** Static and/or video ads on gas station TV, digital displays in venues, gas pump toppers, billboards, buses, posters
- **Postage:** Postage for new marketing reach only
- **Conventions:** Promoting attendance of the convention to visitors
- **Public Relations:** Agency fees, activation costs, and communication plans (excludes travel expenses)
- **Research:** For effective marketing
- **Trade Shows:** Registration for one or more staff and booth space rentals that broaden the applicant's market reach (justification must be provided in the scope of work).

CRITICAL REMINDER – Pre-Launch Branding Approval: Do *not* wait until the final report to submit your marketing collateral for review. All marketing collateral produced by the project **MUST** be submitted to [MARKETING COLLATERAL](#) and approved by UOT *prior to launching or printing* to the public. If materials are published without prior branding approval, UOT may deny funding for those specific items.



Examples of Ineligible Projects:

- Activities or materials which violate State or Federal laws
- Administrative costs (salaries, travel, food/beverages, lodging, gifts/awards, web hosting, memberships, or personal entertainment)
- Direct funding to acquire, construct, extend, or maintain a facility
- FAM Tours (travel, food/beverages, lodging, gifts, etc.)
- Interest, reduction of deficits, or loans
- Projects already in progress (contract must be signed before beginning the project)
- Scholarships, endowments, or cash awards
- Tangible personal property (office furnishings, art collections, etc.)
- Event equipment and supplies (hard costs like tents, awards, banners, swag, etc.)
- Sponsorships of any kind.

Expert Tip: The intent is to spend on marketing that *brings* visitors to your area, not the things they see or get once they have arrived. **Always run items through this lens before putting in the Co-op application.**

Note: if ineligible items are added in the application and/or final report your organization may be unable to collect the full final payment.

4. Matching Funds

The Cooperative Marketing Grant requires a **1:1 exact cash match** from the applicant. For every grant dollar requested, the applicant must provide an equal dollar amount in non-state cash funds. In-kind donations, trades, or services do not qualify as a cash match.

- **Tier 1 Maximum Grant Request:** \$215,000 per entity (*requires a \$215,000 cash match, for a \$430,000 total project budget*).
- **Tier 2 Maximum Grant Request:** \$100,000 per entity (*requires a \$100,000 cash match, for a \$100,000 total project budget*).

All funding requests from a single entity count towards their respective tier limit. Co-op funds cannot be matched with other state funds (including other UOT programs). *Note: The Utah Sports Commission is NOT an eligible funding partner.* Applicants must disclose their non-state matching funds. Financial commitment letters verifying the cash match must be signed and submitted on the contributor's letterhead. **For Tier 1 applicants, this letter of financial commitment must come directly from your County Commissioner or DMO financial officer.**



5. Deadlines

- **2026 Guidelines Released:** April 2026
- **Applicant Webinar:** April 14th, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. MT
- **Application Open:** May 6th, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. MT
- **Application Deadline:** June 10th, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. MT
- **Interviews:** July 27th-28th, 2026
- **Awards Announced:** August 14th, 2026
- **Grant Revisions Open:** August 17th, 2026
- **Grant Revisions Deadline:** September 4th, 2026
- **Contract Signature Deadline:** October 15th, 2026
- **Scope of Work Revisions:** October 13th, 2027
- **Final Day to Request Amendments/Extension:** February 26th, 2028
- **Final Report Deadline:** March 1st, 2028

APPLICATION & SCORING

6. Application

Applying Via the Salesforce Portal - The Cooperative Marketing Grant application process is hosted on Salesforce, aligning it with other GOEO grants.

- **Returning users** (e.g., Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant applicants) should use their existing login.
- **New users** should select "New User?" to create an account.
- **Portal Link:** goed.my.salesforce-sites.com/econ

The Campaign Overview - New this year, the required [Campaign Overview](#) (Tier 1 only) houses your core strategy in one place so you don't have to repeat answers throughout the application. This document provides a streamlined look at your vision and serves as the benchmark for evaluating your project's success during the final report phase. Two examples are provided in the application.

