

Form Name:	Lodging Tax Application
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Unique ID:	675102041
Location:	47.466300964355, -122.65280151367

ORGANIZATION / PROJECT INFORMATION

Organization name	White Pass Scenic Byway
Project name	Marketing and Operations and Hospitality Training
Project coordinator	Mary Kay Nelson
Amount requested from Lewis County	77200
Total project amount	82200

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Mary Kay Nelson
Street address	360 SE Valley View Way #B Chehalis, WA 98532
Mailing address (if different from street address)	PO Box 805 Chehalis , WA 98532
Current home phone	(360) 508-1774
Current email address	mkmarketing@localaccess.com
Agency Tax ID Number	271818764
Organization Unified Business Identifier (UBI)	602728076
UBI expiration date	May 10, 2021
Type of organization:	501(c)3
Organization's mission statement or purpose (one or two sentences):	The mission is the public education and promotion of events, activities, and attractions of the Byway and the marketing, promotion, and visitor enhancement of the Byway to increase the economy of the communities in Lewis County.
Year the organization was founded:	2007
Has your organization received Lewis County lodging tax funding in the past?	Yes
When did your organization receive Lewis County lodging tax funding?	2008-2019

How much did your organization / project receive? 70,000

For organizations that received funding for fiscal year 2020: How did COVID-19 affect your event(s) / project(s)? (Please include details about any unspent lodging tax grant funding.)

The marketing of the White Pass Byway was not adversely affected by COVID 19. Some projects were slowed down until the 4th quarter and the messaging has changed. Efforts continued with digital marketing and will ramp up in the 4th quarter to invite visitors to return to the wonderful outdoor recreation activities this winter season. We continue to build momentum in hope we can help the economy recover successfully in 2021. The Board feels it is important to stay competitive and invest in recovery by marketing our businesses and communities to build future business. We were not able to complete the Hospitality Training program in 2020.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project name

Marketing, Hospitality Training and Operations

1. Describe how the project promotes tourism in all of Lewis County's unincorporated areas.

All marketing and training activities are focused on the unincorporated areas of Lewis County. The website and mobile app, as well as social media concentrate specifically on the White Pass Scenic Byway corridor, but also link to our neighboring communities in the county as well as Discover Lewis County. Our newsletters are distributed to all Lewis County communities in an effort to cross promote the entire region. We focus on events, in all communities when they are going on, hopefully in 2021. We marketing camping, water activities, sightseeing, Mount Rainier and Mount St Helens to attract visitors to our area.

2. Describe how the project will enhance tourism and result in "heads in beds."

Creating overnight stays is our primary goal. Our marketing targets a specific audience looking for outdoor recreation and leisure travel. The website has improved listings with photos of all lodging options, all lodging is also listed on the mobile app. We provide a comprehensive list for visitors with direct access (links) to Air BnB, VRBO, campgrounds, motels and cabins in Lewis County.

3. List the responsible party / parties.

The White Pass Byway volunteer Board of Directors representing six communities on the Byway is responsible for program oversight, setting goals, policy, and budget, for the organization and its projects. The Board hires contractors to conduct the day to day operations of this marketing and promotion program.

4. Describe the area the project will serve, as well as the project's expected impact.

The White Pass Scenic Byway is defined by Washington State as the US Hwy 12 corridor from Mary's Corner to Naches. We expect to increase awareness, attendance and participation in events, activities and attractions in Mayfield, Mossyrock, Salkum Onalaska, Morton, Randle, Packwood and White Pass, by promoting all there is to see and do in the region.

5. Describe how the project will specifically promote tourism.

Digital Marketing: Paid advertising with Google and Facebook ads and newsletter campaign
Print Marketing: Continued printing of the popular tearsheet maps,
Mobile App: Promotion of camping and lodging, events, dining, and tourism related businesses
Website: Provides visitor information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week about what there is to see and do in Lewis County.

6. Describe how you have collaborated with other entities throughout Lewis County to promote tourism.

We have collaborated with Discover Lewis County on the Outdoor Recreation program and continue to pursue grant opportunities for this program. Next year we plan to re-instate the Hospitality Training Program. We communicate with the USFS Gifford Pinchot for Outdoor Recreation and are the single point of contact for the Mt. Rainier National Park.

