

# FLAGLER COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



## Fund 110 Special Event Marketing Grant (SEMG) Guidelines

APPROVED AND ADOPTED AT REGULAR MEETING OF BOCC  
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# GUIDELINES

## **I. BACKGROUND**

Flagler County currently collects a five percent (5%) Tourist Development Tax (“Bed Tax”) on all overnight tourism accommodations in the County. This tax is levied on customers of hotels, motels, condominiums, campgrounds, apartments, and private homes that rent accommodations for less than six (6) months in duration. The purpose of the tax, as outlined in Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, is to provide funds to implement programs to increase the amount of tourist activity in counties within Florida.

The Tourism Development Council (TDC) annually allocates funds for special events for local groups and organizations that coordinate events with a demonstrated history of or significant potential to draw visitors to the area. The Special Event Marketing Grant (SEMG) is administered by the TDC with recommendations from the Tourism Development Office (TDO) staff.

A “Special Event” is defined as “a new or existing organized concert, exhibition, festival, fair, competitive tournament, conference or celebration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and with a targeted interest to the general public which may be free or with a predetermined entry or registration fee(s)”. For the purpose of this grant program, the public interest could extend to Flagler County residents and to those living outside Flagler County who would visit the destination and potentially stay overnight to observe or participate.

Each application will be evaluated against established criteria and historic precedent. The number and extent of these grants will depend upon the availability of designated funds and specific allocations. Ideally, the funds allocated by the TDC will eventually be returned through increased transient lodging sales resulting from these special events and the tourist development tax generated from those sales.

## **II. STATEMENT OF POLICIES**

The SEMG is intended to provide funding assistance to organizations for marketing of special events that promote Flagler County as a tourist destination. Funds received pursuant to the SEMG must be used for expenditures associated with marketing and promoting the event to visitors and guests outside of Flagler County, with the goal of increasing overall economic impact and/or overnight stays in Flagler County.

The Tourism Special Event Marketing Grant is **not** intended to be a sustainable source of funds, to create goodwill within the community or to help boost local awareness of an organization.

The TDO will establish the application period and process, verify eligibility of the requestors and adherence to established statutes and local policies before submitting requests to the TDC.

- A. Applications must conform to the guidelines specified by the TDC. Applications that do not conform to these guidelines will not be considered for funding. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- B. The TDO will review applications for the SEMG and make recommendations to the TDC.
- C. Funding priority may be given to events that generate high-value and/or overnight stays in Flagler County during non-peak periods. Non-Peak season is considered to be the months of September through January.
- D. Not all applications may be awarded funding fully or partially. This is a highly competitive process and applications will be reviewed and scored on rigorous criteria.
- E. Funding requests are subject to approval by the TDC which then makes its recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The BOCC is not bound by the recommendations of the TDC and has the final approval or denial of grant requests. In addition, all Special Event Grant awards are subject to the availability of funds through the BOCC's annual budgeting process.
- F. **The maximum award an organization can seek is up to twenty-five (25) percent of the projected total budget.** To clarify, if an organizations total projected budget is \$20,000, then the maximum that can be awarded is \$5,000.
- G. Awarded funds from the SEMG may only be used for advertising, marketing and promotion outside of Flagler County. This is to ensure that funds will be used to attract event participants who reside outside of Flagler County. No media, marketing, or advertising expenditures within Flagler County will be reimbursed. All applications must include a comprehensive marketing plan that includes all in-county and out-of-county advertising and marketing.
- H. Allowable Use of Expenditures Include:
  - Out-of-County Print, Radio, Television and Internet Advertisements including social media campaigns, search optimization, and e-marketing;
  - Outdoor signage/banners/billboards;
  - Posters/flyers/brochures;
  - Design, production and placement of out-of-county advertising
  - Postage for direct mail of promotional materials
- I. Non-Allowable Use of Expenditures Include:
  - Annual operating, administrative, and maintenance costs, including salaries;
  - Security (i.e., police, sheriff deputies, ushers, marshals, etc.)
  - Fees to Sanctioning Bodies
  - Maintenance, Janitorial and other Clean-up
  - Officials' Fees (i.e., referees, umpires, etc.)
  - Officials' Housing
  - Awards to Participants (i.e., trophies, plaques, etc.)