The Tri-View - The Tri-View is a pivotal tool designed to illuminate the interconnectedness of the grant process. It visually demonstrates how the grant guidelines, application questions, and evaluation scorecard work in unison. For applicants, the Tri-View is an invaluable asset for crafting compelling applications, enabling you to strategically allocate effort and maximize success by seeing exactly how responses are assessed.

ROI and Budget Worksheets - The (1) ROI Worksheet and (2) Budget Worksheet are required documents. Please note that **they are two separate file uploads** in the application portal. Both



must be completed in the UOT-provided format. Applicants must provide a detailed, comprehensive budget breakdown rather than single line items.

7. Interview

As part of the application process, applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in an interview with the Co-op Committee. The interview is designed to positively impact the applicant's score (offering up to 20 bonus points), clarify application details, and provide mentoring rather than focusing on a "wow" presentation.

How to Prepare - Applicants should prepare a five-minute overview of their application (assuming the Committee has already read it) followed by five minutes of Q&A regarding ROI, restrictions, or clarifications.

8. Scoring Parameters & Process

≥ 70% Requirement - Applications must receive a score of 70% or higher cumulative by the scoring committee to be eligible for funding.

Point System (120 Points Maximum)

- **Strategic Vision:** 40 points
- **Impact & Community:** 35 points
- **Financials & Compliance:** 15 points
- **Administration:** 10 points
- **Interview:** Up to 20 bonus points

Review Process

- **Additional Review:** Entities receiving substantial appropriations from the Utah State Legislature in the same year they apply for Co-op money are subject to additional review. Alert staff at uotgrants@utah.gov if this applies.

9. Helpful Hints

Start Early & Gather Required Attachments - Ensure you have the following documents ready before starting your application.

- **Required for ALL Applicants (Both Tiers):**
 - **General Marketing Plan:** A one-page summary of your organization's marketing strategy.



- **Two Separate Worksheets:** (1) The 2026 Project Budget Worksheet and (2) the ROI Worksheet.
- **Required for Tier 1 Applicants Only:**
 - **Campaign Overview:** A high-level deep dive into the specific project you are funding with this grant request template.
 - **Financial Audit/Balance Sheet**
 - **Letters of Financial Commitment** (Must be signed by Commissioner or Financial Officer).
 - **Letters of Project Support:** A minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 letters (max one page each). *Upload as one file in Salesforce.*
- **Required for Tier 2 Applicants Only:**
 - **Notification of Intent:** Proof of communication sent to your local DMO regarding this grant application.
 - **Letters of Project Support:** 2 to 3 letters from local stakeholders or municipal leaders (max one page each). *Upload as one file in Salesforce.*
 - **Organizational Documents:** List of Board Members, Organization Chart, Articles of Incorporation, and Bylaws (including mission statement and conflict of interest policy, if available).
 - **IRS Exemption Letter:** Official determination letter (if applying as a non-profit).
 - **Financial Statements:** Your organization's current financial statement and balance sheets.

Stay on Track

- Save often. Do not submit until 100% complete; changes cannot be made post-submission.
- **AI Usage:** The application will ask if you used Artificial Intelligence (AI) to draft your submission. Please answer honestly; this is strictly for UOT's internal data-gathering purposes and will **not** impact your score in any way. *Note: you will be asked to certify the application was thoroughly reviewed of all AI content to ensure answers are accurate.*
- **Leverage the Tri-View:** Understanding the scoring breakdown as you answer will help craft a stronger application.

10. Funding Decision

Award Announcement - The Board of Tourism Development's funding decision will be announced at the August board meeting.

No Guarantee of Funding - There is no guarantee that all applicants will be awarded funds. Limited funds may not allow all qualifying projects to receive assistance. All decisions regarding



awarding of funds are at the discretion of the Co-op Committee, Board of Tourism Development, and the UOT, and are final. The Committee reserves the right to adjust funding parameters based on available funds.

NEXT STEPS

11. Project Start and End Process - Project can begin as soon as the contract is signed. Projects must be completed before the final report deadline, March 1st 2028. (Unless and extension has been approved)

12. Grant Revisions & Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

If awarded less than the original requested amount, the applicant may be required to submit a statement adjusting their scope of work and budget. An MOU will then be issued. Upon UOT's receipt of the signed MOU, a contract number will be assigned with an ending date of March 1, 2028. Recipients are encouraged to submit their final report upon project completion rather than waiting for the deadline.