7. Describe why your project should receive funding.

The Byway has a proven track record of successful operations for the past 13 years. Our Facebook page is among one of the highest followings for tourism related pages in the northwest, second to the Cascade Loop. Our audience is engaged and relies on Facebook for suggestions on seasonal information. The website has increased their following with improved imagery and is one of the best outdoor recreation and lodging resources in the state. In addition to our marketing program, the White Pass Scenic Byway is represented at Washington Tourism Alliance which has afforded our region more opportunities to be recognized and involved in statewide tourism programs.

8. Describe how your organization would respond to potential cancellations or closures, such as those caused by COVID-19 in 2020.

This year the White Pass Byway played a significant role in communicating with all businesses along the US Hwy 12 corridor. With our up-to-date comprehensive contact list of businesses, we were able to contact them directly to distribute PPE and survey them for information about the status of their business. Many businesses expressed appreciation for this and felt the County was looking after their best interests. Serving the needs of communities is another way of serving our economy and making sure their needs are met during disasters and closures.

USE OF HOTEL / MOTEL TAX

Please indicate below the types of activities for which the lodging tax monies would be used:

TOURISM PROMOTION
MARKETING ONLY

Describe the expected results (measurable outcomes) of your project, with the dollar amount for each outcome.

\$15,000 Google and Facebook Advertising - increase web traffic by 10%
\$5,000 Continue Mobile App with marketing to increase use by 5%
\$5,000 Purchase advertising in Washington State Visitor Guide and website to increase awareness
\$1,000 Print and distribute Lewis County Event poster - produce 500 countywide event posters
\$2000 Website and photos add appropriate new photos and content to website
\$5,000 Produce 5,000 hiking and drive tour tearsheet maps
\$2,200 Hospitality Training for up to 50 front line employees

Total number of attendees predicted to attend:

65,000

Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

This number is based on the number of web visits, an increase of 3% over a year ago. Every day, depending on the season, visits to the website range from 50-250. 30-50 people use the mobile app. This is available 24/7. It is expected only a percentage of these web visits result in lodging and visits to Lewis County, however we continue to influence and reach potential visitors every day. The more visits we can drive to the site, the more people we can influence to come to Lewis County. In addition, our 44,733 Facebook followers see images and reasons to visit weekly throughout the year.

a. Projected number of attendees who will travel fifty (50) miles or more one way from their home or business to attend:

65,000

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

Again, based on website visits, Google Analytics report our audience is primarily from over 50 miles away. 41% of the web traffic is from the Seattle area, 7% is from Portland, 5% from Yakima, 3% from Tacoma, 2% from Olympia, Vancouver, Richland and Spokane. Less than 1% is from the local area of Lewis County.
Our marketing efforts continue to target Puget Sound and Portland markets.

a. Projected number of participants who will travel from another country or state to attend:

20,000

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number Using statistics from Google Analytics, we find interested and potential visitors from a wide variety of locations. 97% are from the United States with 67% from Washington. 11% from Oregon, 4% from California, 2% from Texas and Florida. Out of state tourists tend to spend more and stay longer, thus they are an important segment; however it typically costs more to market to them. Leveraging our local dollars with Washington State Travel Guides and ExperienceWashington.com is also cost effective, especially now that their marketing program has begun.

a. Projected number of participants who will stay overnight in paid accommodations: 6,000

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number There is a direct correlation between the amount of money spent on digital advertising and the number of visitors to the website. the more we spend on marketing the more traffic is sent to the website and mobile app, and the better we can influence them about why they should come here. Our ability to drive visitors to lodging and camping is directly related to funds available for marketing. Outdoor recreation is a popular activity and brings many from the urban centers on vacations and weekend getaways. The more visible we are, the better we can compete for their business. Lewis County continues to be economically feasible as a place to go and stay as well as play.

a. Projected number of participants who will stay overnight in unpaid accommodations: unknown

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number We know that by increasing the visitors to Lewis County, we will also increase the number of visitors who stay in unpaid accommodations. There is no way to determine exact numbers.

10. Describe how the project provides short-term or long-term economic benefit for Lewis County Tourism is economic development. Tourism provides jobs, Tourism employees youth, women and men who need income. Businesses in Lewis County depend and rely on visitors and travelers as their customers. This year we found that while many business had to close, many were able to stay open and serve the travelers who came through the area. Outdoor Recreation brought many many people to seek recreational activities. These visitors brought business to hotels restaurants and grocery stores. The benefit of the White Pass Scenic Byway marketing program is to market Lewis County to the state and other states. With our website, top notch social marketing, mobile app, and networking with statewide tourism programs we are able to sustain jobs, and provide businesses with customers.

