



VTC
Microbusiness
Marketing
Leverage
Program
Webinar (MMLP)

VTC Grants Presentation

MEET THE VTC GRANTS TEAM!



Staci Martin
Partnership Marketing Grants Director



Noah Salaah ad-Deen
Partnership Marketing Grants Manager



Shruthi Manimaran
Partnership Marketing Grants Coordinator

VTC'S DEVELOPMENT & FUNDING PROGRAM TEAM

VTC Partnership Marketing

Destination Development Team

■ Becky Nave – Director of Destination Development
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■ Sarah Austen Holzgrefe – Destination Development Specialist
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Destination Development Managers


Michelle Workman 276.722.0238 | mworkman@virginia.org

 Kalen Hunter 276.213.0009 | khunter@virginia.org

 Katie Conner 540.676.4953 | kconner@virginia.org

 Kelli Weaver 540.679.6697 | kweaver@virginia.org

■ Vacant

 Laura Messer 804.278.7651 | lmesser@virginia.org

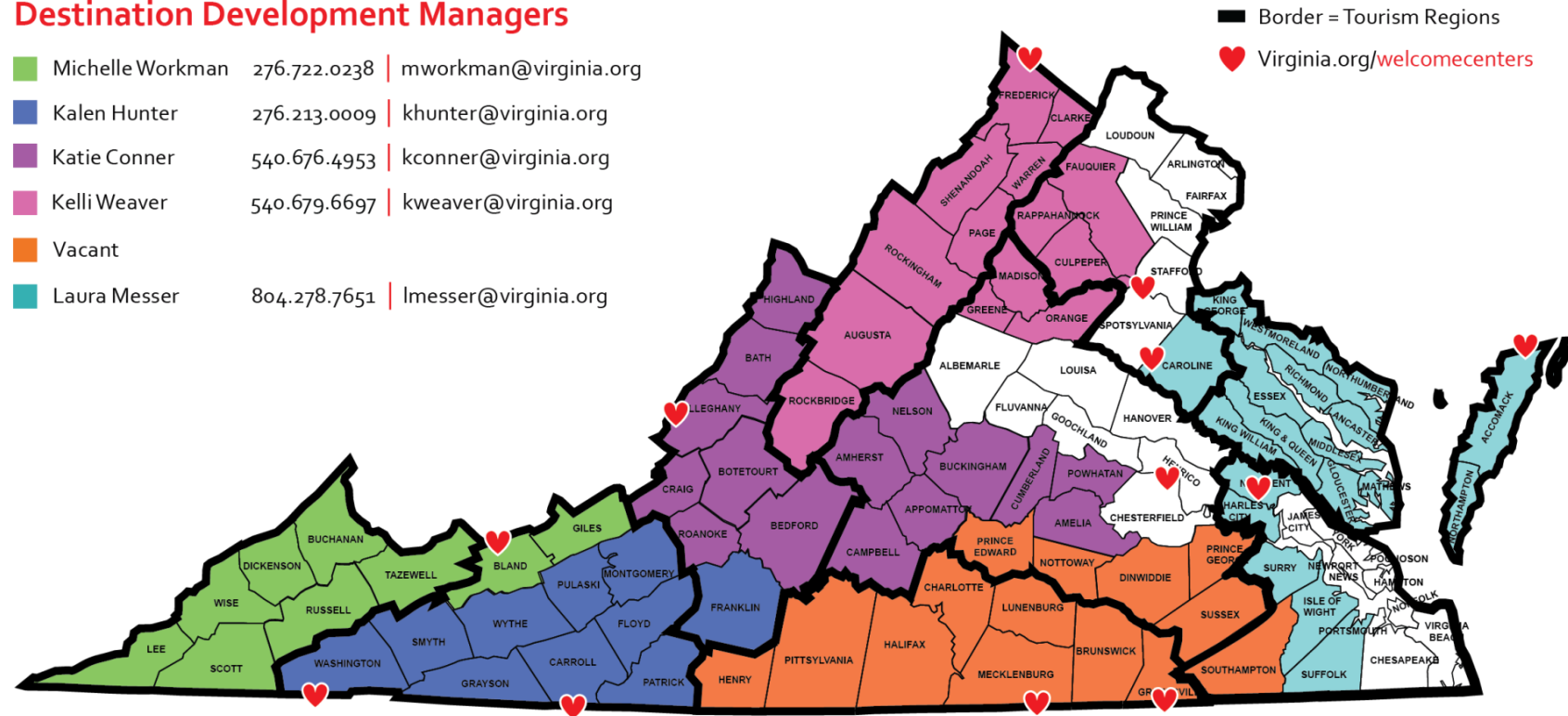
VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS®

