

AOT Cooperative Marketing Program

Fiscal Year 2026

Guidelines & Instructions

Due Date: Applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on July 25, 2025.

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ARIZONA OFFICE OF TOURISM

The AOT Cooperative Marketing Program FY2026

1. Program Purpose

The AOT Cooperative Marketing Program is administered by the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) for the purpose of expanding travel and tourism related activities in communities throughout Arizona. It provides a means for eligible participants, (Destination marketing organizations (DMOs), tribal entities, statewide tourism associations and regional tourism partnerships), to participate in tourism marketing opportunities.

AOT works with Off Madison Avenue, our agency of record, to negotiate a variety of tourism marketing opportunities at reduced rates. Eligible participant buys are matched at fifty (50) percent (1:1) of the AOT negotiated rate.

2. Program Description

The AOT Cooperative Marketing Program offers a variety of strategic media and marketing service offerings that participants can participate in at tiered levels. Below is a list of each of the offerings included in the AOT Cooperative Marketing Program for FY26:

- Packaged Digital Media**
- Strategic Planning Services**
- Integrated Media Advertising Programs**
- Individual Ad Buys**
- Out-of- Home**
- Content Creation and Distribution**
- Research**
- Brand Development Packages**
- Trade & Media Missions**
- Crowdriff UGC (User Generated Content)**
- Bandwango Digital Passports**
- IBCCES Autism & Cognitive Disorder Certification Training**
- Self-Managed Custom Marketing Services**

3. Matched Rates

AOT will match fifty (50) percent (1:1) of the negotiated rate for eligible co-op participants.

- 3.1 Individual ad buys shall not exceed \$15,000 half-net rate.
 - 3.1.1 **Partners co-op plan selected offerings cannot exceed \$50,000.**
 - 3.1.2 Opportunities may have minimum or maximum participation requirements.

Matched rates for the AOT Cooperative Marketing Program are contingent upon AOT's FY 2026 budget.

4. Program Eligibility

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs), tribal entities, statewide tourism marketing associations and regional tourism partnerships meeting the criteria in this section are eligible. Please read the eligibility criteria thoroughly.

- 4.1 Applicants must meet the criteria of at least one of the following four categories in order to be eligible for matched rates:
 - 4.1.1 **An Arizona-based Destination Marketing Organization (DMO).** A DMO is defined as an incorporated not-for-profit organization or governmental unit that is responsible for the tourism promotion and marketing of a destination on a year-round basis. Only one DMO can participate per city, town or region. **Eligible DMOs must be located in counties with less than 3,000,000 residents as determined by the 2020 Decennial Census.** An entity cannot participate in both Prop 302 and Co-op.
 - 4.1.2 **A tribal entity** that wishes to market existing tourism attractions and tourism facilities.
 - 4.1.3 **An Arizona-based statewide tourism association** that represents entities that rely on tourism-related business for a majority and/or more than 50% of their income.
 - 4.1.4 **An Arizona-based regional partnership** which consists of a minimum of three (3) DMOs that promote a minimum of three (3) communities as a

single regional tourist destination.—Only one regional partnership can participate per region. Each regional participant must be the designated DMO for its respective community. Regional partnerships must have a tourism website or microsite that promotes each regional participant in an equitable manner.

And

- 4.1.5 Applicants must be exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 of the Internal Revenue Code. Applicants shall not use the 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 status of another organization. Tribes and Governmental Units are exempt from the 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 status requirement as they are government.

And

- 4.1.6 Applicants must have a **tourism website** or **microsite** to use as the call to action and a **fulfillment piece**.

DMOs in counties with populations greater than 3,000,000 (Maricopa) are not eligible for participation on the program but they are able to participate with AOT on co-op marketing opportunities, at the negotiated rate, but will not receive the 50% match.