- Rental Items (i.e., tents, toilets, barricades, and other event-related items)
  - Volunteer and Officials Incentives
  - Contract Labor (Medical, Timing & Scoring, Law Enforcement, Parking, Non-Profit Organizations, etc.)
  - Local Transportation Costs
  - Meeting Room Rental
  - Audio-Visual Equipment Rental
  - Staff and Speakers' Guestrooms
  - Professional services including legal, medical, engineering, accounting, auditing, consultant, or tax service;
  - Debt reduction;
  - Real Property;
  - Tangible property, including but not limited to copy machines, computer equipment, and other office equipment, light fixtures, musical instruments, and other equipment and permanent collections;
  - Interest or reduction of deficits or loans;
  - Travel Expenses;
  - Prize money and/or scholarships, awards, plaques, or certificates;
  - Promotional items (being sold or given away) including apparel, tote bags, etc.
  - Receptions or socials;
  - Sales Tax;
  - Media receptions, social events, private entertainment (i.e. food, beverages);
  - Other expenditures not consistent with Florida Statutes or Tourist Development objectives
- J. The Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Tourist Development Council logo must prominently appear on all appropriate marketing and printed material, advertisements, and promotional items such as t-shirts if applicable. Approved logo can be found on the [www.visitflagler.com](http://www.visitflagler.com) website.
- K. Accommodations secured for the event must be located within Flagler County.
- L. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. A Reimbursement Request Form must be completed along with proof of payment for all marketing, advertising and promotional expenses related to the event. Proof of payment must be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and the front and back copy of cleared checks or credit card receipts. Credit card purchases must be in the name of the organization (no personal credit cards or personal checks are permitted).
- M. To be eligible for reimbursement, a completed Post-Event Report must be submitted within 60 calendar days of the event. Failure to submit a complete Post-Event Report will result in disqualification for reimbursement.

- N. Organizations receiving SEMG are subject to audit by Flagler County Board of County Commissioners.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY**

- A. The TDC accepts applications from organizations promoting a special event that will increase economic activity and/or overnight stays in Flagler County.
- B. Event must take place within Flagler County in the upcoming fiscal year (October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024).
- C. Event attendees must utilize hotel rooms in Flagler County to generate local Tourist Development Tax when applicable.
- D. Only lodging subject to Tourism Development Tax (TDT) shall be included, i.e. rooms exempt from payment of tax or provided on a complimentary basis, shall be excluded from the calculation.
- E. Event must show potential for future growth in Flagler County.
- F. Event must show marketing efforts by promoting the event to tourists as defined in Section 125.0104 (2)(b)2., Florida Statutes: "Tourist" means a person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside the county of his or her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations in Flagler County.

### **IV. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REVIEW**

All applications will be handled in the following manner:

- A. TDO will announce SEMG timeline that will include workshop dates, application deadline, TDC meeting, and BOCC meeting for the upcoming fiscal year.
- B. All applicants will be required to attend/view a mandatory workshop that will cover all grant guidelines, procedures, and reporting requirements as well as ways to work with the TDO for any additional marketing opportunities.
- C. Applications must be submitted based on the schedule set forth under Special Event Marketing Grant Schedule. (Section VI)
- D. The applicant must submit a completed hard copy application to the TDO either in person or via USPS mail at:
  - Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches
  - 120 Airport Road, Suite 3
  - Palm Coast, FL 32164
- E. TDO staff will set an optional review period prior to the application deadline during which applicants may request a review of their application for completeness and adherence to the guidelines.
- F. Each applicant must submit a current W9 and a completed Vendor Information Form at the time of submission. The W9 must match the organization name applying for the grant.
- G. The application must be signed by an authorized agent of the organization.

- H. The BOCC and the TDC must be named as additional insured's on the applicant's general commercial liability policy certificate of insurance for the event with a further certification that the insurance premium has been fully paid. The limits of liability shall be no less than \$1 million for general liability, \$1 million commercial general liability, each occurrence, and \$1 million personal injury, including death. The policy must be occurrence based.
- I. Certificate(s) of insurance must be submitted to the TDO thirty (30) days prior to the event.
- J. The authorized representative of any organization whose application is deemed ineligible will be properly notified as to which guideline and/or criteria was not met.
- K. The TDO will score all applications based on the rubric in Section V below, and will rank applications based on their average score.
- L. Any application receiving an average score below forty (40) points will not be considered for funding.
- M. The TDC will receive a copy of each grant application prior to the applicable TDC meeting including their individual scoring as well as staff recommended awards for review and consideration based on approved evaluation criteria.
- N. Once each TDC member has submitted their scores, the TDO will provide the TDC the final combined average scores prior to the applicable meeting.
- O. The TDC receives final scores and at the applicable TDC meeting, the TDC will vote on each qualifying applicant and prioritize a list of its recommendations for funding. The TDC may decide to fully fund the top scoring applications or may choose to partially fund any or all of the applications.
- P. Funding recommendations will then be presented to the BOCC for final approval.
- Q. A formal letter will be sent to each applicant informing them of the TDC and BOCC's final decision. There is no appeal process.
- R. Applications that do not receive a recommendation for funding by the TDO, TDC, or BOCC will not be considered again until the following fiscal year.
- S. Visitor tracking of attendees is required. Special Event representatives may use the attached Visitor Survey, or a survey as approved by the TDO. Organizations that do not submit Visitor Surveys will automatically forfeit all SEMG funds awarded.
- T. All materials submitted with applications for grant funding will become a matter of public record, open to inspection by any person, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.
- U. All applicants should be prepared to make a brief presentation to the TDC and or BOCC for consideration and be available to answer any questions.
- V. Any significant changes to the Special Event such as location, date, etc. must be immediately reported to the TDO in writing.

W. Should there be any additional funding available after the initial BOCC awards (usually in September each year), applicants may apply for such remaining funding by contacting the TDO for further assistance.