Virginia Tourism Corporation

Contact VTC's **Destination Development Managers** in your area for strategic planning, marketing leveraging and other community development assistance and resources

* Contact Becky Nave for white map areas not assigned to a DDM

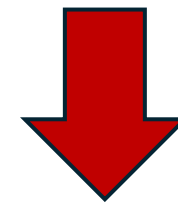
Website VATC.org/partnershipmarketing/tdmanagers



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Microbusiness MLP Program

Same Program; Two Portals



DMO's Only **DMO MMLP Co-Op**

\$395,000 available for DMOs

Opens: June 10th, 2025 – Closes: June 26th, 2025

- **Competitive tiers at \$1,250, \$2,500, \$5,000 and \$30,000.**
- **Required** to extend the *Vacation Starts with VA campaign through Co-ops and Toolkit*
- Fall marketing September-November
- **Max award: up to \$30,000**
- Cash Match/Reimbursement
- May allow for retargeting in early 2026 through DMO & MLP grants opening Feb. 2026

Microbusinesses, Main Streets, Orgs **Traditional MMLP**

(DMOs cannot apply in this round)

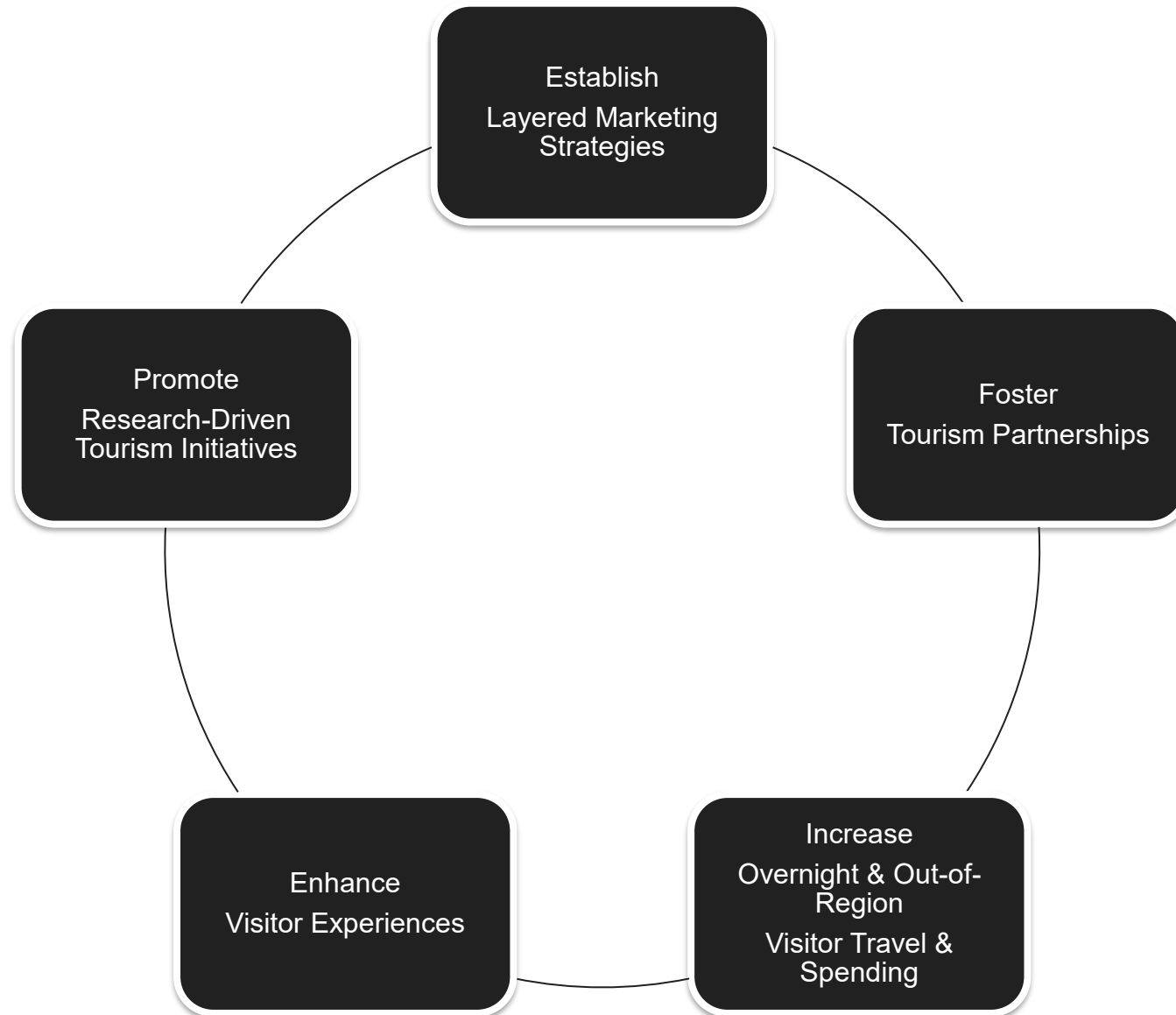
\$125,000 available for Main Streets/Orgs

