

RESOLUTION 25-R-_____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE TOURIST
DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAM GUIDELINES; AND
PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, provides the procedure for the consideration and levy of a tourist development tax by the governing board of each county within the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, on February 17, 2004, the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida (Board), appointed and confirmed the members of the Marion County Tourist Development Council (TDC); and

WHEREAS, the TDC, adopted its plan for tourist development and recommended to the Board, the adoption of an ordinance levying a tourist development tax within a tax district encompassing all the incorporated and unincorporated areas within Marion County, Florida; and

WHEREAS, on July 6, 2004, the Board enacted Ordinance 04-17, levying and imposing a tourist development tax, subject to referendum approval, under the provisions of Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the tourist development tax, including the tourist development plan, was approved at a referendum on November 2, 2004; and

WHEREAS, the TDC recommended changes to the tourist development plan to the Board and on July 3, 2007, the tourist development plan was amended in Ordinance 07-17; and

WHEREAS, the TDC again recommended changes to the tourist development plan and on March 7, 2009, the tourist development plan was amended in Ordinance 09-07; and

WHEREAS, the TDC shall review all funding requests and shall make recommendations to the Board for funding.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida:

SECTION 1. FUNDING PROGRAM GUIDELINES. The Board hereby adopts the attached funding program guidelines for Meeting Rewards; Room Night Generating Events; Bid Fee Events; Marketing Assistance; and Arts & Cultural Destination Enhancement.

SECTION 2. CONFLICT. All Resolutions or parts thereof in conflict with this Resolution are repealed to the extent necessary to give this Resolution full force and effect.

SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE. This resolution shall take effect upon adoption by the Board.

DULY ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

ATTEST:

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA**

GREGORY C. HARRELL, CLERK

KATHY BRYANT, CHAIRMAN



MEETING REWARDS PROGRAM IN OCALA/MARION COUNTY

RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau (OMCVCB) provides a booking incentive program, which offers up to \$2,500 to organizations that book a meeting at an Ocala/Marion County facility or venue through the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau.

TO QUALIFY FOR THE INCENTIVE, THE MEETING PLANNER MUST MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. The meeting planner must submit a hotel RFP with the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau.
2. The meeting must be held at a facility or venue inside Marion County.
3. The meeting must pick-up a minimum of 50 rooms in Marion County.

***To qualify as a new meeting, the specific meeting must not have been held in Ocala/Marion County over the previous three consecutive years.**

***Meetings booked in January, February or March are not eligible for funding.**

INCENTIVES WILL BE EARNED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE:

Total Room Nights	New (April – December)	Repeat (April – December)
50-99	\$1,000	\$750
100-149	\$1,500	\$1,250
150-199	\$2,000	\$1,750
200 +	\$2,500	\$2,250

No substitutions for incentives will be allowed. The *Meeting Rewards Program in Ocala/Marion County* incentive cannot be combined with another Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau funding program.

PROCEDURES FOR OCALA/MARION COUNTY VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU:

1. OMCVCB staff will accept and verify qualifications of the meeting planner's registration.
2. OMCVCB staff will determine eligibility for funding under this program using the guidelines established in this document.
3. An OMCVCB representative will contact the meeting planner and begin the RFP process.
4. Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau representative will send the RFP/lead to appropriate meeting properties, facilities, or venues, in a timely manner based on the needs expressed in the meeting planner's RFP, or specifics provided to the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau representative.
5. When a booking is confirmed and contract agreed to between the proposed venue and the planner, the planner must notify the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau.
6. Upon receipt of verification of the total room pick-up for the specified meeting from the contracted lodging properties, and verification that the meetings were held in Ocala/Marion County, Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau will remit payment per the incentive earned to the meeting entity.
7. OMCVCB staff will provide a quarterly update to the Tourist Development Council of events approved for funding and funds expended under this program.
8. OMCVCB staff will provide a quarterly update to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners submitted as a notation for record of events approved for funding and funds expended under this program.

PROCEDURES FOR INDUSTRY PARTNERS:

1. The venue(s) selected for the specific qualified meeting must notify Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau in writing when the meeting is contracted, confirming dates, anticipated total room pick-up and anticipated total attendees; a copy of the contract should accompany this notification.
2. Upon completion of the specified meeting, the lodging property, facility or venue must verify in writing to Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau the total room pick-up associated with the specified meeting; and additionally, verify that the meeting/s were held in Ocala/Marion County.
3. If attendees stay at more than one lodging property, the meeting planner or the participating properties must notify Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau in advance and the property/properties must agree to report the room nights booked for the qualified meeting.
4. Failure to provide the required notifications and reports will negate the meeting planner's right to receive the specified incentive.
5. Upon receipt of the room night verification, Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau will then pay to the company, association, or organization that held the meeting the promotional incentive earned.

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

1. The *Meeting Rewards Program in Ocala/Marion County* promotion can be discontinued any time without prior notice.
2. All meetings booked prior to the discontinuation date of the promotion will be fulfilled per the incentives schedule outlined above.
3. Meeting planner must qualify with Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau for each specific meeting prior to said meeting being contracted by the meeting property.
4. The resulting contract will be solely between the meeting planner and the meeting facility, with OMCVCB not serving as a contractual party in the event's preparation or execution.
5. For the purpose of this promotion, new meeting means that the specific meeting named in the registration has not been held in Ocala/Marion County during the previous three years.
6. For the purpose of this promotion, repeat meeting means that the specific meeting named in the registration has been held in Ocala/Marion County during the previous three consecutive years.
8. Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau will serve as a facilitator in providing this incentive and planners are required to obtain reports with room totals from the various accommodators to show total room pick-up amount.
9. Upon room night verification from the meeting property and the meeting planner, Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau will confirm the incentive earned, and that amount will be payable by the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau to the business, association or organization which hosted the meeting.
10. All overnight accommodations used in association with the funded event must be appropriately registered with the Marion County Tax Collector's Office to collect applicable Tourist Development Taxes (TDT). Room nights will not qualify toward funding if the property is not compliant with TDT registration requirements or if the accommodations are not subject to TDT collection. Please refer to the following webpage (<https://www.mariontax.com/td-home>) and Appendix A for additional information about TDT and how to ensure compliance.
11. Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau Staff will have final determination as to any questions regarding qualifications of the meeting and the incentive amount to be awarded.
12. Liability: Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau, Marion County and its employees will not be held liable for any action of the meeting facilities or venues or the Meeting Planner. Further, Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau, Marion County and its employees will not be liable for an injury suffered by the result of the participation in the *Meet and Save in Ocala/Marion County* promotion.
13. Employees of Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau, Marion County, Florida, or marketing or advertising agencies or organizations associated directly with either entity are not eligible for this promotional incentive.

