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York County Launches Marketing Grant, Enhances Existing Grants

Newest program offers matching dollars for promotional expense up to \$2,500

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Small businesses often struggle to grow because they can't afford quality marketing—but York County wants to help. The York County Economic Development Authority (EDA) and Economic & Tourism Development Department (ETD) are excited to announce their new Small Business Marketing Grant, which joins six other recently enhanced grants in their business incentives program.

The EDA approved this initiative, which was created to support the growth and success of small local businesses. The grant provides financial assistance for a new, one-time promotional effort to help enhance their visibility, attract new customers and increase their revenue. Eligible businesses can apply for matched funds of up to \$2,500 to cover a marketing expense including (but not limited to):

- Digital advertising,
- Social media campaigns
- Print media
- Outdoor advertising
- Vehicle wraps
- Branding
- Broadcast

Nearly all of the County's other six matching grants are aimed at small businesses—including one for websites and ecommerce, one for home-based businesses transitioning to a commercial space, one to create a Google virtual tour, and a broad business-growth grant to cover a one-time expense.

“Marketing is crucial for the success of small businesses, as it drives customer engagement and brand recognition,” said Jeff Clemons, chairman of the York County Economic Development Authority. “This new program is a game changer because it provides our local entrepreneurs with the financial support they need to maintain and enhance their marketing efforts. By investing in their promotional strategies, we are investing in the long-term prosperity of our community.”

To be eligible for the new Small Business Marketing Grant, businesses must meet the following criteria:

- Be a for-profit business that's licensed in York County
- Have 25 or fewer employees
- Receive grant approval before any work begins
- Not be in default or non-compliance with any County programs, ordinances or taxes
- Demonstrate a need for marketing assistance and a clear plan for how the grant funds will be used

Applications for the Small Business Marketing Grant program are accepted as of August 1, 2024, and will be reviewed on a rolling basis until grant funds are exhausted.

“Small businesses are the backbone of York County’s economy, and we are committed to supporting their growth and success,” said Kristi Olsen-Hayes, director of the County’s Economic & Tourism Development Department. “We understand that when times get tough, marketing expenses are often the first to be cut. Through this new grant program, we hope to underscore the importance and ROI of marketing. We’re here to provide the necessary resources for our small businesses to reach new customers and grow their brand.”

As part of the EDA’s recent review of their program offerings, enhancements were also made to several existing grant programs that will provide more funding and easier access for existing businesses seeking financial assistance:

- The Business Growth Grant now offers matching grants up to \$4,000 per business, up from \$2,500
- The E-Commerce Grant now offers up to \$750 in matching funds, up from \$500
- The Home-based Business Transition Grant now offers \$2,500, up from \$2,000.

In addition, several programs now include clauses for small, woman and minority (SWaM) owned businesses and veteran-owned businesses, further increasing the grant amounts that qualified companies can receive.

Interested companies can review the program qualifications and apply for funds online for all York County’s assistance programs at <https://www.yorkcounty.gov/3919/Incentive-Programs>

About York County Economic & Tourism Development

York County seeks to create a diverse economic base through continually recruiting, growing and retaining business across a variety of industries. The **Department of Economic and Tourism Development** is dedicated to expanding York County's tax base through capital investment in the County; promoting tourism; supporting large, small and home-based businesses; and providing new employment opportunities for County residents. Its efforts result in improved quality of life throughout York County, including charitable giving, volunteerism, and job creation.

The ETD works in cooperation with many regional and state agencies to pursue its mission. Key among these allies are the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Hampton Roads Alliance, Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center, and local Chambers of Commerce. Its strongest ally is the **York County Economic Development Authority** (EDA). Established in 1972, the EDA is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia and has unique powers established in the Code of Virginia. The EDA is a conduit for non-taxable industrial revenue bonds, and can legally own, develop, and sell/lease commercial real estate. It also can provide incentives necessary to close deals within targeted industry sectors.

Learn more at <https://www.yesyorkcounty.com/>