

Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) Applicant Information Session May 4, 2022 – Q&A

Is the available funding split 50/50 between the Phase I and Phase II applications?

There is one funding cycle that has two phases of application for projects. It is one single funding request and a single pool of available funding. The Phase I application is basic and foundational. It requires some basic information about the project, details about the requesting organization, and the amount being requested by the organization. If a project application is deemed appropriate by the TPDF Committee in Phase I, it will advance to the Phase II application process.

Do you assist in matching partners for a project? My question is more about finding a non-profit to partner with a group of citizens who are not represented by a non-profit.

The applicant must bring at least 50% of funding of the project to the application, and the applicant organization must demonstrate in Phase II the source(s) of matching funds. The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is unable to match partners for a project. The payment of the grant will be made to a non-profit organization or municipal partner, and it will be the recipient for those funds. That organization will be responsible for the project and liable for any use of the grant dollars.

What are some examples of successfully implemented projects in the past and how is their impact measured?

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority asks that each successful applicant that receives grant funding provide a report in subsequent years, both on the progress that they are making on construction and development of a project, and then also its impact for the first several years after completion. The full list of funded projects can be found online at <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/product-development/>. The tremendous variety of projects that have been supported includes everything from a veterans memorial at Pack Square Park, to renovations at Harrah's Cherokee Center in downtown Asheville, to French Broad River access, to improvements in the River Arts District. It's also supported the development of soccer fields, baseball fields, the Woodfin Blueway and Greenway, the Asheville Art Museum, and the YMI Cultural Institute in downtown Asheville, just to name a few. The projects funded have extensive use/visitation from visitors and residents alike.

Does land acquisition meet the definition of capital investment?

It does not meet the definition. The TPDF is intended to support bricks and mortar development once that property has been acquired or at least where there is an option on that property.

One of your examples for funding was the Wilma Dykeman Riverway - which was funded in multiple years. Does the TPDF fund multi-year projects? When are projects required to be completed?

Yes, the TPDF does fund multi-year projects. Typically, projects receiving TPDF funding in more than one cycle have been funded via subsequent requests rather than a single multi-year request. The expectation for completion of a funded project varies from project to project and will be detailed in the contract with the applicant. A project that is still many years away from completion may not receive as favorable consideration by the TPDF committee compared to projects that are farther along in the planning process.

If a project includes multiple phases, the BCTDA asks that the applicant detail those phases in its application but formally request funding for each phase at a time when the applicant needs that funding. The BCTDA has established the strategic priority list pathway for projects that may require funding in multiple phases. The BCTDA cannot guarantee an applicant grant funding in future years and can only commit to grant funding it has available in hand at the time of the application. But the BCTDA can inform applicants that projects requesting multiyear grant funding may be prioritized in future years. The project will still be subject to the same TPDF requirements and evaluation criteria that are in effect at that time.

Can you please clarify what will be required to adequately demonstrate the availability of 1:1 matching funding?

In prior years, the TPDF committee has requested documents such as letters from banks stating that the organization qualifies for a specific loan amount, or a demonstration of funds already raised and committed through philanthropic fundraising. Applicants have also provided commitment letters from a potential funder stating that the applicant will receive funding dependent upon an award of funding from the BCTDA.

The BCTDA always requires each grantee to sign a contract, and that contract may make the award of funding dependent upon certain milestones. The successful applicant will not necessarily be awarded 100% of TPDF funding at the time of the contract. The amount of the grant made available immediately will differ depending upon each project. Some projects may be farther along in their planning and are truly shovel-ready and in a position to accept or need more of the total grant award.

Once Phase I is complete, will a list of applicants approved for Phase II be made publicly available?

In prior years that information has been reported by local media. This is a public process and applicants should understand that Explore Asheville and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority are subject to open records laws of the state of North Carolina. If the applicant has information about either a project or the organization that it does not wish to be made public via a submitted application, it may want to consider funding options other than the TPDF.

TPDF is prioritizing projects that bring in more diverse visitors (specifically Black and LGBTQ visitors). Does it also prioritize applications from those same communities?

The TPDF committee's focus will be the potential project's alignment with the four strategic pillars, one of which includes engaging and inviting more diverse audiences.

Can Asheville or Buncombe County parks and recreation departments apply?

The TPDF application process is open to any municipal partner in Buncombe County as long as the project is located within Buncombe County. The Asheville or Buncombe County parks and recreation departments are welcome to apply for project funding. The BCTDA does request that each municipal applicant coordinate their TPDF requests with other departments within the same governmental entity.