APPENDIX A



GEORGE ALBRIGHT, MARION COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 63
OCALA, FLORIDA 34478-0063

352-368-8209
352-368-8112

The Tourist Development Tax is a 4% charge on the revenue collected on the rental of any living quarters or accommodation in a hotel, apartment, motel, vessel, condominium, mobile home, time-share, cottage, or a single or multi-family dwelling that is rented for a period of six months or less.

Marion County does not have a contact with any of the rental platforms (Airbnb, VRBO, Home away, etc.), therefore it is the property owner's responsibility to pay the 4% Tourist Tax for Marion County.

Pursuant to Florida Statute 212.15(1) taxes are due the first day of the succeeding month and will be delinquent on the 21st of such month.

As the property owner it is your responsibility to pay your tourist tax each reporting period in a timely manner. If you have zero rentals you are responsible for filing a zero return each period you have no rentals.

A 10% penalty or a minimum late fee of \$50 and daily interest rate will be charged per reporting period for noncompliance.

Payments may be made online at <https://www.mariontax.com/TouristLogin.asp> or via mail.

Example of how to calculate the Tourist Development tax:		
1. Gross Rental Receipts	\$	Enter the total amount of rental for the reporting period.
2. Minus(-) Exempt Rental Receipts	\$	Enter any rental exempt from the Tourist Development Tax.
3. (=) Taxable Rental Receipts	\$	Enter amount of taxable rentals (Line 1 minus (-) Line 2).
4. Total Tax Collected 4%	\$	Enter the total of Tourist Tax collected with is 4% of Line 3.
5. Adjustments (if applicable)	\$	Enter any Over/Under Payments from previous reporting periods.
6. Total Tax Due	\$	Enter the total of Line 4, plus/minus (+/-) Line 5.
7. Minus(-) Collection Allowance	\$	Enter 2.5% of first \$1,200 of Line 6 if this return is filed within 20 days from the last of the reporting month, \$30 maximum.
8. Plus(+) Penalty	\$	If delinquent, enter 10% of the amount of Line 6 or \$50, whichever is greater.
9. Plus(+) Interest	\$	The interest rate is variable. You will need to contact our office at (352) 368-8209 for instructions.
10. (=) Total Amount Due	\$	Enter total due with return, add (+) Line 6, minus (-) Line 7, plus (+) Line 8, plus (+) Line 9.

Any question, please email tmccann@mariontax.com or call 352-368-8209.

Sincerely,
Tammy McCann
Deputy Tax Collector



Room Night Generating Events

Funding Program Guidelines & Application

The Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau (OMCVCB) recognizes events are a major contributor to the overall tourism economy. In order to develop event related tourism, the OMCVCB has put in place these Funding Program Guidelines for events seeking funding. This funding program is conducted in accordance with applicable federal, state and local policies. The Florida State Legislature enacted the Local Option Tourist Development Act (Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes) in response to the growing need of Florida counties to provide additional revenue sources for tourist development in an effort to stimulate the local economy. The Marion County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to Marion County Resolution 04-R-44, as a result of the 2004 passage of the 2% Tourist Development Tax (TDT) and subsequent passage of an additional 2% TDT in 2015, and operates in accordance with Florida State Statute 125.0104. The Tourist Development Tax Revenues are designated to promote Ocala/Marion County as a preferred visitor destination.

ROOM NIGHT GENERATING EVENT FUNDING CRITERIA - STATEMENT OF POLICIES

Funding will be provided as a reimbursement in direct correlation for room nights generated and approved eligible expenses. For each verified room night, a rebate will be eligible to the Event planner. The rebate schedule for the year will be as follows:

Quarter 1 (Q1): January – March - \$5 rebate per verified room night

Quarter 2 (Q2): April – June - \$10 rebate per verified room night

Quarter 3 (Q3): July – September - \$15 rebate per verified room night

Quarter 4 (Q4): October – December - \$10 rebate per verified room night

* The applicable rebate rate is determined based on the event dates, not the submission date of the funding application.

** If the event dates span two or more quarters, the rebate rate will be determined individually, using specific STR data to assess the timeframe and allocate the event to the appropriate quarter.

*** Requests for a higher amount will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For consideration, the applicant must have a contracted housing bureau ensuring a verifiable tracking method for ALL room nights associated with the event. This provision is not available for any events taking place in Q1 (Jan.-Mar.).

Any Event that estimates producing less than 250 verified room nights will not be eligible to apply. Additionally, reimbursement amounts will be capped at the figure requested on the application and approved by the Marion County Board of County Commissioners. No amounts will be increased retroactively. The maximum funding for any Event by this Program is not intended to exceed \$10,000 during Q1 and \$25,000 during Q2, Q3 and Q4.

APPLICATION DEADLINE AND GUIDELINES

Applicants seeking funding under this program will not be eligible to apply for funding through any other programs offered by the OMCVCB for the same room-generating event. Applications must be submitted to the OMCVCB no later than 120 days prior to the start date of the event. Completed applications will be date stamped and reviewed by the OMCVCB in the order received. If the event qualifies for room night generating funding, the funding request will be presented to the Tourist Development Council (TDC) for review. If recommended by the TDC, the funding request will be presented to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners (MCBCC) for final approval.