\$250,000 available for Microbusinesses

Opens: June 10th, 2025 – Closes: July 24th, 2025

- **One tier -- \$5,000**
- **Optional** use of *Vacation Starts with VA* and *VA250 America: Made in Virginia* Toolkits
- Off-season marketing September to May
- **Max award: up to \$5,000**
- In-Kind or Cash Match/Reimbursement

Why Apply to the Microbusiness MLP?





Breaking Down The Application

Your Focused Tourism Program – The Goals, The Marketing Message, & The Why

Goals should be reasonable and achievable with the funds you are requesting. *(Is my campaign achievable with VTC funding? If I don't receive a VTC award, can I complete this campaign?)*

Marketing Messages should be clear, unique, and relatable to the audience you are targeting. *(Will this message resonate with my audience? What did I use to confirm this?)*

The Why – The reason a visitor should come to your business, event, or destination over a similar/competing one. *(What makes mine more attractive?)*

Focused Tourism Program Examples

Spring-Break/Long Weekend Travel Campaign

Music, Culture, & Heritage Visitor Experience

Craft Brewery Trail Creation/Expansion

Youth Sporting Event Expansion

Restaurant Guild Group Marketing Campaign

"Hands-On History" Experience at a Museum

Tourism Partnerships (Hub & Spoke Itinerary Model)



- Collaborative Marketing Campaign Between You and Your Partners. Think about it like a travel itinerary.
- **Requirement** – You need **2** Main Tourism Partners & **4** Tourism Spokes listed in your application. Total of **6** other tourism businesses working with you.
- **Requirement** – **1** of your partners must be a lodging partner and **you MUST have a lodging letter of support** (*Hotel, Bed & Breakfast, Campground, etc..*)
- Examples of Eligible Tourism Partners:
 - Restaurants
 - Boutique Retail
 - Tourism Attractions
 - Breweries & Wineries
 - Museums & Historical Sites
 - Lodging
 - Other Tourism Businesses, Attractions, or Events

