

PACVB Pre-Campaign Survey Questions
01/24/05 Update

What is your opinion of the Commonwealth's matching grant program for Tourist Promotion Agencies (TPAs) and Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs)?

Matt Baker: It's a good program. My only concern is the lack of parity for smaller, rural TPAs. The counties in the northern tier think they're not funded to the level they should be, because the larger organizations get a greater share of the grants. They have a large territory to cover and a large territory to promote and market. There just are not enough resources.

Roy Baldwin: The Lancaster County TPA is doing a great job. I like the idea that they work regionally. Wish other TPAs would work as well.

Bob Godshall: TPAs are doing a good job; regionalization might be helpful to improve efficiency.

Gary Haluska: Matching grant program is terrible, TPAs need to be consolidated in eight regions, as per the DCED Tourism Guide.

Frank LaGrotta: I'm for it.

John Payne: It's a good, effective program. I could name some projects – as both County Commissioner and State Rep – that wouldn't have happened without the matching grant program. (Tech Port, Giant Center, for example)

Brian Preski (Chief of Staff to the Speaker, John Perzel): Waste of money; apparently, John is very upset with the multitude of TPAs in the Southeast and how political the process has become. He believes that regionalization is critically needed.

Chris Sainato: Working well.

Matt Wright: The allocation equation gets altered every year. The smaller TPAs know that all the money goes to the larger TPAs. The system is more fair when the budget fund is larger. I know what they want to hear; I know why they're asking. They're trying to make their point by asking questions.

Should the Commonwealth invest additional funding into Pennsylvania's TPA matching grant program?

Baker: More funding is probably part of the answer – or at least a better, fairer method of distribution of the funds.

Baldwin: Yes.

Godshall: Yes.

Haluska: No, not unless it is regionalized.

LaGrotta: Absolutely. It's part and parcel of the Governor's proposal to make Pennsylvania a tourism magnet. You can't do that unless you invest money in promotion.

Payne: Yes, provided there's still a matching requirement. It shouldn't be free money, but they can use hotel tax or other funds.

Preski: No.

Wright: The more money in the fund, the more reasonable and fair the distribution is.

Sainato: Yes.

Do you agree that an increase in the matching grant program has the potential to stimulate economic development in your area through increased tax revenue and job creation?

Baker: Yes.

Baldwin: Yes.

Godshall: Yes.

Haluska: No, unless it is regionalized.

LaGrotta: God, yes. It's a natural way to create jobs. When we put through Route 60 and other road improvements, the communities weren't ready with sewer and water, so we never got the industrial expansion, but there's great tourism attractions already in existence there. I've already met with the tourism people from Butler County; we want to put a visitors center where Interstate 79 crosses US Route 422. This will open up McConnells Mills and Moraine State Park to more tourism. We've got more than a dozen colleges and universities within 30 miles of that intersection. There's just a lot of potential. How much do the TPAs want?

Payne: Yes, that's a no-brainer. I'm in a tourist town, and we see direct results from the matching grant program.

Preski: No.

Sainato: Yes.

Wright: This only makes sense.