**St. Mary’s County Tourism Co-op Advertising Program Guidelines**

**Program Description**

SMCT provides matching dollars to eligible applicants for advertising tourism-related services, programs, campaigns or events. Dollars SMCT sets aside for the Co-Op Program and size of matches are based on each fiscal year’s County-Approved Budget, SMCT’s marketing objectives and the number of eligible applicants. Generally, matches are between $1,000 and $3,500.

**Program objectives**

* Increase visitation to St. Mary’s County by visitors from outside of Southern Maryland
* Help local tourism entities increase their marketing reach and extend their marketing dollars

**Eligibility**

**Events:** Eligible Events are events drawing 1,000 or more attendees per year, having been produced for at least two immediate prior years, attracting a minimum of 25% of attendees from outside of Southern Maryland and being a SMCT partner in good standing.With regard to out-of-region visitation data, for FY 2016 (July 2015 – June 2016), SMCT will consider reasonable justification of figure of 25% or a marketing plan that shows how the event will reach this percentage in FY 16.

**Destination Anchors**: Eligible establishments are those with a significant portion of their customers drawn from outside of St. Mary’s County and who focus on the leisure travel market. An entity must be a SMCT partner in good standing.

**SMCT-offered Co-ops:** At times and in accordance with its current marketing plan, SMCT will offer marketing campaign-related co-ops. These are open to individual tourism & hospitality businesses as well as to events producers and destination anchors that fit the campaign objective’s profile. A business must be a SMCT partner in good standing.

**SMCT Partner In Good Standing:** 1) having no outstanding co-op bills, 2) having provided all required past reports within the requested timeframe, 3) having met all requirements and responsibilities of past co-op agreements, 4) are a registered partner on [www.visitstmarysmd.com](http://www.visitstmarysmd.com).

**Funding and Types of Advertising**

**Amount Available:** Amount available annually for co-oping is dependent on SMCT’s annual fiscal budgetary allocation as set by the St. Mary’s County budget process, SMCT’s current marketing objectives and number of co-op applicants.

**Event** **Funding Availability:**  Funds are restricted to one event per year per event producer.

**Match Requirement:** Amount must be matched dollar per dollar.For example, if advertisement costs $200, SMCT would pay $100 and Co-op Partner would pay $100.

Ads may exceed dollar per dollar match but Co-op Partner will be responsible for the amount beyond the match. There may be limits on the overmatch, please check in advance.

**Types of Advertising:** Advertising may be in any standard print, electronic or digital format to include television, radio, internet, billboards, internet, etc.

**Where Ads May Run:** Funds may be used for advertising in markets outside of Southern Marylandy (but market reach may include Southern Maryland).

**Process**

* Applicant for Co-op Advertising Funds completes and submits an Intent to Apply and Agreement form (IAA) by posted deadline.
* SMCT reviews IAAs against Budget and SMCT marketing objectives, sets aside amount for each eligible applicant and notifies applicant of acceptance or denial of entrance into that year’s program.
* Eligible aplicant ensures all pre requirements as stated in the Guidelines are in place, *and then….*
* Co-op Partner submits Advertising Order Form in accordance with form’s instructions and deadlines.

**SMCT’s Responsibilities**

* SMCT will contract with each publisher for ads on the Co-op Partner’s Advertising Order Form. Co-op Partner DOES NOT contract for co-op ads.
* SMCT will pay each publisher in full for ads and will bill the Co-op Partner for their share of ad.

**Responsibilities of Co-op Partner**

* Co-op partner provides actual ad to publisher that meets the publisher’s specifications and deadline. If ad is not published due to failure to meet ad specifications or deadline, Co-op Partner will be billed by SMCT for the FULL cost of ad which Co-op Partner will be required to pay.
* Co-op partner must reimburse SMCT for its share of the ad cost within 30 days of billing by SMCT.
* Co-op partner must include SMCT-provided graphic logo on all print co-op advertising at no less than 1 and ¼ inch in width.
* Co-op partner must place SMCT-provided graphic logo with link to Tourism website’s homepage ([www.visitstmarysmd.com](http://www.visitstmarysmd.com)) on their homepage or other page and page location acceptable to SMCT.
* For events, co-op partner must list the event in the Maryland Office of Tourism Development’s Online Calendar of Events.
* Co-op partner must make SMCT-provided tourism literature available at place of business or if an event, at info booth or ticket booth or some other location acceptable to SMCT.
* Co-op partner must list SMCT as an Official Sponsor if advertising is event-related.
* Co-op partner must provide SMCT with a report within three months after the advertising run to include number of visitors to business or number of attendees to event, and number from outside of region. (SMCT can help create a workable and easy method to collect and report this data).