5. Strategic Plan - Objectives of the Program

- 5.1 Provide strategy, research and tourism marketing services to assist participants in planning and implementing tourism marketing programs.
- 5.1.2 Deliver a cohesive message with reach and frequency to visitors in target markets to have a larger impact.
- 5.1.3 Secure opportunities at varying levels that allow for co-branded and stand-alone programs for the participants.
- 5.1.4 Increase overnight visitation and return visitation to the communities and regions of Arizona.
- 5.1.5 Increase visitor spending.

6. Marketing Plan

The AOT Marketing Cooperative is an Arizona-focused cooperative marketing program that utilizes a marketing plan designed to attract visitors from major

metropolitan areas in Arizona, drive markets, short-haul domestic and targeted international markets.

The fiscal year 2026 program will run from September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026.

AOT has developed a comprehensive marketing plan informed by the annual AOT cooperative marketing survey results, participant insights, strategy planning and AOT research. The marketing placements are geo-targeted to identified target markets and audiences.

7. Application Instructions

Each entity may submit a maximum of two applications. If an entity submits two applications, one must be a regional partnership.

The application must be completed via provided Google Application found below or in Attachment A, Section A - Applicant Administrative Information and Attachment A, Section A - Affidavit in Support of Application.

- 7.1 Entity Name: The name of the applicant must be the same as it appears on the incorporation, federal tax exemption or the state charter.
 - 7.1.1 Physical Address: Provide a street address (no P.O. Boxes) for deliveries.
 - 7.1.2 Mailing Address: Provide a mailing address that can be used by AOT for routine correspondence.
 - 7.1.3 County: Identify the county in which the applying organization is located. In the case of regional applications, list all counties included under the application.
 - 7.1.4 Project Coordinator's Name and Title: The person responsible for administering the project and the day-to-day contact for AOT. This individual is also responsible for submitting all necessary documentation throughout the year-long effort of this project and must be familiar with the specifics of the AOT Marketing Cooperative, as well as the application submitted. Provide the Project Coordinator's telephone number and e-mail address.
 - 7.1.5 Provide the destination website that will be promoted in marketing placements. Regional partnerships must have a website that promotes the region and each participant in an equitable manner.

7.1.6 The fulfillment piece is the tourism brochure or visitor guide that will be sent to people who inquire about the destination. Regional partnerships must have a fulfillment piece that promotes the region and each participant in an equitable manner. The fulfillment piece must be sent to **jlehman@tourism.az.gov**.

7.1.7 Refer to Section 4.1.4 for information on Regional Partnerships. List all regional participants in the designated box.

7.1.8 Signatures: The signatures on the application certify that the information on the form is correct to the best of the signatories' knowledge, and authorizes the participation in the AOT Cooperative Marketing Program for FY 2026. Applications must bear the typed signatures of the Project Coordinator and the Administrative Official (the person authorized to commit the applicant to funding requested co-op opportunities). Both typed signatures are required to process the application. In some cases the Project Coordinator and the Administrative Official will be the same person. **The application Google Form must be completed and signed, and received by AOT no later than July 25, 2025 by 5:00 p.m.**
The application Google Form can also be found on the Attachment Form - page 10
Application questions: Please contact Jamie Daer, at jdaer@tourism.az.gov

7.1.9 A signed Designation of Destination Marketing Affidavit must be on file with AOT. **If you presently do not have an affidavit on file with AOT, the affidavit form must be completed, signed and received by AOT via Google Forms no later than September 2, 2025. The Affidavit documentation forms can be found on Attachment page 11 of this document.**

Late applications will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will be ineligible.

8. The AOT Cooperative Marketing Opportunity Selection Sheet

The AOT Cooperative Marketing Program allows participants to leverage their resources in partnership with AOT; and for eligible participants to receive matched

rates of fifty (50) percent (1:1) for most selected marketing opportunities listed on the AOT Cooperative Marketing Opportunity Selection Sheet.