Research-Driven Tourism Programs

- VTC is a research-driven authority. Visit www.vatc.org/research
- DATA YOU CAN USE:
 - VTC POI reports
 - Visitor Profile reports
 - Arrivalist data
 - STR reports,
 - Economic Impact reports
 - Credit Card Zip codes
 - Social Media Insights
 - Mailing list Insights
 - Any other tourism research
- All Data Sources Must Be Specifically Referenced In Application



LAYER YOUR MARKETING USING OUR FUNDING PROGRAMS

- Tourism marketing often gives potential visitors **first glance** at a particular destination or product.
- Check out our national tourism marketing agency, **Brand USA**, for insights on visitor and travel trends and for layered marketing strategies.
- Follow **VTC channels** and **Leisure 360 buy ups** for ideas on marketing, content, and design.
- Monitor your **regional partners** and layer in with their initiatives.
- **Requirement** – Any marketing that you submit to VTC to be used as cash match or that you want to be reimbursed **MUST** include the “Virginia is for Lovers Logo and/or Hashtag (#LoveVA) on it.

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VACATION
STARTS WITH **VA**

AMERICA
MADE IN VIRGINIA

Leveraging the Toolkits
Through Traditional MMLP Grant

Optional Traditional MMLP Grant Toolkits

Vacation Starts with VA Toolkit

- Available through Vatac.org
- Excellent for Main Streets & Chambers of Commerce
- Toolkit includes templates and how-to webinar on digital design

America: Made in Virginia Toolkit

- Available through on VATC.org and VA250.org
- Excellent for early 2026 marketing
- Toolkit includes ideas for restaurants, craft beverage, museums, and outfitters

A Robust Marketing Mix – The Key To Expanding Your Audience



Explain How You Will Enhance The Visitor Experience

VTC Grant Application is divided into three main parts

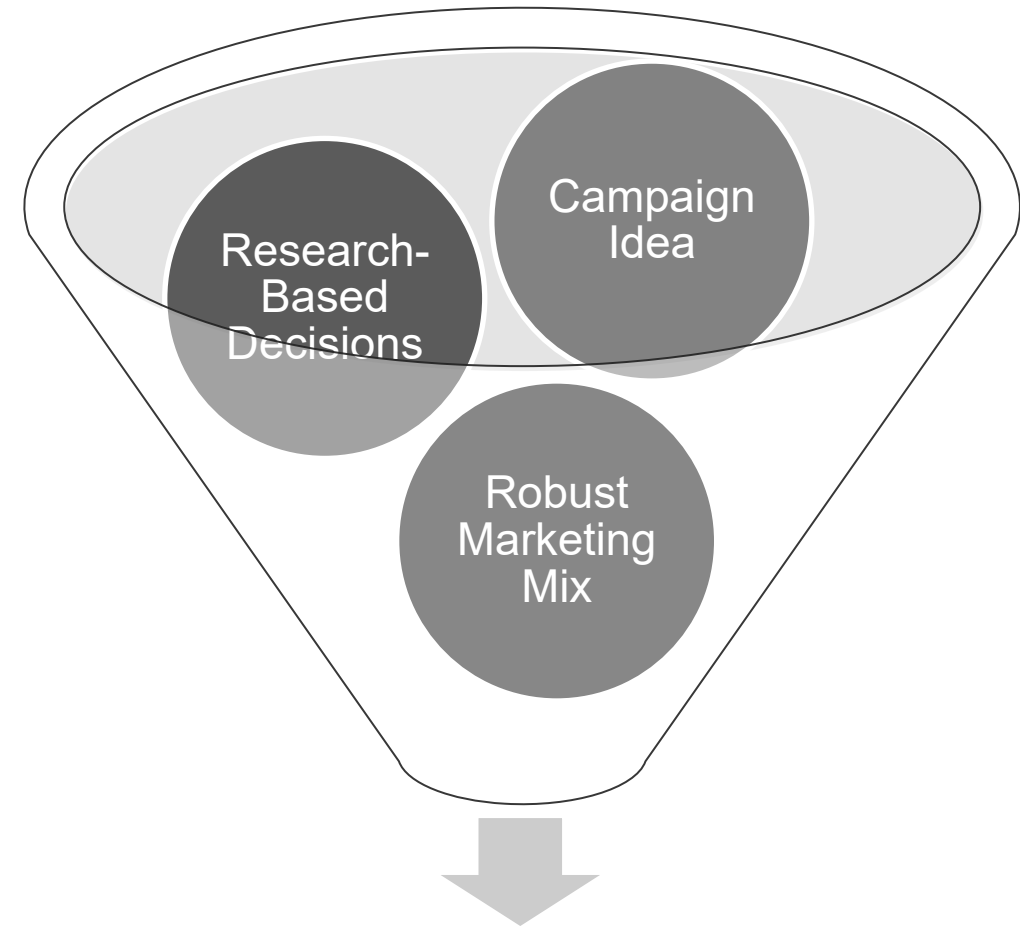
- Goals & Partnerships (Campaign Idea)
- Research & Data
- Marketing Plans (Robust Marketing Mix)

