



Request for Proposal
Media Marketplace 2025 and 2026

Last updated: February 16, 2024

Thank you for your interest in serving as the host destination for the 2025 or 2026 Annual Media Marketplace of the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA), the premier source for media interaction and professional development for public relations professionals from convention and visitors bureaus in the Mid-Atlantic region.

This conference provides an event that meets the professional, education, and media relations-building goals of our 80+ members. MATPRA attempts to rotate this conference through each of the states and to different sections of the Mid-Atlantic region between major media markets. (NOTE: Major media markets are designated as those with at least 100 working travel journalists within a 150-mile radius).

The Board of Directors, media committee, and host committee are part of a team that develops this conference. All groups must work together collaboratively. To assist you, our potential host, throughout the process, MATPRA will provide you with a “Roles and Responsibilities” document that outlines what is expected of all parties involved.

CRITERIA TO CONSIDER WHEN SUBMITTING A BID

Please respond to the criteria below in your proposal to host the 2025 or 2026 Media Marketplace on behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA).

- Bid must be submitted by a current MATPRA member in good standing who is current on annual dues and has attended at least one quarterly meeting in the last year.
- Bids should include information about a proposed location, dates, schedule, activities, and hotel rates.
- Does your location (or if working with a contiguous location as a regional host team) have a conference center/hotel that can serve as a meeting center and Marketplace site that offers at least 6,500 square feet of space to arrange six- or eight-foot tables with aisle space?
- Does your region have a host hotel property that can offer at least 125 rooms to serve as lodging for attending media and alliance members?
- Does your region offer diverse story opportunities that are available within the host destination and surrounding areas to serve as themed Destination Tours during the event?
- Consideration: Any destination that has hosted or is hosting a national travel/tourism industry event within 12 months of our proposed conference WILL NOT be considered for the year applicable in this RFP. This includes the PRSA Travel and Tourism Conference, IPW, SATW annual conventions, the Destinations International Annual Convention, the PRSA International Conference, ESTO, etc.

The selected host destination will be responsible for providing regular updates to the membership at the quarterly meetings leading up to the Media Marketplace and via email to the entire membership. Please be sure that a representative from your destination can attend all MATPRA meetings leading up to your event.

Upon selection, a contract between the host destination and MATPRA will be developed to detail the agreement with the terms presented in the proposal as well as a timeline for future deadlines regarding the Media Marketplace event. If you have any questions, please contact the MATPRA Board Chair.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Media Marketplace is the single best source for building and growing media relationships with travel journalists interested in Mid-Atlantic stories, as well as professional development opportunities for public relations professionals of convention and visitors bureaus in the Mid-Atlantic region. In addition to learning about current trends and practices, participants have the opportunity to network with colleagues and gain exposure to travel media via panel discussions, tours, and social functions.

The objective of the Media Marketplace is to present our common and complementary messages to a broad range of travel media within the Mid-Atlantic region. The Media Marketplace is tentatively planned as a multi-day event, with one-on-one, face-to-face media contact; tours of the host's destination; the organization's annual meeting; and if warranted, professional development sessions.

Attendees are limited to MATPRA members in good standing from the Mid-Atlantic states, while travel journalists accepted via an application process may attend from within the United States and Canada. All applicants are vetted by the MATPRA Media Committee before acceptance.

The conference can draw 100-200 participants, depending on its location, including media invitees, DMO representatives, and possible professional development speakers. Marketplace is held between the months of May and September with a Tuesday through Thursday format. Alternative schedules may be considered, but this format is preferred. (See below for dates to avoid and note that we are open to suggestions about your destination's ideal dates for the conference.)

Qualified MATPRA destinations agree to pay a registration fee of up to \$600 to attend Marketplace (includes meals, tours, and transportation). This registration fee helps underwrite the cost of hosting the Media Marketplace. The fee covers costs for one member from a qualifying MATPRA member DMO. If the event format allows for one additional representative to attend Media Marketplace, an additional fee of at least \$500 will be imposed for that additional representative. Lodging rates for DMOs attending Marketplace shall not exceed \$175 per room, per night, plus taxes and fees.

Before event registration opens, the MATPRA Board and Marketplace host will discuss the possibility of permitting an additional representative as it relates to the event budget, capacities, public health precautions, and other limitations.

Members of the media must apply for consideration to attend the Media Marketplace. Applications will be vetted by the MATPRA Media Committee to determine acceptance. Media are not permitted to bring guests to any MATPRA-sponsored activities including meals,

Destination Tours, and Marketplace. The host destination will be offered four spots for local media partners and be asked to provide one staff member or designated representative to serve on the Media Committee during the application process and review.

