

# Colonial Heights Recreation and Parks Tourism Corporation Grant for

Colonial Heights Recreation and Parks received a \$10,000 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation Special Events & Festivals Sponsorship Program (SEF) for the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Fort Clifton Festival.

Colonial Heights Recreation and Parks will supply \$5,000 in matching funds to support marketing and promotion for the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Fort Clifton Festival, a signature community event celebrating the city's history, arts, and culture, drawing both local residents and out-of-town guests to Colonial Heights. In addition to providing a free, family-friendly experience, the event generates increased visitation to local restaurants, shops, and attractions, contributing to overnight stays and measurable economic impact for the community.

Virginia Tourism Corporation will award more than \$885,733 in matching grant funds to 88 special events and festivals during this grant round, ultimately impacting 324 combined partners. The VTC Special Events & Festivals Sponsorship Program is designed to increase visitor spending by maximizing limited marketing and event production dollars to stimulate overnight visitation through new tourism marketing and event expansion partnerships. The program also extends the iconic *Virginia is for Lovers* brand to drive special event and festival visitation. Each GO Virginia region is allocated 20 percent of available funds, creating a diverse portfolio of supported events across the Commonwealth.

In this funding cycle, local partners will commit more than \$4.8 million in public-private funds to match VTC funding, generating more than \$5.68 million in new marketing and event production activity focused on increasing overnight visitation to Virginia in 2026. In total, the awards will support 88 special events and festivals and impact 526 tourism-related partners statewide.

Using a help tourism marketing model, many destination partners financially to apply for funding. Partners include destination marketing organizations and local businesses. With the special event or festival, destination marketing organizations and local businesses extend their stays to experience Virginia. Major historical sites, green spaces, and economic impact beyond have proven results in driving creativity and destination.

"The Fort Clifton Festival is one of Colonial Heights' most important role in showcasing said Matt Specill, the Colonial Heights Recreation and Parks Director. "Support from the Virginia Tourism Corporation allows us to expand our reach, attract new audiences, and continue building a strong tourism economy that benefits local businesses."

"As Colonial Heights continues to invest in tourism, this grant helps us showcase the very best of Colonial Heights" **said Amber Wallace, Colonial Heights Tourism and Economic Development Specialist.** "It's an exciting time for the city. Festival help create moments that draw visitors in, inspire return trips, and contribute to a growing tourism economy."

"Special events and festivals are compelling the heart of the destination," **said Rita McCleary, President and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation.**

"Through the Special Events & Festivals Spons experiences that bring communities together, inspire travel, and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more across the Commonwealth."

VTC will highlight the tourism and hospitality industry and businesses that are attracting visitors and supporting

A full list of funding recipients can be found [here](#).

Out-of-state visitors and Virginians are availing themselves of special events and festivals

Colonial Heights Recreation and Parks provides a wide range of recreational programs, facilities, and special events that enhance quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Through community programming, historic preservation, and signature events such as the Fort Clifton Festival, the department works to promote wellness, celebrate local heritage, and support tourism and economic vitality in Colonial Heights.

About Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)  
Virginia is more than the most iconic and recognizable state in the nation. Using that powerful brand equity, Virginia Tourism Corporation promotes the Commonwealth as a premier travel destination. The dollars spent by travelers from across the country and around the world in Virginia support local economies and create jobs.