13. Payment & Reporting

Initial Payment - 50% of the award amount can be invoiced via Salesforce anytime **after the MOU is signed**.

Progress & Changes - If a recipient cannot complete the project as approved or needs scope changes, can be proposed until October 31, 2027 (uotgrants@utah.gov). The applicant must submit proposed modifications and a revised budget for approval. The awardee may move forward with project with a verbal (email) approval. But an amendment to the contract is still required so allow 2-3 weeks for final approval.

- If an applicant has a staff change in their organization it is the responsibility of the applicant to notify UOT of this update so information can be updated in Salesforce.
- The applicant is responsible for checking/reading all email throughout the project allowing for a smooth grant period.

Final Payment - The remaining 50% will be issued upon successful execution of the project and approval of the final report by UOT's Grants Specialist. Reports must be submitted in Salesforce by March 1, 2028. Failure to do so renders the recipient ineligible for future funding rounds until resolved.



14. Final Report Requirements

To close out your grant and receive the final reimbursement, recipients must complete the final report form in the Salesforce portal. Please be prepared to provide the following required documentation:

- **All Project Invoices:** You must submit copies of *all* invoices covering the entire project budget. This includes invoices for both the Co-op award amount AND your exact cash match amount.
- **Summary Sheet:** A summary of all provided invoices. The figures and line items on this summary sheet *must* directly match both the submitted invoices and your approved Budget Worksheet.
- **Updated ROI Worksheet:** The finalized return on investment worksheet reflecting your actual performance and metrics.

CRITICAL REMINDER – Pre-Launch Branding Approval: Do *not* wait until the final report to submit your marketing collateral for review. All marketing collateral produced by the project **MUST** be submitted to [SUMBIT HERE](#) and approved by UOT *prior to launching or printing* to the public. If materials are published without prior branding approval, UOT may deny funding for those specific items.

FINAL REPORT Allow up to 45 business days for your final report to be reviewed. *Note: We strongly encourage you to submit your final report early, ideally in January 2028. Beating the final deadline rush helps you avoid the heavy backlog of last-minute submissions, which often results in a much faster review process and a quicker final payment!*

16. Utah Logo Guidelines

The Cooperative Marketing Grant aims to promote both the recipient's project and Utah's brand. UOT's logos must be used in accordance with UOT's Brand Guidelines. Our logo can be requested at travel.utah.gov or [Logo Request Form](#)

- Drafts of all materials require UOT's approval (allow 5 business days) via [Submit Marketing Collateral](#)
- UOT may deny funding or logo use if content is deemed inappropriate or negative towards Utah.
- UOT reserves the right to use recipients' Co-op marketing collateral in its own marketing and communications.

All Projects - IMPORTANT All recipients must display the Utah-Life Elevated logo on their website, linking it to www.visitutah.com. It must be prominently placed and visible for the entire duration of the project. Nofollow links are not allowed.



- **Billboards:** Must display the logo at a size clearly readable to passing motorists. Specify location and dates.
- **Digital Ads:** Include the logo and a link to www.visitutah.com on the *landing page* linked to the digital ad. Screenshots of landing pages are required for approval.
- **Partner Logos:** Must be declared and approved. Logos representing alcohol, tobacco, or sexually-oriented products/services will not be permitted with the Utah logo.
- **Print and Publications:** All print ads must contain the logo. Size should be commensurate with the applicant's logo (minimum 1.25" in length). Specify publication name, ad size, reach, and dates.
- **Press Releases:** Must feature the state logo.
- **Radio Ads:** Must contain the credit line: *"Produced in cooperation with the Utah Office of Tourism."* It should take 3 to 5 seconds to pronounce clearly. Include market reach and frequency.
- **TV Ads:** Must display the logo for a minimum of 5 seconds (typically at the end). It must be legible and commensurate with the partner logo size.
- **Websites and Content:** Websites/articles created or revised using Co-op dollars must display the logo on the homepage (or prominently) for a minimum of one year, linked to www.visitutah.com. Native content must also contain the linked logo.