The application will be made available as an online fillable version or hard copy upon meeting with the OMCVCB staff. Applicants will be evaluated for funding eligibility based on a number of qualifying criteria such as anticipated number of room nights, estimated economic impact and marketing plan.

- A. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Not applicable or N/A must be marked if needed.
- B. Applicants must meet with a representative of the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau (via phone or in person) prior to applying.
- C. A complete marketing plan must be included in the application which integrates the promotion of the event to out of county attendees to be considered.
- D. Only publicly accessible events are eligible for funding through this program. Events that require registration, membership or ticket purchases may still qualify. Only verified room nights for lodging and accommodations within Marion County are eligible for reimbursement. All lodging accommodations listed by an Applicant may be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the Event.
- E. Only rooms subject to Tourist Development Tax shall be credited to reimbursable room nights i.e. rooms exempt from payment of tax or provided on a complementary basis shall be excluded from the final verified room night calculation.
- F. All overnight accommodations used in association with the funded event must be appropriately registered with the Marion County Tax Collector's Office to collect applicable Tourist Development Taxes (TDT). Room nights will not qualify toward funding if the property is not compliant with TDT registration requirements or if the accommodations are not subject to TDT collection. Please refer to the following webpage (<https://www.mariontax.com/td-home>) and Appendix A for additional information about TDT and how to ensure compliance.
- G. Expenditures will be eligible for reimbursement only if the expenses were incurred between the time the funding application was submitted and the end of the event. Proof of payment must be provided and may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt, front and back copy of cleared check, cash receipt, or credit card statement. Written confirmation from a vendor that an expenditure has been paid in full will also be accepted.
- H. The OMCVCB may request a 'testimonial' for use on its website (ocalamarion.com) as a condition of reimbursement.
- I. If approved for funding, a camera-ready logo will be provided upon execution of the funding contract. Proofs of all marketing/promotional materials with the logo block must be submitted to marketing@marionfl.org prior to production.
- J. Applicant is to have a designated contact(s) (Designee) for the duration of the funding process. The Designee will be responsible for submitting all application documents as well as follow up documentation needed prior to and following the Event.

- K. Any funds granted will be subject to audit by the Marion County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative the County may designate. Any expenditure deemed ineligible as a result of an audit shall be repaid by Applicant to the OMCVCB within 30 days of written demand.
- L. Applicant must provide proof of insurance to County obtained with a company or companies authorized to do business in the State of Florida with an A.M. Best Company rating of at least A- (A minus). A \$1,000,000 Commercial General Liability Insurance Policy is required for the Event along with “Marion County, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, its officials, employees, and volunteers” being named as an Additional Insured on the policy. The term of coverage must include not only all days of the Event, but set up days and take down days as well.
- M. Should an Applicant be approved for funding, Applicant will be required to execute its Event in full compliance with all applicable Federal, State and local laws and regulations. A successful Applicant will be required to expressly certify to this compliance in a written funding contract and to be responsible for such compliance by any subcontractor.
- N. Marion County cannot provide Applicant legal advice and it is strongly recommended that any Applicant consult its attorney before requesting funding.
- O. If approved for funding by the MCBCC, applicants will be required to sign a written funding contract outlining specific deliverables and additional terms of funding.

Applicants will be notified of the TDC meeting at which their application is scheduled for review and are required to attend either in person or virtually. However, applicants are not required to attend the MCBCC meeting where their application is scheduled for final review.

REIMBURSEMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY

Within 60 days after the completion of the Event, Applicant must submit:

1. Eligible reimbursable expenses (with proof of payment and copy of event collateral displaying approved OMCVCB logo block).
2. Invoice for TDC/BCC approved funds (addressed to Ocala Marion/County Visitors and Convention Bureau) and all supporting reimbursement documentation.
3. All hotel room nights generated by the event. This includes all staff, competitors, volunteers, spectators, officials, etc. that stayed in paid accommodations. Rooms nights must be verified directly by a lodging/accommodation site. If a complete and accurate reimbursement request is not submitted within 60 days following the completion of the event, the approved funds will be forfeited. A request for an extension of the 60-day deadline must be provided in writing to OMCVCB staff and may require additional action by the TDC, MCBCC, and/or County Attorney's Office.

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

The following is a list of how Tourist Development Funds are to be used to promote tourism for Marion County.

1. Promotional/Marketing Expense - These expenses must include the OMCVCB logo or utilize the OMCVCB name.
 - a. Promotional expenses in conjunction with the room night generating Event to increase participation and bring out-of-county visitors that will stay in overnight accommodations and generate Tourist Development Tax within Ocala/Marion County as a result of the room night generating Event.
 - b. Advertising and publicity outside of the Marion County area to increase participation, attendance and awareness of the room night generating Event and generate hotel room nights:
 - Print
 - Radio
 - Online/Social Media Advertising
 - Television Advertisements
 - Outdoor Signage/Banners
 - Poster/Flyers/Brochures
 - Media Events
 - Direct Mail
 - Event Banners
 - Printing Collateral
 - Live-Streaming production expense of the Event
 - c. Artwork- Graphic Design – The OMCVCB logo block and name inclusive on all digital and printed material associated with the room night generating Event and listed as a sponsor of the room night generating Event including t-shirts, room night generating Event merchandise, and or give away items.
2. Operational Expense
Operational expenses are attributed purely to the development/production of the room night generating event that specifically targets and promotes out-of-county visitors to come to Marion County.
 - A. Sanction fee/ Rights holder fees
 - B. Rental fees for publicly-owned event venues/facilities.
 - C. Event specific rental items.
 - D. Room night generating Event related judges, officials, or umpires.
 - E. Additional necessary operational expenses, as approved per Florida State Statute 125.0104, and indicated in the final motion to approve funding.

INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

FUNDS MAY NOT BE USED FOR:

1. Prize money, scholarships, awards, plaques, trophies, certificates;
2. Privately-owned event venues/facilities.
3. Marketing/Promotional materials that do not include the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau logo block;
4. Any and all travel expenses. (includes, but is not limited to, car rental fees, airline tickets, hotels, food, luggage fees, etc.);
5. Private entertainment, food, beverages, or any type of concession;
6. Annual operating expenditures;
7. Legal, engineering, accounting, auditing, planning, feasibility studies or other consulting services;
8. Employee salaries;
9. Real property or capital improvements to facilities;
10. Tangible personal property including but not limited to items reusable outside of the Event operations such as clipboards, radios, office furnishings, or equipment;
11. Interest or reduction of deficits and loans;
12. Expenses incurred or committed outside the event period – which begins on the date the funding application is submitted and ends on the final day of the event.
13. Advertising and promotional materials distributed after the Event.
14. Receptions or social functions other than those specifically designed for pre-event media promotional purposes;
15. Sales tax;
16. Website design not specific to the room night generating Event;
17. Ongoing or annual facility maintenance;
18. Items required or services offered by the rented facility that are not expended or consumed by the Event.
19. The provision of regular or additional law enforcement protection at the Event.

RFP DISTRIBUTION AND ROOM NIGHT TRACKING

Room nights can be verified using the room night certification form, a room night pick-up report, a housing bureau pick-up report, or email correspondence from lodging providers. If the applicant intends to use an alternate form of verification, the OMCVCB must be notified in advance for approval of the proposed tracking method. A minimum of 250 room nights will need to be verified in order to be eligible to receive any funding.

For all Events that are funded by the OMCVCB, the following procedure must take place to secure hotel accommodations:

1. Applicant must include the OMCVCB logo block and link www.ocalamarion.com on the Event website.
2. If no host or overflow hotel has been identified, a hotel Request for Proposal (RFP) must be sent out via the OMCVCB office in order to secure hotel rooms for the Event.
3. If a host or overflow hotel has been identified, it must be disclosed in this application.
4. When the applicant has selected the participating hotel(s) from the RFP responses, Applicant must notify the OMCVCB. It is the responsibility of Applicant to establish a system with the hotel to track and document all Event related room nights.
5. The applicant may list any number of 'participating hotels' on the event website and may include any amount of information about these hotels, such as pictures, amenities, and other details, as long as the listed hotels are located in Marion County.
6. When using the Room Night Certification Form this form needs to be filled out and signed by an authorized representative of the lodging partner. An alternative verification method will be considered but the Certification Form is preferred. The Room Night Certification form will be provided to the applicant upon request.

Copies of the following items should be attached to your application:

- List of Applicant's current Officers and/or Board members (if available).
- Applicant's W-9 tax form for post-event reimbursement.
- Overall marketing plan for the room night generating Event.

APPENDIX A



GEORGE ALBRIGHT, MARION COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 63
OCALA, FLORIDA 34478-0063

352-368-8209
352-368-8112

The Tourist Development Tax is a 4% charge on the revenue collected on the rental of any living quarters or accommodation in a hotel, apartment, motel, vessel, condominium, mobile home, time-share, cottage, or a single or multi-family dwelling that is rented for a period of six months or less.

Marion County does not have a contact with any of the rental platforms (Airbnb, VRBO, Home away, etc.), therefore it is the property owner's responsibility to pay the 4% Tourist Tax for Marion County.

Pursuant to Florida Statute 212.15(1) taxes are due the first day of the succeeding month and will be delinquent on the 21st of such month.

As the property owner it is your responsibility to pay your tourist tax each reporting period in a timely manner. If you have zero rentals you are responsible for filing a zero return each period you have no rentals.

A 10% penalty or a minimum late fee of \$50 and daily interest rate will be charged per reporting period for noncompliance.

Payments may be made online at <https://www.mariontax.com/TouristLogin.asp> or via mail.

Example of how to calculate the Tourist Development tax:		
1. Gross Rental Receipts	\$	Enter the total amount of rental for the reporting period.
2. Minus(-) Exempt Rental Receipts	\$	Enter any rental exempt from the Tourist Development Tax.
3. (=) Taxable Rental Receipts	\$	Enter amount of taxable rentals (Line 1 minus (-) Line 2).
4. Total Tax Collected 4%	\$	Enter the total of Tourist Tax collected with is 4% of Line 3.
5. Adjustments (if applicable)	\$	Enter any Over/Under Payments from previous reporting periods.
6. Total Tax Due	\$	Enter the total of Line 4, plus/minus (+/-) Line 5.
7. Minus(-) Collection Allowance	\$	Enter 2.5% of first \$1,200 of Line 6 if this return is filed within 20 days from the last of the reporting month, \$30 maximum.
8. Plus(+) Penalty	\$	If delinquent, enter 10% of the amount of Line 6 or \$50, whichever is greater.
9. Plus(+) Interest	\$	The interest rate is variable. You will need to contact our office at (352) 368-8209 for instructions.
10. (=) Total Amount Due	\$	Enter total due with return, add (+) Line 6, minus (-) Line 7, plus (+) Line 8, plus (+) Line 9.

Any question, please email tmccann@mariontax.com or call 352-368-8209.

Sincerely,
Tammy McCann
Deputy Tax Collector

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. Applicants seeking funding under this program must have an event scheduled to take place **April through December**. Events occurring outside of this timeframe may be eligible for funding through one of the other programs offered by the OMCVCB and should apply accordingly. All previous funding, acquired through various means in Marion County or beyond, will be evaluated alongside the bid fee request. This comprehensive review **will optimize the funding method to ensure the greatest possible future impact. All overnight accommodations used in association with the funded event must be appropriately registered with the Marion County Tax Collector's Office to collect applicable Tourist Development Taxes (TDT). Room nights will not qualify toward funding if the property is not compliant with TDT registration requirements or if the accommodations are not subject to TDT collection. Please refer to the following webpage (<https://www.mariontax.com/td-home>) and Appendix A for additional information about TDT and how to ensure compliance.**

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 in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local policies, as specified under Florida State Statute 125.0104..

