



Event Bid Fee / Rights Fee Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for evaluating and determining whether the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau (OMCVCB) will consider a bid fee or rights fee to secure an event for the destination. The goal is to ensure that such decisions are made strategically, considering the potential economic impact, alignment with destination goals, and overall benefits to the community. The OMCVCB accepts, reviews, and processes bid fees/rights fees on behalf of the Tourist Development Council. Bid fees are provided in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local policies, as specified under Florida State Statute 125.0104.

Approval Process: Requests for bid fees or rights fees must be reviewed by the OMCVCB sales team and would require recommendation by the Tourist Development Council to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners for approval.

Assessment Criteria: The OMCVCB will consider a bid or rights fee only if the event meets a **majority** of the following criteria:

1. **Economic Impact:** The event is expected to generate significant tourism revenue for the local economy mainly through hotel stays but also dining, shopping, entertainment, etc. Bid fees will be considered when the projected economic impact combined with the media value produce a return on investment (ROI) favorable for Marion County.
2. **Brand Alignment:** The event aligns with the destination's brand and enhances the reputation and visibility of the destination to key target audiences.
3. **Strategic Alignment:** Some events align strongly with the destination's tourism goals, whether by attracting a key demographic, building on a destination's strengths (e.g., sports, culture), or supporting a broader marketing campaign. In such cases, paying a fee can strengthen the destination's appeal in those sectors.
4. **Seasonality:** The event helps address seasonal demand by attracting visitors during off-peak periods or fills gaps in the destination's calendar. Events scheduled during off-peak tourism seasons or need periods may qualify for bid fee support if they help fill occupancy gaps and stimulate local business during slow periods.
5. **Media Exposure:** The event offers potential for substantial media exposure and marketing opportunities that amplify the destination's reach and visibility.
6. **Marketing and Media Value:** In cases where an event provides significant media exposure—such as being broadcast nationally or internationally and/or livestreamed online—the value of the marketing exposure may justify the fee, particularly if it is difficult to quantify through direct economic impact alone.
7. **Legacy Impact:** The event is likely to create long-term benefits for the community, including increased interest in repeat visitation, development of local sports or cultural programs, or infrastructure improvements. The OMCVCB may be more inclined to pay a bid fee for events that have the potential to return on an annual basis, creating a sustainable economic benefit for multiple years.
8. **Competitive Positioning:** Paying a fee can make the destination more competitive against other cities or regions vying for the same event. In cases where the event rights holder is actively considering



multiple locations, a bid fee can give the destination an edge. In most cases, an event organizer would require a bid fee if the event is awarded to a destination as part of the competitive bid process.

Rationale for Not Paying a Bid/Rights Fee:

1. Limited Economic Return: If the projected economic benefits of the event do not justify the cost of the bid fee, the OMCVCB will not provide funding. Events that fail to generate sufficient hotel room nights, restaurant traffic, or visitor spending would not warrant the investment.
2. Event Saturation: If the destination already has a full calendar of events during the proposed time, adding another event may create diminishing returns or logistical challenges. The VCB may decline to pay a fee if the event conflicts with or oversaturates the destination's event offerings.
3. Ability to secure event: Events will not be considered for bid fee or rights fee funding if they have not previously required a bid fee, if they are held in other destinations without a bid fee, or if they would still choose to come to the destination without the payment of a bid fee. Only events that explicitly require a bid fee to secure their location in the destination will be eligible for consideration under this program.
4. Risk of Over-Dependence on Fees: The OMCVCB will avoid setting a precedent of routinely paying bid fees, as this could encourage event rights holders to anticipate compensation for every opportunity. **Decisions will be made based on strategic priorities rather than as a blanket policy.**
5. Event Previously Hosted in Destination/Already Secured: If an event has previously been hosted without a bid fee or the OMCVCB is aware of other destinations securing the event without paying a bid, this sets a precedent that a fee may not be required, nor should a bid fee be paid.
6. Unestablished Events: For new, unproven events with no history of success, the OMCVCB may opt not to offer a bid fee due to the risk of poor attendance or lack of financial viability.
7. Budget Constraints: The OMCVCB operates within an established budget and would only consider funding a bid fee if adequate funding is available.

Application Guidelines – No formal written application is required.

- Events interested in pursuing a Bid Fee from the OMCVCB must submit a letter of intent.
- OR**
- An RFP detailing the event must be submitted for consideration.