## **V. RATING CRITERIA & EVALUATION**

To assess the impact of the event on the Flagler County transient lodging industry, the TDC emphasizes the importance of tracking the number of overnight visitors attending the event. Room block reports from hotels are the preferred method of reporting room data. This information will be used to help track the number of visitors attending the event. Furthermore, this information helps determine the growth of a particular event.

If hotel room blocks for overnight verification are not utilized, then the applicant will be required to ensure the completion of Visitor Surveys by a minimum of 20% of the total attendees as submitted in the application. To clarify, if the applicant projects 4,000 attendees and opts to not submit for overnight stay verification, then a minimum of 800 Visitor Surveys are required. All applicants are required to track overall total attendance to establish the overall community impact of the event.

Each application will be evaluated and scored in four (4) categories with a maximum score of one hundred (100) points based on the following criteria:

1. **Commitment to the overall economic impact of Tourism Development in Flagler County- Maximum of 40 Points**

*Evidence of the overall tourism economic impact by out-of-county visitors.*

**(30 points)** High Impact Visitors: More than 400 estimated room nights and/or 10,000 Day Visitors

**(20 points)** Medium Impact Visitors: More than 300 estimated room nights and/or 5,000 Day Visitors

**(10 points)** Low Impact Visitors: More than 100 room nights and/or 2,500 Day Visitors

**(5 points)** Does the event coincide with non-peak seasons?

Non-Peak season is considered to be the months of September through January.

**(5 points)** Is the event a multi-day event?

2. **Event Marketing Plan- Maximum of 20 Points**

*Includes strategies and opportunities for attracting visitors from out-of-county. Marketing plan is thorough, well-defined and realistic.*

**(20 points)** Specifically defined

**(10 points)** Identified but not specifically defined

**(0 points)** Not defined



3. Soundness of Special Event- Maximum of 20 Points

*Event clearly defines event objectives, funding sources and overall budget.*

Event Objectives

**(5 points)** Clearly defined

**(0 points)** Not defined well or at all

Funding Sources/Budget

**(5 points)** Specific income and expenses sources are defined on application

**(0 points)** Not defined well or at all

Has this event received TDC funding in the past?

**(10 points)** 0-3 years

**(5 points)** 3-6 years

**(0 points)** 6+ years

4. Stability and Management Capacity- Maximum of 20 Points

*Proven record or demonstrated capacities to effectively plan, organize and implement a unique and high quality Special Event.*

How long has the event existed?

**(10 points)** Over 5 years

**(5 points)** Under 5 years

**(0 points)** First year

Is the Special Event unique and of a high quality to the area/county?

**(10 points)** Very unique

**(5 points)** Somewhat unique

**(0 points)** Not unique

Grant scoring scales may vary from year-to-year based on TDO and TDC recommendations.

**VI. SPECIAL EVENT MARKETING GRANT APPLICATION SEQUENCE**

April 1, 2021: Special Event Marketing Grant Released

April 7, 2021: Mandatory Grant Workshop (option one- live via Zoom)

April 12, 2021: Recorded Mandatory Grant Workshop Available (option two)

June 4, 2021: Optional application review deadline

June 11, 2021: Deadline for Applications Submittal

June 14, 2021: TDO Review

June 16, 2023: TDO submit to TDC for review.

June 30, 2023: TDC deadline to submit scores to TDO

July 12, 2023: TDC Meeting- vote on grant awards

August 21, 2023: BOCC Meeting- vote on grant awards

August 22, 2023: Grant Award notifications begin to be distributed.

## **VI. POST EVENT REPORT & REIMBURSEMENT**

Not more than 60 days after an event all Special Event Marketing Grant Recipients must meet with a representative of the Flagler County Tourist Development Office for a Post- Event Meeting. A representative or designee from the organization MUST submit the following materials at that meeting in the order listed for reimbursement. The TDO will review all forms and documentation to assess whether all guidelines and requirements were adhered to.

- A. A completed Post-Event Report as required by the TDO.
- B. A Reimbursement Request Form to include proof of payment for all marketing, advertising and promotional expenses related to the event. Proof of payment may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt or invoice and a front & back copy of cleared checks or credit card receipts. Credit card purchases must be in the name of the organization (no personal credit cards or personal checks are permitted).
- C. Final Event Budget Report that compares the projected expenses to actual expenses
- D. Copy/sample of all materials purchased with grant funds (i.e., Print Ads, Tear Sheets, Radio Copy, Brochures, Flyers, Posters, Banner Samples, etc.).
- E. Verified Room Night Report **or** Visitor Surveys (20% of Total Attendance as submitted in the application)
- F. Final Survey Summary Report as required by the TDO.

The TDO will review all submitted forms and post event documentation to assess whether the organization adhered to all the requirements.

Applicant is required to meet their original commitment to the overall economic impact of Flagler County (verified room or visitor surveys) as stated in their application and was approved upon.

Organizations that fail to comply with any of the reporting requirements, will not be eligible to receive any portion of approved funding.

Flagler County BOCC reserves the right to conduct a post-audit of information presented. ANY MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION PRESENTED CAN AND WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT FUTURE GRANT AWARDS.