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. **Strategic/Brand 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 enhance the brand, reputation, and visibility of the destination to key target audiences.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.

Application Guidelines – No formal written application is required.

- A Bid Packet detailing the event must be submitted for consideration.
- OR**
- **If a Bid Packet does not exist, events interested in pursuing a Bid Fee from the OMCVCB must submit a letter of intent.**
- The Letter of Intent should:
 - Briefly describe the project/event and how it meets the criteria described above.
 - Describe your organization and the purpose for which funding is being sought.
 - Demonstrate the applicant's ability to carry out the programming/project during the funding period may include: event production experience, volunteers involved, in-kind support and sponsor/community support
 - Include the requested bid fee amount.

APPENDIX A



GEORGE ALBRIGHT, MARION COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT
PO BOX 63
OCALA, FLORIDA 34478-0063

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2. Minus(-) Exempt Rental Receipts	\$	Enter any rental exempt from the Tourist Development Tax.
3. (=) Taxable Rental Receipts	\$	Enter amount of taxable rentals (Line 1 minus (-) Line 2).
4. Total Tax Collected 4%	\$	Enter the total of Tourist Tax collected with is 4% of Line 3.
5. Adjustments (if applicable)	\$	Enter any Over/Under Payments from previous reporting periods.
6. Total Tax Due	\$	Enter the total of Line 4, plus/minus (+/-) Line 5.
7. Minus(-) Collection Allowance	\$	Enter 2.5% of first \$1,200 of Line 6 if this return is filed within 20 days from the last of the reporting month, \$30 maximum.
8. Plus(+) Penalty	\$	If delinquent, enter 10% of the amount of Line 6 or \$50, whichever is greater.
9. Plus(+) Interest	\$	The interest rate is variable. You will need to contact our office at (352) 368-8209 for instructions.
10. (=) Total Amount Due	\$	Enter total due with return, add (+) Line 6, minus (-) Line 7, plus (+) Line 8, plus (+) Line 9.

Any question, please email tmccann@mariontax.com or call 352-368-8209.

Sincerely,
Tammy McCann
Deputy Tax Collector



Marketing Assistance Funding Program Guidelines

General instructions:

Requesting agencies must attend one of the application workshops, review the attached guidelines and submit the application and all supporting information electronically by the deadline.

- [Click here](#) to register for an application workshop.
- [Click here](#) to access the application.

Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Application Timeline:

June 18, 2025	VCB Marketing Assistance Application Opens
July 7, 2025 10-11:30	Marketing Assistance Funding Program Application Workshop 1
July 16, 2025 1-2:30	Marketing Assistance Funding Program Application Workshop 2
July 22, 2025 1-2:30	Marketing Assistance Funding Program Application Workshop 3
August 1, 2025	Deadline for Application submittal
August 4-12, 2025	OMCVCB Review Period
August 20, 2025	TDC formalizes funding recommendations at their regular meeting
September, 2025	BCC budget approval
October 1, 2025	Notification of funding results
November 14, 2025	LAST DAY TO SUBMIT NOTARIZED CONTRACT FOR BCC APPROVAL
March 2, 2026	All marketing must be approved and deployed
September 30, 2026	Reimbursement documentation must be submitted to OMCVCB

Funding Limit: Eligible organizations may request a maximum of \$5,000, unless they are the secondary applicant utilizing a DBA/same FEIN of the primary applicant, whereby their eligibility will be limited to a maximum of \$2,500.*

* If a tourism business has multiple sub-businesses which share a FEIN, they can submit an application for funding of up to \$5,000 for their primary eligible business and an application for funding of up to \$2,500 for a singular, eligible secondary business.



Marketing Assistance Funding Program Guidelines

The Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau (OMCVCB) accepts, reviews and processes funding requests from tourism-related, Marion County-based organizations on behalf of the Tourist Development Council (as qualified per Florida State Statute 125.0104).

Goals of the Program

The Marketing Assistance Program is designed to enable tourism-related businesses in Marion County to enhance their marketing opportunities leveraged with the Ocala/Marion County destination brand. The goals of the program are to enrich the visitor experience, encourage repeat visitations through local business promotions, inspire brand adoption and support tangible marketing materials highlighting tourism activities in Marion County.

The Marketing Assistance Program is meant to assist site-based businesses such as attractions, outfitters and restaurants or relating to art, heritage/history and culture, that provide service to visitors beyond events, and by the nature of their existence, attract visitation to the region or offer reasons for visitors to extend their stay in the destination.

OMCVCB partners funded through this program are expected to:

- Assume a leadership and advocacy role in the community to advance tourism.
- Enhance the visitor experience and encourage repeat visitations through promotions and dissemination of information regarding tourism offerings available in Marion County.
- Participate in cooperative promotional efforts with the Ocala/Marion County VCB, where applicable.

To be eligible for this program, an organization must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. The organization must be a business that provides services to visitors which either attract visitation to Marion County or offer reasons for visitors to extend their stay in Marion County.
2. The organization must be authorized to transact business in the State of Florida in accordance with Florida law.
3. The organization must provide a current IRS form W-9.
4. The tourism-based organization's facilities, programs or services must be available to visitors throughout the year. While an organization's major program(s) or service(s) may occur primarily during a specific time of year, other services and programming should occur and benefit visitors throughout the remainder of the year.
5. The organization must have a dedicated administrator responsible for managing the organization.
6. It is the responsibility of the applicant to show proof of eligibility. Applications should also show how the organization brings visitors to Marion County throughout the year. Organizations must be able to show results of program dollars spent (e.g. Increased out-of-town visitation, increased website traffic, etc.) with specific data.



