



**INTERIM FUNDING REQUEST FROM THE WASHINGTON TOURISM ALLIANCE  
Fiscal Year 2017**

The WTA is seeking short-term, interim funding from the State for the 2017 biennium to fund several specific programs. **The request is for a total of \$400,000.** The items are as follows:

***Website and Digital Marketing - \$ 198,000***

Funds will be used to provide enhancements to the Washington state tourism website, [www.experiencewa.com](http://www.experiencewa.com), such as digital marketing, social media platforms and other elements. As one example, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) will maximize the number of visitors to the site, expand its reach and allow the WTA to maintain an engaging website to drive travel to Washington. Funding will also allow continued upgrades of the connections between this website and the websites of local marketing organizations and tourism businesses. Additional funding would allow connections with outdoor recreation activities, one of the big draws in our state. If there are disasters, an enhanced website would allow helpful information about the situation, such as alternative routes, to be posted and available to visitors.

- In today's world, most visitors, particularly younger ones, initially use a website to refine their travel preferences. The website needs to be comprehensive and connected to all types of tourism businesses and organizations in the state.

***Postage for mailing and/or shipping the Washington State Visitor Guide - \$154,000***

The Washington State Visitors' Guide is a joint publication of the WTA and state lodging association. While it is a free publication, there is currently no funding available for mailing the guide to those who request it. Previous funding from the State, which expired in June, 2015, allowed the WTA to mail the Guides for free to prospective visitors and this budget request will allow the WTA to once again offer free mailing of the Visitors' Guide. The lack of funding is reflected in a decline in the number of guides requested and mailed.

- It is simply not very visitor friendly to say "come to our state" and to get information about what's here, please provide us with \$3.

***Represent Washington in Brand USA - \$48,000***

Funds will be used to partner with Brand USA, which is responsible for global marketing of the USA as a premier travel destination. Without funding, Washington State will not be mentioned in such things as the Brand USA Inspiration Guide and Discover America website.

- Without participation in this program, when Brand USA markets the country to the world Washington state will become an unidentified "white spot" on the map of the United States. There will be no ability for our businesses to market in conjunction with Brand USA.

***Total Request - \$400,000***