The host destination can reduce costs by offering sponsorship opportunities, first to MATPRA members and then to community partners. Sponsorships can be for meals, transportation, printing, etc., and host destinations are encouraged to be creative in designing additional options. Sample sponsor benefits include:

- Recognition of the sponsor, including the corporate logo, in the appropriate program and invitations, as well as on MATPRA.org.
- Speaking opportunities to pitch destinations.

Any profits that result after all Media Marketplace expenses are paid are to be returned to MATPRA to be used to continue to run the non-profit organization.

Those destinations neighboring the host destination may wish to offer pre- and/or post-FAM tours before and/or after Marketplace. This will be discussed once the location has been determined. Details on pre- and post-FAM tours will be coordinated by the MATPRA Board and Managing Director. If the overall Media Marketplace event is a collaborative effort among neighboring DMOs, the opportunity to host pre- or post-FAM will be given to the Host Committee.

Ideally, the location of the MATPRA Media Marketplace rotates so that the conference becomes equally accessible to participants from all over the Mid-Atlantic. See Appendix A for past conference sites.

To aid in your planning, we are providing reports on attendees/participants for the last few conferences. Please note that in some cases, more than one attendee from a DMO participated. In other cases, several attendees came for a shortened version of the conference, having not been able to attend from start to finish. This information can also be found in Appendix A.

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

The conference format is typically held **Tuesday through Thursday**, not including any pre- or post-conference activities.

Neighboring tourism bureaus are encouraged to organize pre- and/or post-tours that allow the media to experience their destinations. If the overall Media Marketplace event is a collaborative effort among neighboring DMOs, the opportunity to host pre- or post-FAM will be given to the Host Committee.

If warranted and beneficial to all attendees, the Host Committee, in conjunction with the MATPRA Media Committee, will work collaboratively to determine topics for professional development sessions and to identify/secure panelists for these sessions, as well as a sponsored keynote speaker. The MATPRA Board retains final approval for all topics, speakers, etc.

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

Arrival Day/Day One

- Registration for DMOs
- MATPRA Board and Committees arrive and meet in the afternoon, suggest wrap-up of all meetings by 3 p.m.
- Annual Meeting of the organization (one hour), suggest 4 p.m.
- Registration for media attendees
- Welcome mixer for members and media, suggest 7 p.m. start and held at or near the host hotel so late arrival attendees can join.

Day Two

- Registration for media
- Breakfast with opportunity for a sponsorship or keynote speaker
- Media Marketplace (suggest using host hotel - 3 hours)
- Break for DMOs to clean up and pack Marketplace materials (1 hour)
- Lunch with opportunity for a keynote speaker or box lunch on way to Destination Tours
- Destination Tours
- Dinner. If using a dine-around format, we encourage this to be done this evening.

Day Three

- Breakfast with opportunity for a keynote speaker
- Morning Destination Tours
- Farewell lunch with opportunity for a keynote speaker or panel and announcement of future Marketplace location

The host hotel should offer the conference rate for shoulder dates of one night prior and one night after the conference. Members and media have the option to spend the night after Day Three at their own expense.

Please note: *The actual conference structure is subject to change based on evaluations received from conference attendees the prior year. The selected host and the Board will work together to determine what aspects of the feedback must be implemented in the upcoming event. The MATPRA Board's primary goal is to best meet the needs of our members.*

HOST LOCATION BENEFITS

- Your destination receives revenue from rooms, food, and beverage, etc.
- Your destination will likely receive media coverage from the media members who participate in the conference and any special pre-e or post-conference tours. This requires some proactive work on part of the host DMO/CVB.
- You can access media that you otherwise might not be able to bring to your destination. This strengthens your relationship with the media, as your interaction with them goes beyond a standard pitch. You could also use this opportunity to craft a special press tour for these members of the media.
- Your destination is exposed to professionals with a predisposition toward travel.
- Your destination will likely be included in social feeds from not only the conference social media handles, but individual attendees as well.

HOST LOCATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Note: *All contracts, final arrangements, and guarantees with any hotels or outside vendors must be negotiated and signed by the Host Chair.*

- Attend each of MATPRA's quarterly meetings prior to Marketplace and participate in monthly conference calls to give updates and reports to the MATPRA Board. The host is also expected to attend the first quarterly meeting after Marketplace to provide an evaluation of the event from the host destination's perspective.
- Create a local Host Committee that helps to develop the conference – acquiring sponsorships and developing the conference schedule/agenda, etc. It is possible that neighboring MATPRA members may want to support the event, but one official Chair should be appointed as the main contact.

NOTE: MATPRA Board, Managing Director, and appropriate committees will assist with speaker procurement and must grant final approval on all speakers, program, attendees, sponsorships, etc.