Marketing Assistance Funding Program Guidelines

Additional information:

1. A Letter of Intent must be submitted by the applicant outlining the following:
 - Description of the tourism-based business
 - Description of the year-round experiences offered to visitors
 - Description of your current marketing strategies and out-of-county reach
 - What you hope to gain through participation in the program
 - How increased out-of-county visitation could positively impact your business
2. If an effort to be fair and equitable to all Marion County tourism-based businesses, the OMCVCB requires any partner who has received five (5) years of funding (consecutive or non-consecutive), to defer participation in the program for two funding cycles. Once the two-year deferment has been satisfied, the partner is eligible to re-apply for funding.
3. An approved funding partner may apply for reimbursement of their eligible expenses as follows:
 - Year 1: 100% of the verified eligible expenses up to \$5,000 for the primary business and \$2,500 for an eligible secondary business
 - Year 2: 100% of the verified eligible expenses up to \$5,000 for the primary business and \$2,500 for an eligible secondary business
 - Year 3: 80% of the verified eligible expenses up to \$5,000 for the primary business and \$2,500 for an eligible secondary business
 - Year 4: 80% of the verified eligible expenses up to \$5,000 for the primary business and \$2,500 for an eligible secondary business
 - Year 5: 80% of the verified eligible expenses up to \$5,000 for the primary business and \$2,500 for an eligible secondary business
4. Partners funded through this program will be required to outline, specifically, how funds will be spent before the beginning of the Fiscal Year in which funds are awarded.
5. Change requests regarding usage of funds require prior approval and should be made in writing to the OMCVCB Tourism Development Manager.
6. Partners will be required to submit a detailed final report, including specific information about marketing placements (inclusive of the OMCVCB logo) and results, additional dollars spent, copies of invoices, and proof of payment.
7. Partners will be required to provide specific information about how out-of-county visitation data is collected. Partners may use admission, ticket sales, etc. to track visitation, and will be expected to allow a representative from the OMCVCB's research firm to have access to survey a sample of visitors as mutually agreed upon by the OMCVCB, the Partner, and OMCVCB's research firm. This can be done via brief on-site interviews, email or website questionnaires post-event.
8. Funds may be used solely as reimbursement for marketing projects intended specifically to



Marketing Assistance Funding Program Guidelines

bring visitors from out-of-county (Eligible Use of Funds). Any use of funds for items not listed or approved will result in reimbursement for those items being denied. Failure to comply with the required grant reporting will impact future funding decisions and allocations.

9. Funding is to be expended only within the timeframe outlined as part of the approval and within the cycle for which it was approved.
10. All project printed and digital materials, signage or advertising must contain the appropriate logo, with the words, "Funding provided by Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau."
11. Applicants are encouraged to have marketing plans reviewed by the VCB marketing staff prior to submitting them.
12. Funded organization must agree to partner with and/or provide access to the OMCVCB research partners to conduct on-site or email surveys/data collection.
13. Funded organization must list/announce OMCVCB as sponsor (if applicable).
14. To be considered for funding through the TDC, applicants must attend the Marketing Assistance Funding Program Application Workshop prior to submitting application. If the applicant cannot attend one of the Marketing Assistance Funding Program Application Workshop sessions, the OMCVCB staff will make efforts to accommodate a virtual option, if feasible.
15. Funded organizations must have a listing on the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau website (ocalamarion.com). If the organization is not on the website, applicants must advise the OMCVCB staff as part of the application process to ensure this requirement is met prior to funding approval.
16. A current signed IRS form W-9 must accompany the application when submitted to the OMCVCB for consideration. A Substitute Form W-9 and/or a Tax-Exempt approval letter will not replace the requirement for a signed W-9.
17. 18. The tourism partner must select their marketing tactics during the application process. Once the application is signed by the partner and submitted to the OMCVCB, the selection(s) cannot be modified.
19. **A fully executed contract must be submitted to the OMCVCB within 45-days of the program start date (October 1).**
20. Applicant's organization will be required to add Marion County Board of County Commissioners and its employees as an additional insured to their General Liability policy. A Certificate of Insurance with Marion County listed as an additional insured must be submitted to OMCVCB two weeks (14 days) after the Marion County contract for funding is approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Failure to provide the Certificate of Insurance to the OMCVCB within the timeframe denoted will result in voluntary dismissal from the program. If a partner is unable to provide the required documentation in the timeframe allotted, the partner must communicate the reason for delay in writing to the OMCVCB prior to the deadline. The OMCVCB reserves the right to grant or deny an extension to the deadline. (Insurance is an absolute requirement. No other insurance policies will be considered as a substitute for the General



Marketing Assistance Funding Program Guidelines

Liability policy.)

21. Marketing efforts must be approved and begin within three(3) months of the contract's execution. Failure to comply with this timeframe will result in voluntary dismissal from the program.

Eligible and Ineligible use of funds:

Funds MAY only be used for...

- The design, production and placement of print, television, radio, and billboard ads.
- The design and production of travel guides, attraction maps, rack cards, and direct mailers.
- Digital marketing efforts such as online advertising, social media campaigns, search engine optimization, and e-mail marketing.
- The design and construction of a new website or enhancements to an existing website.
Note: See below regarding Website hosting fees.
- Photography and video projects that support an approved marketing campaign.

Funds MAY NOT be used for...

- Capital investments, asset development, or product enhancement
- Salary support, personnel
- Strategic plan development
- Lobbying
- Public Relations/press releases
- Tradeshow registration fees, booth rentals/educational conferences, membership dues
- Travel costs (food, lodging, entertainment)
- Database development
- Market research to identify target markets
- Facility rental/insurance
- Purchase or rental of equipment or supplies
- Food or alcoholic beverages
- Items for resale and promotion items
- Operating costs (including web hosting and domain registration)



Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program

The Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau (OMCVCB) accepts, reviews and processes funding requests from tourism-related, Marion County-based organizations on behalf of the Tourist Development Council (as qualified per Florida State Statute 125.0104).

