

VRMA Opportunity Fund Grant Program Guidelines

1. The Opportunity Fund is a program under the Advocacy Fund that allows short-term vacation rental industry alliances and coalitions to receive an expedited grant from VRMA for urgent advocacy projects.
2. Financial assistance is available to provide support to state, local and regional VRMA- affiliated coalitions or organizations to help address a legislative, regulatory or ballot issue that has national significance or is a common industry problem whose resolution could be precedent-setting and might not succeed without financial support from VRMA. Priority will be given to projects that match funds or are able to fund independent research to protect and promote the industry.
3. Maximum financial assistance for any single Opportunity Fund grant request shall not exceed \$10,000.
4. Opportunity Fund grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis and will be reviewed and approved individually as they are received.
5. Funds must be used for advocacy projects that will be executed within 90 days of submitting the grant application.
 - Example: A local alliance applies for an Opportunity Fund grant on October 1st for a public relations campaign supporting or opposing a recently proposed city ordinance. The campaign must be executed within 90 days and have an invoice paid to the vendor by December 31st.
6. To qualify for Opportunity Fund grants, at least one of the following membership requirements must be met:
 - Coalition must be an Associate VRMA member in good standing; or
 - Have VRMA representation on the coalition's Board or steering committee; or
 - Over a majority of the coalition's membership must also be VRMA members.
4. Requests for assistance must be made by the appropriate state, local or regional affiliated coalition and must be submitted in writing, accompanied by suitable documentation in support of the request. Applicants should address the following topics in their application:
 - a. The affiliated coalition's mission, goals and objectives;
 - b. Documentation confirming membership criteria are met;
 - c. A summary of the landscape of the state including media coverage of the industry, percentage of housing stock, the breakdown of vacation rentals vs hotels, the breakdown of individual manager vs management companies, the current permit or licensing structure regulated at local or state level, and the demographics (urban, coastal, destination) of the market in question;

- d. A summary of the issue's history, current status, and any licensing or ordinance changes in the last two years;
 - e. An explanation of the issue's national significance or how it could set a precedent for the vacation rental industry;
 - f. A detailed outline of the affiliated coalition's action plan for addressing the issue and how VRMA's funds will be allocated;
 - g. An explanation of the affiliated coalition's resources already committed, and why additional support from VRMA is necessary for success;
 - h. A detailed description of how the project will promote the professional management of vacation rentals; and
 - i. The amount of money the affiliated coalition is requesting from VRMA's Advocacy Fund.
5. The coalition's position on the issue cannot conflict with any VRMA policies.
6. Applications will be reviewed by the VRMA Grant Review Team and approved by VRMA's Board of Directors.
7. Upon request, the coalition receiving financial assistance under these guidelines shall provide VRMA's Government Affairs Council with written updates on the project's progress and an explanation on how the funds are being utilized.
8. The VRMA-affiliated coalition receiving funds shall provide VRMA with the opportunity to be recognized as a coalition partner in the proposed project. The coalition is required to provide VRMA with copies of any collateral materials developed as part of their overall campaign so they can be made available to other affiliated coalitions facing similar issues/situations. Examples of these materials include: opinion polls, research data, reports, marketing or campaign materials, legislation, etc. The materials will be property of VRMA.
9. Applications from individuals will not be accepted.
10. If the recipient organization ceases operations before the awarded project is completed, VRMA reserves the right to either discontinue funding or, at its discretion, assume responsibility for and complete the project.
11. Grant funds will be disbursed directly to vendors, research firms, and/or entities included in the approved application, upon receipt of invoices and expense statements. Activities and expenses not included in the original, approved application are not eligible for reimbursement. Awarded funds are non-transferable.
12. The applying affiliated coalition is solely responsible for any and all reporting requirements, which may apply as a result of receiving monies from the VRMA Opportunity Fund for taxation and political/lobbying purposes.
13. Grant funds shall not be used to fund campaigns by individual political candidates.

14. Grant funds shall not be used to fund litigation and lawsuits.

15. Applicants can only use VRMA Opportunity Fund grants for specific, budgeted items outlined in their application. Requests should also have a professional, accurate estimate or price from a vendor or company.

Projects eligible for Opportunity Fund grant awards:

- Studies
- Reports
- Polling
- Research data
- Amicus briefs
- Draft/model legislation
- Public relations (PR) campaign and materials including mailers, text, advertising, media production, etc.
- Consultants tasked with a specific function such as developing PR campaign materials
- Seed funding for a lobbyist for a specific and actionable legislative or regulatory threat. Applicants will need to show additional funding sources to support the lobbyist beyond the scope of the grant.

Funds may not be used for the following expenses:

- Staff salaries
- General operating expenses
- Other overhead costs by the organization
- Litigation or lawsuits
- Membership drives
- Campaigns by individual political candidates
- Projects for which VRMA has already awarded funds for in the previous year (subject to discretion by the VRMA Government Affairs Council)

For any questions, please contact Alex McIntyre, VRMA Government Affairs Manager, at amcintyre@vrma.org.