



GOOGLE STREET VIEW FOR BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM

Google, the world's most widely known and used search engine, offers companies of any size an opportunity to present an interior virtual tour of their business on Google Maps and on Google searches, free of charge, thereby giving them huge amounts of online presence and exposure that they otherwise may not have had access to. According to a study done by Google in July 2015, "Virtual tours help double interest in business listings" and "When searching for restaurants and hotels online, 62% of people use Google." **Google is #1 for local searches and, among those surveyed, "67% wanted more business listings to have virtual tours."**

The only requirement for posting a businesses' virtual tour on Google is that the photography must be done by a "Google Trusted Photographer" (GTP). There are only three GTPs in the entire Hampton Roads region, one on the Southside and two on the Peninsula. These photographers charge the business a nominal fee to do the panoramic photography, then the GTP has access to the Google software platform that enables them to develop the virtual tour from the still panoramic photographs and post it online to the businesses' Google listing. The virtual tour utilizes Google Street View technology and will display in Google searches, Google maps and Google+. Business owners can also embed the entire Google Street View virtual tour to their websites and social media at no charge.

A goal of the York County Economic Development Authority is to strongly promote and support our existing businesses. We do this through many on-going programs, such as the E-commerce Grant Program, the NxLevel Scholarship Program, and the Buy Local Program. **Because of the significant benefits to our local businesses of having additional exposure on Google, this program meets this goal of supporting and promoting our business community and has the potential to help grow many local companies.**

GRANT DETAILS AND REQUIREMENTS

The York County Google Virtual Tour Grant Program is a partnership of the York County Economic Development Authority, the York County Office of Economic Development, and the area's Google Trusted Photographers. **The program was created to help "Get York County Businesses on the Map" and to enable York County's businesses to get widespread exposure on the world's number one search engine, Google, by posting an interior virtual tour of their business.**

The EDA has appropriated \$20,000 in available matching grant funds for this program. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. **This grant program awards 50% matching grants only; on a first-come, first-served basis, to existing York County businesses for the purpose of having interior panoramic photos taken of their business location, which will be transformed into a virtual tour and posted on Google Maps.**

Grants are fifty percent of total project costs, up to \$500 per business. For example, if the photography session costs a total of \$250, grant amount will be \$125. If the total project cost is \$1,000, grant amount will be \$500. If the total project cost is \$1,500, grant amount will be \$500.

Grants will only be awarded for work performed **after** approval of the application. All projects must be completed within 6 months of approval. Funds will be awarded to the applicant only upon satisfactory completion of the project(s) in accordance with the approved application. Applicant must submit copies of all paid invoices/receipts in order to receive reimbursement of the approved amount. Non-profit agencies may not apply. Only one application is permitted per business location.

QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

- Applicants must have a current York County Business License
- Grant recipients will be given access to and full use of their still images by the chosen photographer. By accepting grant funds, the business agrees to allow the Office of Economic Development and/or the Economic Development Authority to use these still images as well. Uses may include printed materials, websites, presentations, and any other means needed.
- Grants are for interior photography work only; Exterior photography is not eligible for grant funds.
- A new interior virtual tour must be established, where none previously existed for the applicant's business. This program is not intended for updating prior virtual tours, unless an exception is granted by the Economic Development Director.
- Application must be made using the Application Form developed by York County OED, and must be complete in all respects.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicant must first download and print the application.

1. Applicant contacts at least one of the area's Google Trusted Photographers to get a quote for the interior photography work to be done.
2. Applicant completes, signs, and submits the grant application (including all quotes and indicating the chosen provider) via email (econdev@yorkcounty.gov), fax [(757) 890-6670], mail (York County Economic Development, P.O. Box 612, Yorktown, VA 23690), or in person (224 Ballard Street in Historic Yorktown).
3. York County Economic Development staff will send notification to the applicant acknowledging receipt of their application.
4. Applications will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the York County Economic Development Authority.
5. York County Economic Development staff will mail a letter to the applicant business address on the application, informing them of the decision. If approved, this letter is to be considered as the permission for the applicant to begin work and the date of the letter will begin the 6-month period.
6. Chosen provider completes the project as quoted.
7. Applicant business pays the provider **in full** and submits paid receipts and/or copy of returned checks to the York County Office of Economic Development.
8. York County Economic Development staff will verify completion of the project as quoted and provide grant payment to the approved applicant within 30 days of the receipt of information.

Submit Application via:

E-mail: econdev@yorkcounty.gov

Fax: (757) 890-6670

Mail: York County Economic Development, P.O. Box 612, Yorktown, VA 23690

In person: York County Economic Development, 224 Ballard St., Yorktown, VA 23690

GOOGLE STREET VIEW FOR BUSINESS GRANT APPLICATION FORM

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Business Name: _____

Contact person: _____

Physical address: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

CHOSEN PROVIDER (Must be a "Google Trusted Photographer")

Business Name: _____

Contact Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

PROPOSED COST

Total Estimated Cost: _____ Amount of Grant Funds Requested: _____

Please attach the following 2 items to this application:

- Copy of Current York County Business License
- Copy of all quotes obtained for this project

I (Applicant) hereby confirm that _____ is currently a business located in York County. I understand that grant funds will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. I also understand that grants will only be awarded for work performed **after** approval of this application and that all work must be completed within 6 months of approval. I understand that funds will be awarded only upon satisfactory completion of the project, in accordance with the approved application. I understand I must submit copies of all paid invoices/receipts in order to receive grant funds.

Business: _____

Applicant: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Submit Application via:

E-mail: econdev@yorkcounty.gov

Fax: (757) 890-6670

Mail: York County Economic Development, P.O. Box 612, Yorktown, VA 23690

In person: York County Economic Development, 224 Ballard St., Yorktown, VA 23690