Goals of the Program

The Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program is a multi-faceted approach to enhancing the tourism product within Ocala/Marion County. Its primary purpose is designed to support and enhance Marion County as a culturally engaging and vibrant destination. With that in mind, the Marion County Board of County Commissioners has allocated a portion of the Tourist Development Tax revenue to aid in the programming and promotions of arts, cultural, history, heritage and nature experiences that, as one of their main purposes, attract tourists, as evidenced by the promotion of the experience to tourists.

The Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program is open for applications on an annual basis to organizations/programs which promote Ocala/Marion County's appeal as a tourist destination by sponsoring tourist-oriented cultural programming and special events (visual and performing arts, including theater, concerts, recitals, opera, dance, art exhibitions, and festivals). The OMCVCB's objective in funding events is to position Marion County as a must-experience destination through quality events and projects that attract tourists from outside of Marion County into the area; have a strong cultural component; encourage overnight stays in Marion County motels, hotels, RV parks/campgrounds, and/or short-term rentals; and perpetuate an environment for growth in the tourism industry in Marion County.

The OMCVCB administers the funds collected from the tourist development tax on transient lodging sales and designates it to promote Marion County as a preferred visitor destination. Ideally the funds allocated by the TDC will eventually be returned through an increase in transient lodging sales and the tourist development tax generated from those sales. Events funded through this program must demonstrate the intent and ability to attract out-of-county visitors to Marion County. The TDC investments are focused on further developing exemplary existing programs and stimulating new activities. Applicants not meeting these criteria should consider applications to other programs.

Additionally, this program is designed to create a portfolio of activities which:

Attract Visitors During Year-Round or Non-Peak Periods:

Priority consideration will be given to Proposals for programming that is year-round. Events and programming will be evaluated based on their timing to be held when tourism is relatively slow. Generally speaking, months of January, February and March are peak for tourism. -Therefore, events or programming during this timeframe will not be considered within this program.

Encourage Increased Visitor Spending:

Visitor spending supports jobs and generates tax revenues. Events should stimulate additional economic activity rather than displace normal expenditure patterns.

Reinforce Existing Positive Images:

Programs and events which set Ocala/Marion County apart from other destinations by focusing attention on the area's unique tourism offerings and marketing the destination. Applicants should focus funding requests on programs and events that are not typically available in a visitor's home community and



Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program

therefore establish a reason to visit Ocala/Marion County.

Provide Added Value to the Ocala/Marion County Visitor Experience:

Value can be defined in two ways. Events may provide “emotional value” by exceeding the anticipated satisfaction level of visitors. Events can also provide “financial value” by providing no-cost or low-cost activities of interest to visitors during otherwise slow times.

Events, performances or programs must be promoted to the public and should not be unreasonably restrictive through admittance fees, public access or crowd capacity, which limits participation by visitors. One of the main purposes of the events must be to attract overnight visitors to Ocala/Marion County.

To be eligible to apply, an organization must:

- Be active and in good standing with regard to its registration status with the Florida Division of Corporations pursuant to Chapter 617, Florida Statutes;
- Have both a strong tourism and cultural component as depicted in the Letter of Intent and Proposal;
- Ensure that projects are open and accessible to Ocala/Marion County tourists and residents; utilize hotels located within the boundaries of Ocala/Marion County as their “event hotels;” and be in full compliance with funding agreement requirements of any previous program funds provided through the Tourist Development Council or other Ocala/Marion County funding sources, including timely and satisfactory submission of all reports.

The Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program is being implemented to create more economic prosperity for Marion County. The events and programs supported by this funding mechanism through Tourist Development Tax (TDT) will be expected to generate economic impact, both directly and indirectly, and will be challenged to compete and deliver high brand recognition for Ocala/Marion County.

The Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program supports the Marion County Board of County Commissioners’ (MCBCC) philosophical position that the OMCVCB role of out-of-area marketing is the priority for TDT funding. Also, TDT funding of special events and ongoing programs generally should be provided only on a limited term basis, as “seed funding”, not as a perpetual revenue source. This is to encourage organizations to develop their programs in ways that help them become self-sufficient regarding their promotional expenses. In doing so, funding is made available to assist other events and organizations, thereby enhancing the overall tourism product.

To request support from the Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program, an organization (Applicant) must prepare and apply as part of the competitive annual award cycle. To ensure proper budgeting procedures, the TDC will receive and review submitted applications on an annual basis.

The TDC will then determine the recommended contract award dollar amount and forward that recommendation to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners for approval.

LETTER OF INTENT

Applicants must submit a “Letter of Intent” to the OMCVCB no later than **October 1st. If October 1st falls on a weekend, the Letter of Intent must be provided no later than the last business day preceding October 1st.** The Letter of Intent should:

- Briefly describe the project/event and how it meets the criteria described above.



Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program

- Describe your organization (please include the size of your operating budget), and the purpose for which funding is being sought.
- Demonstrate the applicant's ability to carry out the programming/project during the funding period (may include: event production experience, volunteers involved, in-kind support and sponsor/community support)
- Include the total project costs and the requested grant amount.
 - If a standard sponsorship proposal exists, please submit it with the Letter of Intent.

The OMCVCB will notify you by email as to whether or not a full proposal will be invited for consideration. OMCVCB staff will conduct a "technical review" to determine if the proposed program or event meets the overall goals and requirements of the Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program.

Proposals that are determined not to achieve these standards will be rejected as part of the Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program, but may still be applicable for other funding opportunities that will be outlined to applicants based upon individual criteria requirements for OMCVCB programs.

New/Repeat Events

For the purpose of OMCVCB funding programs, a new event is defined as a specific event named in the application that has not been held in Ocala/Marion County during the previous two consecutive years and a repeat event is defined as a specific event named in the application that has been held in Ocala/Marion County at some point during the previous two consecutive years.