- Choose date(s) for the MATPRA Media Marketplace. The selected date(s) for Marketplace should not conflict with other major tourism industry events or federal holidays, including those outlined below. Please check with the committee before you commit to any dates.
 - PRSA/SATW Associates Council Meeting
 - PRSA Travel & Tourism Section Meeting
 - SATW National Meeting
 - Travel Media Showcase
 - Destinations International Annual Convention
 - IPW
 - Rosh Hashanah
 - Yom Kippur
 - ESTO
- Identify and arrange a hotel that provides the best available lodging, meeting, and entertainment venues for a reasonable price. Rates no higher than \$175 per night are desired with a minimum number of 50 available rooms available at the host hotel. Overflow rooms should be arranged at a nearby hotel should they be needed for additional attendees.
- Complimentary/discounted lodging should be secured for all media. Costs accrued for media will be the responsibility of the host destination. Accommodations will also need to be made for any additional speakers or panelists at the expense of the host destination.
- Arrange transportation for all attendees to and from events, as needed. Transportation to and from the host destination for speakers or panelists may be subsidized by the MATPRA organization. *NOTE: We are able to keep our conference fees low from year to year because the Host Committee uses their regional connections to obtain discounts.*
- Identify and arrange a meeting venue either in the hotel or nearby that is comped by the host facility or paid for by the Host Committee. Meeting rooms must be secured for all events on the agenda and able to accommodate up to groups of 175 (theater-style and tradeshow layout). Banquet rooms must be able to accommodate up to 200 (banquet style). The minimum requirement for the overall conference facility is 10,000 square feet of meeting space that includes breakout possibilities.
- Arrange and secure all banquet/food and beverage needs for the conference, including MATPRA's annual meeting. Be prepared to accommodate a variety of dietary needs/restrictions.
- Prepare and secure sponsorship opportunities and communicate/arrange with MATPRA members. If opportunities remain within a 120-day window of the event, sponsorships may be opened up to the Host Committee's partners in communication with the MATPRA Board of Directors. Sponsorships can be of

cash value or in-kind donations, if appropriate.

- Arrange and secure all Destination Tour opportunities, while keeping in mind that an equal number of journalists and DMO representatives should be assigned to each tour to allow for effective networking opportunities.
- Work collaboratively with Host Committee, MATPRA Board, Managing Director, and appropriate committees will to determine the professional development topics, and to identify and secure panelists for these topic sessions, as well as a sponsored keynote speaker. The MATPRA Board retains final approval for all topics, speakers, etc.
- Provide special event insurance policy to cover off-site Destination Tour activities, as well as pre- and post-FAM tours if applicable. The host is encouraged to check their existing policy to determine if the MATPRA event would be covered. In the event the host's policy cannot be used, hold harmless agreements (waivers) will be required of all event attendees, guests, volunteers, etc. MATPRA shall provide a special event insurance policy to cover events happening at the host hotel, including the Marketplace event floor and conference space.
- Identify and secure an airline and or mass transit partner who can offer discounts for conference participants and/or comp tickets for members of the media, if possible.
- Work with MATPRA Board, Managing Director, and appropriate committees to promote the conference via e-invitations, emails, and a conference program. Materials will be emailed from the MATPRA email address, using MATPRA branded templates.
- Act as the main liaison with the hotel, audio-visual companies, food and beverage managers, etc.
- Develop budget, provide budget support, and work with the MATPRA Board and Managing Director on financial goals.
- Arrange for a registration area and have a delegate at the registration table, along with at least one MATPRA Board member.
- Secure meeting space for MATPRA's annual meeting. Host participating Site Selection Committee members for a two-day, one-night site visit at least 60 days prior to Marketplace. The host destination should secure a rate of no more than \$175 for one night for all committee members. Committee members will be responsible for the cost of lodging, transportation, and meals during the visit, but the host destination should be prepared to cover any additional expenses.
- Monitor and track the destination's public health situation and ensure that any and all mitigation efforts, mandates, and best practices are enacted at each event location, including but not limited to Destination and FAM tour sites, restaurants, and meeting spaces. Host will provide notice to the Board of these measures, and these will be communicated to event participants by the Board, as needed.
- Create a plan of action in the event that a participant becomes ill during pre, post, or Marketplace events.

MATPRA RESPONSIBILITIES

- Work collaboratively with the Host Committee in developing the program and sponsorship opportunities.
- Review and approve all promotional and printed materials prior to production.
- Serve as moderators for media panels and professional development sessions, along with the Professional Development and Media Committees.
- Create and produce state signs for each state.
- Provide on-site staff support from the Board or contracted support personnel. Act as event emcee by handling event introductions and housekeeping notes as needed.
- Invoice all sponsors and provide money to host as needed to cover expenses.
- Manage registration/accept payment for all DMO representatives and journalists.

