



ERTD Grants Committee

Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at 10:00am

Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83460586879?pwd=Y1h2eURCcENTck9zQk1FcFovQ1NlZz09>

Meeting ID: 834 6058 6879

Passcode: 568601

Special Meeting

### **Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Nikki Cabrera, Tyra Penn-Gesek, Stuart Peaslee, Fran Kefalas

Guests: Andrea Manning

1. Call to Order
  - a. Nikki Cabrera called the meeting to order at 10:01am.
2. Meeting Minutes Approval 9/3/25
  - a. Stuart made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 9/3/2025, seconded by Tyra Penn-Gesek. All in favor, the motion passed.
3. Review Suite of Documents on the Regional Marketing Partnership Program
  - a. The committee agreed to standardize terminology throughout Appendix A and the rubric by using the phrase “collaborative partners” to describe entities that play an active role in a project, rather than those that simply benefit from it. They proposed updating the rubric language to read, “Number of



collaborative partners involved in the project. A collaborative partner plays an active role and is not merely a tourism entity that may benefit.”

- b. Members discussed the ongoing confusion among applicants about what constitutes a true partnership and reaffirmed that the grant is meant to encourage genuine collaboration, not simply the inclusion of member lists or beneficiaries. They agreed to seek the Executive Committee’s input on whether to maintain the current “partnership” focus or broaden the definition to include other forms of collaboration, and to provide applicants with examples of acceptable partnerships, such as cross-promotion of materials, shared match dollars, or coordinated programming.
- c. The committee considered potential rubric refinements to better reward projects that build on existing tourism assets and demonstrate long-term regional impact. They agreed to include a question asking applicants to describe how their project leverages CTvisit assets, previous grantees, or neighboring initiatives, and discussed the possibility of connecting awardees post-funding to strengthen cross-promotion and collaboration.
- d. Members agreed that the term “visitors” should be replaced with “anticipated reach” to more accurately capture both in-person attendance and broader audience exposure through digital or mobile assets.
- e. The group supported adding a prompt requiring applicants to describe how their project aligns with tourism goals and complies with CTvisit branding guidelines, noting lessons learned from a prior awardee whose corporate branding conflicted with state requirements.



- f. The committee confirmed that prior funding does not guarantee future awards and that applicants must reapply each year. Repeat requests for identical projects or those failing to meet eligibility criteria will be scored accordingly, though the committee will continue offering clarification opportunities to smaller or volunteer-run applicants who may need additional guidance.
    - g. The committee discussed ways to extend each project's impact beyond its initial activity, suggesting a post-award gathering or coordination among grantees to encourage collaboration, connect related initiatives, and strengthen long-term regional visibility.
- 4. Next Steps for Regional Marketing Partnership Program FY26
  - a. Members agreed that an updated draft of materials should be prepared for review prior to the Executive Committee meeting on November 6, 2025.
  - b. A recommendation on updates to the suite of documents is tabled, with the committee scheduled to meet again on Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
- 5. Adjournment
  - a. Stuart Peaslee made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tyra Penn-Gesek. All in favor the meeting adjourned at 11:01am.