11. Explain what plans exist to allow this project to become self-sustaining. Include any plans for ticket sales, event sponsors, and other cost-recovery models.

The Byway seeks opportunities to supplement the Lewis County Lodging tax allocation. We intend to conduct a sponsorship program to the local communities in 2021. We are working with Discover Lewis County to apply for an Outdoor Recreation grant through the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation program. This will not fund general operations and marketing. We rely on Lodging Tax dollars for marketing and promotion.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website address	Whitepassbyway.com
Facebook user name	Facebook.com/whitepassscenicbyway
Instagram	Instagram/whitepassby
Twitter account name	Twitter.com/whitepassbyway
Any other social media platforms your organization uses to promote tourism	Mobile App download at Google Play or Apple store search for WhitePassWA Pinterest and YouTube

BUDGET

Amount	\$5,000
Source	Sponsorships
Confirmed	No
Date available	2021

Income 2

Income 3

Income 4

Income 5

Income 6

Expense - Personnel

County	\$0
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Other Funds	\$0
Total	\$0

Expense - Administration

County	\$1700
Other Funds	\$0
Total	\$1700

Expense - Marketing/promotion

County	\$35,640
Other Funds	\$5,000
Total	\$40,640

Expense - Direct sales activities

County	\$0
Other Funds	\$0
Total	\$0

Expense - Minor equipment

County	\$0
Other Funds	\$0
Total	\$0

Expense - Travel

County	\$1500
Other Funds	\$0
Total	\$1500

Expense - Contract services

County	\$38,360
Other Funds	\$0

Total	\$38,360
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Expense - Other activities

County	\$0
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Other Funds	\$0
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Total	\$0
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Total Cost

County	\$77,200
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Other Funds	\$5,000
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Total	\$82,200
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Priority 1	\$77,200
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Full Funding Request	\$77,200
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Priority 2	\$70,000
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Minimum Funding Request	\$70,000
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Applicant will / can accept no less than this amount	\$60,000
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If partial funding is received, how will that affect the project / activity? Please describe:

Reduction in funding will directly affect the amount of marketing that can be done with paid advertising and social media. Very little of the budget is spent on overhead and operations. Marketing is carried out by professional contractors who manage the day to day operations and execute all aspects of the program, from organizational management, social media, advertising, networking, mobile app and website management to hospitality training. All these activities will be reduced if less funding is received.

PROJECT TIMELINE / TOURISM SEASON

What is your anticipated timeline for accomplishing this activity?

The marketing operations is an ongoing and continual program year-round. While we seek to promote the off season and shoulder seasons, we also need to promote the events and activities that happen during the peak summer season in order to compete in the tourism marketplace. In order to increase lodging tax, our job is to market businesses and lodging when there is a need and availability. Winter recreation is as important as summer outdoor recreation. Both require year-round marketing efforts.

Year-round	Yes
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Year-round Explanation	Website, social media, mobile app, newsletters and tearsheets
Off-season	Yes
Off-season Explanation	We consciously promote off season and mid-week experiences
Shoulder season	Yes
Shoulder season Explanation	Mar-Apr and October - November are opportunities to attract new visitors

Is it a seasonal activity appropriate to its location? Explain

It is harder to impact the high season as much lodging is at capacity

Yes, all our marketing is targeted to the best audience for that season. Our social media programs and digital marketing is adapted for the appropriate season. Communication on seasonal roads, facilities events and programs is important to travelers coming to Lewis County. Many agencies and organizations have become dependent on Byway maps, newsletters, website and mobile app for updated information. We provide Lewis County visitor information digitally 24/7 year-round.

Financial Review

Balance sheet	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9003184012
Income statement	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9003184013
Operating budget for 2020	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9003184014
Projected budget for 2021	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9003184015

Financial review

Financial review	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9003184016
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Nonprofit determination

Nonprofit determination	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9003184017
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Personnel list

Personnel list	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/9003184018
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary K. Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Nelson".

(Print or type applicant's name)

Mary K. Nelson

Date

Oct 07, 2020