MEDIA COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Manage the online media application process alongside the Board.
- Vet all media applications and develop a final list of accepted journalists in conjunction with the Host. The MATPRA Board liaison to the Media Committee will distribute all notifications of acceptances and declines from the MATPRA email account.
- Communicate the status of media RSVPs with the Host Committee by their set deadlines.
- Design and send the conference invitation, with input from the Host Committee and final approval from the MATPRA Board.
- Review all promotional and printed materials.
- Assist in securing speakers for the media panel portions of the program.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Work with the Host Committee to create a timeline of posts to the MATPRA Marketplace social handles to push out consistent messaging.

COSTS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUDGETING

- Printing and Postage
 - Printed piece at the show (150 pieces)
 - Name Badges
- Food and Beverage
 - Mixer
 - Breakfast (day 2 and day 3)
 - Marketplace reception (snack and drink during Marketplace; typically this is funded by MATPRA)
 - Lunch (day 2 and day 3)
 - Dinner/Dine-A-Rounds (including gratuities)
 - Evening Receptions
 - Coffee/Tea/Soft drinks during sessions
- Transportation
 - Destination Tour transportation (including gratuities)
 - Transportation to lunches and dinners (including gratuities)
 - Transportation for out-of-town journalists from/to airport and/or train station (including gratuities)
- Branded Signage
- Lodging varies with location, but the hope is that some media rooms will be comped by the host hotel.
- See Appendix B for budgets from the past two Marketplaces.

DEADLINES

Please communicate your intent to apply to host either the 2025 or 2026 Marketplace to Managing Director Heidi Schlag by March 15, 2024 at midatlantictourism@gmail.com.

Proposals for 2025 host due April 15, 2024.

Proposals for 2026 host due June 1, 2024.

Submit proposals to midatlantictourism@gmail.com.

Questions? Contact Chair Morgan Christopher at morganck@gmail.com.

SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE

- Morgan Christopher, Chair, morganckc@gmail.com
- Claire Aubel, Chair-Elect, caubel@visitmaryland.org
- Eric Knopsnyder, Secretary, EKnopsnyder@golaurelhighlands.com
- Jake Wynn, Treasurer, jwynn@fredco-md.net
- Edward Stoddard, Host 2022, edwards@happyvalley.com
- Justin Kerns, Host 2017, Justin.Kerns@visitwinchesterva.com

APPENDIX A

Previous Marketplace hosts and numbers of attendees are as follows.

Location	Dates	Number of DMOs	Number of Media
Roanoke and Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge	August 27-29, 2024		
Montgomery County, MD	July 31- August 2, 2023	60	43
Central PA	October 17-19, 2022	56	39
2020 and 2021	Cancelled due to COVID pandemic		
Richmond, VA	September 24-26, 2019	64	53
Laurel Highlands, PA	September 25-27, 2018	67	54
Winchester, VA	September 12-14, 2017	64	53
Talbot County, MD	September 13-15, 2016	67	50
Erie, PA	September 23-25, 2015	49	39
Cumberland Valley, PA	October 1-3, 2014	55	30
Arlington, VA	August 13-16, 2013	59	55
Lehigh Valley, PA	September 18-21, 2012	52	71

Testimonials from past Media Marketplace hosts:

"MATPRA's unwavering commitment to promoting travel destinations across the Mid-Atlantic USA is truly commendable. We were honored to host the 2022 MATPRA Media Marketplace in Central Pennsylvania, where The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau, Visit Clearfield County, Explore Altoona, and the Raystown Lake Region came together to provide travel writers with unforgettable firsthand experiences. This event not only showcased the beauty and charm of our region but also highlighted the incredible opportunities for exploration and adventure here. I am grateful for MATPRA's partnership and dedication to helping us share our story with the world, and we look forward to continuing to work together to inspire travelers to discover the magic of our destinations."

Edward Stoddard
Communications Director
The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau

"Our small community of Winchester, VA, hosted MATPRA Marketplace back in 2017, and the impacts were greater than we expected in both the short and long terms. The immediate social media and blogs posts were expected; however, we were very excited to see articles trickling in for several years afterward from journalists who attended. The most unexpected boost was from the DMO attendees themselves who are also frequent travelers and influencers in their own circles, and who returned to Winchester with family and loved ones afterwards on personal vacations!"

Justin R. Kerns, TMP
Executive Director
Winchester-Frederick County Convention & Visitors Bureau

"Erie PA hosted MATPRA Marketplace more than 10 years ago, and I still have fond memories of it. From putting everything together to seeing everyone enjoying themselves, it was well worth the effort. In fact, I may be crazy enough to bid on it again! If you are considering hosting Marketplace, don't hesitate, go for it. It's great exposure for your destination."

Christine Temple
Director of Communications
VisitErie

APPENDIX B

Budget breakdowns of the past two Marketplaces are as follows.

2023 Montgomery County, MD

Actual Income: \$67,990

Expenses: \$65,487

2022 Central Pennsylvania

Actual Income: \$71,248

Expenses: \$57,516