Complete Your Application with as much detail as possible. Explain your initiative clearly and concisely.

- All sections of the application should call back to one another – must have synergy

Put Your Self in the Shoes of your Targeted Audience. Will your marketing reach you? Does your data and marketing message resonate with you?

What you include in the grant application is what will determine your award score. You Receive What You Put In.



Focused Tourism Program
“Capsule Campaign”



Increasing Overnight & Out-of-State Visitation – The Economic Impact

This is our pathway to reach **\$100M/day** in visitor spending in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Currently, we are at **\$91M/day**.

Each tourism business, hotel, event, and unique initiative helps us reach our collective goal: **More Travelers, Spending More, & Staying Longer**

YOUR Initiatives Contribute to the Tourism Ecosystem. What you bring to your community matters.

Economic Impact & You

- Use The Available Visitor Data on your location
- Think “New, Unique, Bigger, Better” – Expansionary Marketing
- Build & Maintain Partnerships in your community
- Remember – Visitors Will Reach You Once You Reach Them

Requirement – VTC Awardees must submit a final report at the end of their initiative highlighting their performance metrics

Application Score Breakdown

WEIGHT BASED ON SECTION

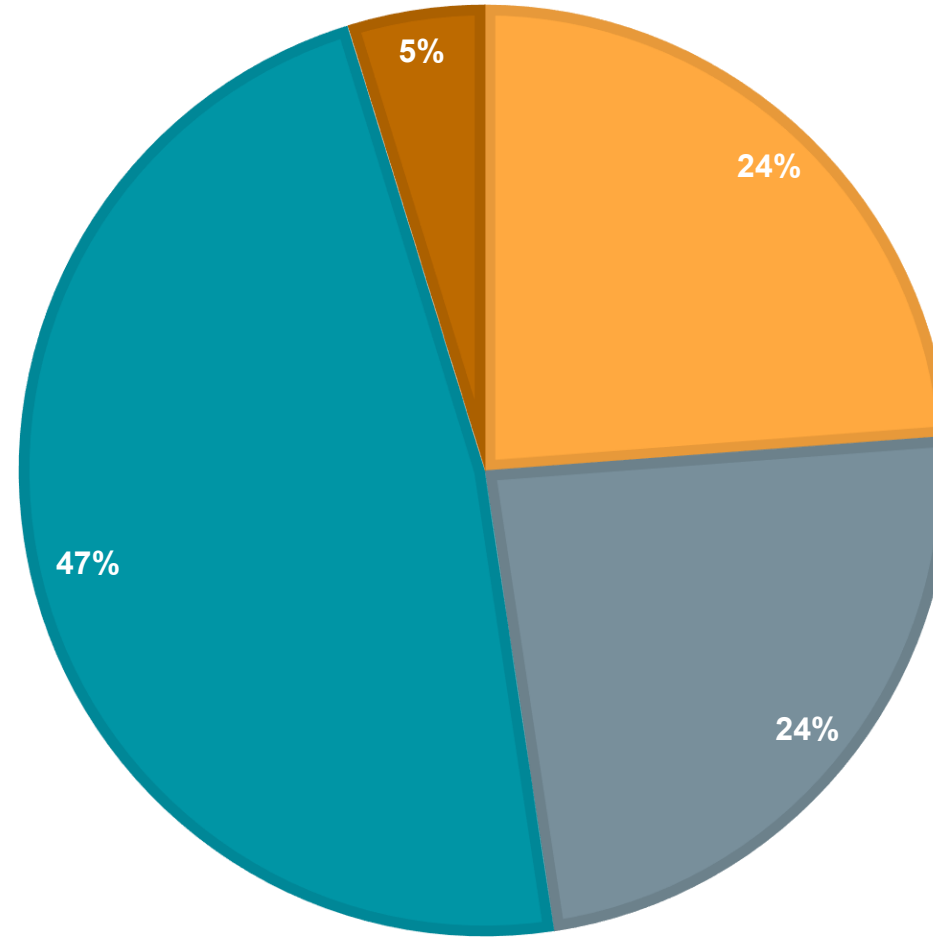
■ Goals & Partnerships ■ Research/Data ■ Marketing Plans ■ Bonus Section

