

## DESTINATION READY 2021

### SUMMARY

Travel Oregon is launching the Destination Ready program to provide funding and assistance to destination-based organizations to support the development, enhancement and stewardship of visitor experiences that abide by [state guidelines](#) and will aid in economic recovery, enhance local livability and provide access to a diversity of explorers. Project awards can range from \$10,000 - \$50,000 in cash and consulting time per project category; all projects are expected to be completed within six months of the execution of a financial agreement. This \$250,000 direct investment program led by Travel Oregon's Destination Development department is part of a larger suite of investments Travel Oregon is deploying in 2021.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Oregon's communities and destinations have been impacted by COVID-19, wildfires and significant social and civic unrest. In response, Travel Oregon's Destination Ready program aims to partner with Oregon's tourism destinations—geographic areas consisting of a set of resources and attractions that are visited by tourists—to bolster key tourism products and experiences that will aid in destination recovery and resiliency. The program is led by Travel Oregon's Destination Development (DDEV) department, which has a strong history of engaging with tourism destination organizations and partners to support the development of the key visitor experiences, businesses and organizations that make up a destination's fabric. To continue this work amid unpredictable industry conditions, DDEV has created a set of visitor experience project categories and associated projects that are available to destination organizations for immediate funding and support by Travel Oregon (see page 3).

When considering whether to apply for this program, destinations should understand their existing core visitor experiences and apply for projects that will support and enhance these areas. Eligible applicants include DMOs, RDMOs, economic development and government entities and non-profit entities registered with the Oregon Secretary of State's Office. Proposed projects should align with Travel Oregon's eligible projects list (see page 3) and should be efforts that a destination has already begun or is actively considering for completion by summer 2021. All projects must be completed within six months of the execution of a financial agreement. Successful applicants demonstrate the capacity to manage the funds and successful project execution.

Once selected, Travel Oregon will meet with each destination project team at least three times – once during the initial project phase, once mid-project, and once at the conclusion to gather input and assess effectiveness. Certain projects will require additional support in either capacity or expertise. Travel Oregon's DDEV team will work with the applicant to identify if Travel Oregon staff or contractor support is necessary to successfully execute the project.

#### *Anticipated Community Outcomes*

- Destination assets are enhanced and stewarded to support safe and sustainable visitor experiences that support local livability.
- Businesses are informed and operating effectively to maximize the economic impact of visitation.

- Visitors are engaged, resulting in safer experiences and improved stewardship of community assets.
- Visitors are satisfied with core destination experiences.
- Destination experiences are marketable when marketing resumes.

## KEY PROCESSES & DATES\*

- Applications Open – January 14
  - [Destination Ready Information Session](#) – January 21
- Applications Due – February 3 at 12 p.m. PST
- Destination Award Announcements – February 11
- Destination Initial Meetings – February 22-March 5
- Project Agreement and Funding Disbursement – March 15-31
- Project Completion Date – six months after Project Agreement is signed
- Final Project Evaluation Questionnaire – one month after project completion date

\* all dates are 2021

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

Application materials can be found at [industry.traveloregon.com/destinationready](http://industry.traveloregon.com/destinationready). Organizations will need to submit one application per project category, which can be inclusive of multiple projects. All questions should go to [development@traveloregon.com](mailto:development@traveloregon.com). Questions and answers will be posted to the [FAQ page](#).

### Applicant Eligibility

- Applying organization must be based in Oregon.
- Applying organization must be a DMO, RDMO, economic development entity, government entity or non-profit entity registered with the Oregon Secretary of State's Office.

### Criteria for Successful Applications

Travel Oregon will rank applications based on a set of criteria that include:

#### *Destination Project Criteria*

Applicant demonstrates:

- Understanding of the key tourism experience offerings in their destination.
- Clarity of how this project enhances one or more of those key visitor experiences.
- Project selected can be accomplished in six months (ideally to impact the peak visitor season).
- Partnerships that will support effective implementation of the project.

#### *Organizational Criteria*

Applicant demonstrates:

- Organizational capacity and ability to manage the project timeline, implementation and administration.

- Funding leverages other sources of funding, volunteer capacity, or other in-kind match.
- Organization demonstrates how they are addressing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Application is complete.

## DESTINATION READY ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The following project categories and associated projects are supported by the Travel Oregon Destination Ready program. *Please note that outcomes generated through this program do not include or guarantee marketing or promotion in Travel Oregon channels.*

### Food Trails or Culinary/Farm Trails

Opportunity: Financial and/or technical support for existing food or culinary/farm trails with the goals of enhancing visitor experience and increasing business sales.

Eligible projects include:

- Brochure design update/reprint: *Funding to update trail brochures for accuracy and improved visitor engagement. Travel Oregon staff or contractor technical assistance is available.*
- Oregon Welcome Center distribution: *Funding to cover distribution costs of placing a food or farm trail brochure in Travel Oregon Welcome Centers for one year.*
- Business engagement workshop and follow-up: *Travel Oregon will fund a contractor to assist in agenda development, train/present at the workshop, and provide follow-up technical support to businesses as needed.*
- Digital footprint audit and assistance for businesses (see Small Business Marketing and Technical Support section below).
- Signage: *Funding for the creation and/or production of signs.*

### Water Recreation

Opportunity: Financial and/or technical support for projects with the goal of developing, improving and stewarding water recreation as a key visitor experience.

Eligible projects include:

- River, lake or beach clean-up events and programs.
- Boat launch completion or improvement of existing launches, including ADA improvements.
- River or water trail mapping (online or printed).
- Signage projects (river mile markers, educational signage, etc.).

### High-Use and Destination Critical Outdoor Recreation

Opportunity: Financial and/or technical support for projects with the goal of addressing impacts on public lands resulting from high levels of visitation and/or to support stewardship of outdoor areas that are central to a destination's visitor offerings.

Eligible projects include:

- Trail development, clearing, improvement and other stewardship efforts and volunteer events.
- Recreation site infrastructure improvements and stewardship (signage, kiosks, map updates).
- Garbage management solutions.
- Parking/transportation strategies and solutions.
- Responsible recreation messaging development and/or deployment of [Take Care Out There](#) messaging framework and assets.

### **Bike-Friendly Destinations**

Opportunity: Financial and/or technical support for initiatives around creating a more bike-friendly destination in areas that have determined bicycle tourism to be a key visitor experience.

Eligible projects include:

- Development (by contractor or local lead) of a curated set of bike routes for integration into tourism platforms and other apps/websites.
- Investments in bike hubs that may include racks, fix-it stations, signage, water, bathrooms, camping, etc.
- Efforts to increase quantity of [Bike Friendly Businesses](#) in the destination.

### **Small Business Marketing and Technical Support**

Opportunity: Financial and/or technical support for efforts to train businesses in marketing fundamentals and provide hands-on support to improve business marketing with the goal of improving accuracy and quality of business information available online.

Eligible project:

- Digital footprint audit and assistance for businesses: *Travel Oregon to fund a contractor to work directly with a targeted group of businesses in a destination to identify and implement areas for improvement on social media, website, and online listings. Destinations should focus on a category of businesses (e.g., food and drink), or a specific geography (e.g., main street) for this project.*

### **Business District / Main Street Improvement**

Opportunity: Financial support of infrastructure projects and programs with the goal of improving a destination's business district or main street.

Eligible projects include:

- Funding to support an organized volunteer cleanup event or beautification program in a business district.
- Creation of outdoor public spaces for people to eat, drink and patronize businesses safely, following state guidelines.
- Signage projects including development of information kiosks and wayfinding programs.