

# EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT TOURISM RETURN-TO-WORK GRANT PROGRAM

## Program Overview

To assist with the revitalization of the tourism industry in New York State, Governor Hochul has allocated \$100 million to the **Tourism Return-To-Work Grant Program**.

Empire State Development will award grants to qualifying tourism businesses in New York State for increasing their average employment between January 1, 2022, and September 30, 2022, as compared to a baseline employment period between October 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021. For seasonal businesses, the baseline employment is January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021. These enhanced benefits to the existing program will allow businesses to document additional employment growth that occurred during July – September 2022.

Grants of up to \$5,000 per net new full-time job are available, capped at 50 jobs and \$250,000.

This grant:

- ✓ Does not require a match
- ✓ Is not a loan, and does not need to be paid back
- ✓ Is open to all qualifying tourism businesses, including not-for-profit organizations, that suffered economic harm during the COVID-19 pandemic, and grew employment in 2022.

**For further assistance completing an application, please email [TourismReturntoWork@esd.ny.gov](mailto:TourismReturntoWork@esd.ny.gov) to schedule an individual counseling session.**

## Eligibility

To be eligible for grants, applicants must:

- ✓ Be incorporated in New York State, or licensed or registered to do business in New York State;
- ✓ Have experienced economic harm resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by a year-to-year decrease of at least 15% of gross receipts and/or gross wages between 2019 and 2020\*; and
- ✓ Be engaged in a tourism-related field

## Application Process

To aid in determining eligibility, the first step in the process is completion of an eligibility screening tool. If eligibility requirements are met, an email will be sent with the next steps on how to submit an application. Please see the links at the end of this document for additional information.

## Required Documentation

The application will require accompanying documentation, including but not limited to:

- ✓ Proof of at least 15% Gross Receipts loss or 15% Gross Wages loss as shown on 2019-2020 Business Income Tax returns\*
- ✓ Proof of business location and current operation
- ✓ Actual employment data (full-time, part-time hours) for both a base period (*Q4 2021 for year-round businesses and Q1 and Q2 2021 for seasonal businesses*) and a growth period (*Q1, Q2 and Q3 2022*).
- ✓ NYS 45 forms for employment verification
- ✓ Seasonal businesses must submit their most recent Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return – include IRS Form 941
- ✓ For funds distribution: W-9 and bank account information

\*Applicants that file taxes on a fiscal year basis will submit returns for FY 2019-2020 compared to FY 2020-2021 to show economic harm. Non-profit organizations will use total revenue and/or salaries to calculate economic harm and will also have the option to use its operations revenue minus any grant and/or donations to calculate economic harm.

For a complete list of requirements, visit the [Tourism Return-To-Work Program page](#).

**Program Website:** <https://esd.ny.gov/tourism-return-work-grant-program>

**Program Contact:** [TourismReturntoWork@esd.ny.gov](mailto:TourismReturntoWork@esd.ny.gov)



**Empire State  
Development**