Goals & Partnerships: **25 Points**

Research & Data: **25 Points**

Marketing Plans: **50 Points**

Bonus Section: **5 Points**



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How To Prepare

What Do I Need To Have Before Starting The Application?

- Focused Tourism Program – Your Proposal
- Letter of Support from your Local or Regional DMO
- List of Tourism Partners that will support your initiative (One of them needs to be a lodging partner)
- Tourism Research that you will include in your application
- Robust marketing mix



You are here: [Home](#) / [Grant and Funding Sources](#) / (VTC) Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program

(VTC) Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program

The next rounds of this program:

Opens: June 10, 2025

Closes: July 24, 2025

For questions, please email VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org

Max Award: \$5,000

- Reimbursable grant program to leverage existing marketing funds. Requires a targeted and research-based marketing plan designed to drive tourism to Virginia.
- **Marketing Focus:** Small business and shoulder season (September to May) marketing.
- **Who is eligible:** Small tourism-related business with 20 or fewer full-time equivalent employees including boutique retail, restaurants, food trucks, small attractions, craft breweries, distilleries, wineries, boutique lodging and B&Bs, and events focused on shoulder season visitation.
- **Additional eligibility:** Chambers of Commerce, NGOs, such as PDCs and Main Street organizations, may apply but the application must support microbusinesses and/or shoulder season visitation with a robust marketing plan. If the Chamber/Main Street organization

Grants And Funding

- › [Grant and Funding Sources](#)
- › [Additional Funding Sources](#)
- › [Virginia Tourism Grant Webinars](#)
- › [Commonwealth of Virginia \(TDFP\)](#)

Contact Staff



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757-390-7330



Noah Salaah ad-Deen

What VTC Resources Are Available To Assist?

- Program Terms & Conditions
- Application Instructions & Word Template
- Program FAQs
- VTC Grant Webinars
- Reach out to the VTC Grants team directly for specific questions

Other Helpful Resources:

- Sign Up For VTC Orientation
- Browse our website (www.vatc.org) for tourism research, reports, branding ideas, or ways in which you can collaborate with VTC
- Reach Out to the Destination Development Manager in your region on how to enhance your tourism partnerships, improve your marketing, or request research reports

Remember

Don't stress

- We're always here to help and answer any questions!

Don't rush

- Start preparing early and work step-by-step!

Don't worry

- If you miss the application deadline, there are other grants opening throughout the year, every year!

LET'S WORK TOGETHER!

**REACH OUT TO THE GRANTS TEAM
FUNDING PROGRAMS OVERVIEW: [VATC.ORG/GRANTS](https://vatc.org/grants)
QUESTIONS?**

**MARKETING LEVERAGE PROGRAM, VA250 PROGRAM, MICROBUSINESS PROGRAM
VTCMLPGRANT@VIRGINIA.ORG**

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