***Some research or trade and media missions will have a match rate up to a certain amount which may not equate to 50%.**

A link to the selection form will also be available on July 8, 2025, 5:00 p.m. at <https://tourism.az.gov/rural-marketing-co-op-program/>

8.1 All applicants may not receive every offering requested.

- 8.1.1 Select opportunities are limited due to space. If space limitations are exceeded, participants will be selected based on the date and time stamp of their submission.
- 8.1.2 Costs for Mobile Data reports will be customized based on destination location and needs.
- 8.1.3 Trade and media missions – some shows may require that the participant pre-register and provide proof of registration, payment and an invoice to Off Madison Avenue (Agency of Record) for the negotiated match rate.
- 8.1.4 CrowdRiff UGC Platform – must have at least **6 DMO partners** in order for the program to be offered.
- 8.1.5 **Participants are responsible for any taxes and/or production costs at 100%. Taxes and production are not eligible for AOT matching funds.***

*Publication costs identified on the AOT Cooperative Marketing Program Opportunity Selection Sheet are listed as net rates for all placements.

Participants will be billed directly by the publisher at half the net cost.

9. Ad Placement Requirements

- 9.1 All print and digital ads (excluding small banners/mobile banners) must be received by AOT for review prior to the material deadline identified in the AOT Marketing Cooperative Opportunity Profiles. Please e-mail ads to Krista Mott-Fulton at kmott-fulton@tourism.az.gov. AOT approval for print and digital ads creative is mandatory and may take up to five (5) business days from the date of receipt.

9.1.1 Participant print and digital ads must include your logo and a full-color, black or white [AOT brand mark](#) (see below) on all print and digital placements unless the size of the digital placement (small banners/mobile banners) will not support two logos. In that case, the AOT brand mark is not required. **Please feel free to use the AOT brand mark version-with-icon that best represents your destination.**



9.1.2 If a print or digital placement is sent to the publisher without prior AOT review/written approval, AOT will not pay the program match (50) percent (1:1). The full advertisement cost will be the responsibility of the AOT Marketing Cooperative participant.

9.1.3 Inclusion of the [AOT brand mark](#) is required on all participant websites. Please see 9 for AOT brand mark information.

9.1.4 Project Effectiveness -

- Publisher must provide placement metrics
- Cancellations or changes must be submitted and approved by AOT prior to implementation.
- **The responsible party on the application must fulfill the campaign offerings chosen and finalized.**
- **They must be responsive to media partners, agency partners and AOT throughout the entirety of the program or face possible penalties such as cancellation of media, forfeiting the 50% (1:1) match from AOT or ineligibility for future co-op plans**

10. AOT Cooperative Marketing Program Timeline

- FY26 AOT Cooperative Marketing Program Webinar - July 14, 2025 @ 10:00 - 11:15 a.m.
- Application, affidavit and selection sheet posted on Tourism.az.gov - July 8, 2025
- Media Buying Assistance - July 21-22, 2025 (9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)
- Applications Due - July 25, 2025 by 5:00 p.m. AZ Time
- Selection Sheets Due - July 25, 2025 by 5:00 p.m. AZ Time
- Affidavit Due - September 2, 2025
- AOT Co-op Marketing Program Begins - September 1, 2025
- AOT Co-op Program Ends - August 31, 2026

ATTACHMENTS

Application Google Form

Affidavit Google Forms (see below)

AOT requires a DMO designation and affidavit from each partner that intends to participate in any AOT programs, but the designation will only be viable for the determined time the municipality or county sets.

Below are the needed documents with links and additional details:

1. [DMO Cover Page & Affidavit](#) (Submit Through [Google Form](#))
 - a. Required for FY26 and any time there's a change in DMO designation
2. [Copy of the Official Action](#) (Submit Through [Google Form](#))
 - a. Required for FY26 and any time there's a change in DMO designation
3. [Designated DMO Form](#) (All documents will be uploaded and submitted through [this form](#))
 - a. Required for FY26 and AOT will use this information to verify DMO status next year.

The DMO Cover Sheet & Affidavit, Official Action and Designation DMO Background Information Form are due September 2, 2025 through the [Google Forms](#) but the official action must be effective July 1, 2025.

More information on this process can be found on tourism.az.gov