
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 554 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY RADER, STRUZZI, LONGIETTI, JOZWIAK, CIRESI,
ZIMMERMAN, DRISCOLL, FREEMAN AND WHEELAND, FEBRUARY 22, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
FEBRUARY 22, 2021

AN ACT

1 Providing for the Visit Pennsylvania Grant Program; and making
2 an appropriation.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Visit
7 Pennsylvania Assistance Act.

8 Section 2. Definitions.

9 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
10 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
11 context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic
13 Development of the Commonwealth.

14 "Destination marketing organization." A nonprofit
15 corporation, organization, association or agency that is engaged
16 in tourism promotion or marketing on a regional or Statewide
17 basis to attract leisure or business travelers to this

1 Commonwealth.

2 "Eligible loss." The net decrease between April 2019 and
3 April 2020 in total county hotel tax receipts received by the
4 county treasurer, minus any administrative fees, in those
5 counties served by a tourism promotion agency or destination
6 marketing organization.

7 "Grant." A grant awarded under the Visit Pennsylvania Grant
8 Program established under section 3.

9 "Program." The Visit Pennsylvania Grant Program established
10 under section 3.

11 "Tourism promotion agency." A recognized nonprofit
12 corporation, organization, association or agency that is engaged
13 in planning and promoting programs designed to stimulate and
14 increase the volume of tourist, visitor and vacation business
15 within counties served by the tourism promotion agency. The term
16 shall include a tourism promotion agency as that term is defined
17 in the act of July 4, 2008 (P.L.621, No.50), known as the
18 Tourism Promotion Act.

19 Section 3. Visit Pennsylvania Grant Program.

20 (a) Establishment.--The Visit Pennsylvania Grant Program is
21 established in the department for the purposes of providing
22 financial assistance to Pennsylvania tourism promotion agencies
23 and destination marketing organizations adversely impacted by
24 the novel coronavirus identified in the proclamation of disaster
25 emergency issued by the Governor on March 6, 2020, published at
26 50 Pa.B. 1644 (March 21, 2020), and any renewal of the state of
27 disaster emergency.

28 (b) Application.--A tourism promotion agency or destination
29 marketing organization that has an eligible loss may apply to
30 the department on a form and in a manner prescribed by the

1 department.

2 (c) Submission.--Within 30 days of the effective date of
3 this section, the department shall establish a time period of
4 not less than 30 days for a tourism marketing agency or
5 destination marketing organization to submit an application for
6 a grant.

7 (d) Review.--Upon closure of the time period under
8 subsection (c), the department shall approve or disapprove all
9 applications and distribute all money made available to the
10 department to approved applicants as follows:

11 (1) If the total loss from all applicants equals
12 \$15,000,000, all applicants shall receive the exact amount of
13 each applicant's eligible loss up to a maximum grant of
14 \$1,000,000 for each applicant.

15 (2) If the total loss from all applicants is less than
16 or greater than \$15,000,000, each applicant shall receive
17 each applicant's percentage of total loss from all
18 applicants, up to a maximum grant of \$1,000,000 for each
19 applicant, not to exceed \$15,000,000 for all applicants.

20 (3) The department may not award a grant under the
21 program that exceeds \$1,000,000 to an eligible tourism
22 promotion agency or destination marketing organization.

23 (e) Use.--Grant funds may be used for any of the following:

24 (1) Operating costs, debt repayment, payroll and payroll
25 expenses.

26 (2) Marketing the area served as a leisure travel
27 destination.

28 (3) Marketing the area served as a business, convention
29 or meeting travel destination.

30 (f) Program guidelines.--The department shall develop and

1 issue guidelines for the program. The department shall transmit
2 notice of completion of the guidelines to the Legislative
3 Reference Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

4 Section 4. Funding.

5 The sum of \$15,000,000 is appropriated to the department
6 from the COVID-19 Response Restricted Account established under
7 section 110-C of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176),
8 known as The Fiscal Code, for the purpose of making grants under
9 this act.

10 Section 5. Expiration of authority.

11 The authority of the department to award grants under this
12 section shall expire when all available funds are disbursed for
13 grants provided under the program.

14 Section 6. Effective date.

15 This act shall take effect immediately.