The criteria for the recurring funding of events are, as follows:

New Events: (First- and second-year events) These events will be eligible for the maximum amount of funding associated with the corresponding funding scale.

Repeat Events: (Repeat events with a continuous 3-5 funding year history) These events/programs will be eligible for 80% of the amount of funding associated with the corresponding funding scale. **Partners who have received five (5) years of funding (consecutive or non-consecutive) must defer participation in the program for two funding cycles (once the two-year deferment has been satisfied, the partner is eligible to re-apply for funding)**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The number and amount of each award will be dependent upon the availability of funds and specific allocations associated within the annual Tourist Development budget. The maximum award will be no more than 10% of the allocated budget for the Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program, based on available revenue. FY 25-26 budget will be \$100,000 – but this number may change in subsequent years.

EXAMPLE: 10% of \$100,000 is \$10,000 – therefore \$10,000 is the maximum amount that will be eligible for an individual request.

Awards will be funded on a sliding scale reflective of the point values outlined in the section titled Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program Application. For example, if Applicant requests \$10,000 and scores 45 (averaged) out of 100 points, the VCB staff will recommend the Applicant receive a maximum funding amount of \$4,500 (45% of \$10,000).

EVALUATION METRICS

Annual applications will be evaluated on these metrics:

- Total visitation (see Proposal's quantifiable / measurable data requirements per Section III);

Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program

- Generation of incremental economic activity;
- Marketing exposure for Ocala/Marion County and the Event/Project;
- Event/Project site must be located in Marion County;
- Applicant must be based in Marion County (as confirmed on W-9); and,
- Narrative on how quality will be delivered (i.e. production values - presented, performed, exhibited, etc.)
- Examples of eligible exposure:
 - Marketing mediums such as:
 - Newspapers;
 - Mass audience magazines;
 - Social media;
 - Travel journals;
 - Trade magazines;
 - Radio;
 - Television;
 - Website;
 - Visit Florida advertising or promotional co-op opportunity;
 - Other opportunities deemed in accordance with F.S.S 125.0104.

Matching Funds

Regardless of the funding amount approved for the Event/Project, the reimbursement will not exceed Applicant's documented expenditures. Applicant is required to provide matching amounts from other sources (either in-kind or monetary) equivalent to 50% of the award amount. In-kind services are defined as goods or services provided to the Event/Project for which Applicant would normally have to pay. The value of the match should be based on the difference between what Applicant would normally have to pay for the goods or services, and what Applicant actually has to pay. Documentation of the value will be required from the contributing entity. Applicant is encouraged to list in-kind donations as demonstration of additional community support.

TDC funds allocated to an Applicant cannot be used as matching funds for another Applicant's project or as matching funds for any other Marion County program.

Applicant may not receive funding from more than one TDC program for the same Event/Project in the same fiscal year.

REVIEW PROCESS

A Rank and Review Committee consisting of four (4) members, each from the following Marion County Departments: Tourist Development, Parks and Recreation and Library will be appointed by the County Administrator. Additionally, the Executive Director of the Marion Cultural Alliance (MCA), the designated Local Arts Agency for Marion County will also serve on the Committee. If the Executive Director of the MCA is not available, the County Administrator may approve a designee. This Rank and Review Committee will review and score each proposal.

Tourist Development Tax funds are intended to supplement, not replace, Applicant's Event/Project budget. Applicant must recognize that every application will not be fully funded (or funded in full). This is a highly



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competitive process and there are limited funds available, therefore applications will be reviewed and scored on specific criteria.

Applicants must notify the OMCVCB and TDC of any changes (i.e. date, venue, event content etc.) to their Event/Project plans in writing at least **90 days prior** to the Event/Project start date. Failure to do this can result in termination of the contract and jeopardize future funding. This is necessary to properly promote programs through various marketing platforms and the OMCVCB website www.ocalamarion.com. The TDC/MCBCC will vote to determine if the requested changes are acceptable and whether to maintain or adjust funding accordingly.

All information provided to the TDC in conjunction with the Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program will become a matter of public record, except for information exempt pursuant to Section 125.0104 (9)(d)(2), Florida Statutes.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS (Proposals are to be independently written documents provided by the program/event organizer requesting funding). These proposals should include the following five (5) sections, as well as, any attachments outlined within the requirements:

SECTION I. Program Event Summary, Organizational Information and Program Management.

This Section will be worth up to 10 points

This section must contain a Program/Event Summary, as well as, organizational information including: Mission Statement, Economic Impact Information, Financial Request, Financial History of the event (up to three years if applicable), Board of Directors (if applicable) and Authorized Official Signature Page.

SECTION II. Narrative Statement of Program /Event.

This section will be worth up to 35 points

This section will contain information on the nature of the program and/or event (festival, concert, exhibition, etc.), examples of past programs/events conducted by the applicant, and other information to inform the TDC why this program and/or event should be supported through a funding grant.

Be sure to describe the event(s) in sufficient detail to include dates, schedules, venues, and special features. Remember that **Proposals will be judged heavily on this content.**

SECTION III. Tourism Generation/Marketing Plan.

This section will be worth up to 35 points

In this section, Proposals will contain information on why/how the proposed events/activities attract tourists, time of year events are scheduled, marketing and advertising plan that targets tourists (including marketing distribution and impressions), RFP for distribution to lodging industry partners, specific measurable objectives on tourist attraction such as gross attendance and overnight stays, demographic and geographic objectives, methodology on how objectives will be measured, and evaluation criteria. The proposed marketing plan should contain detailed description(s) and itemized costs of "Out-of-County" marketing including media placement in specific markets (electronic and print advertising), public relations (non-paid media such as press releases), additional promotional materials, print and collateral distribution and targeting, signage and way finding. Creative approaches in programming and marketing are encouraged. The proposed plan could include key performance indicators, as well as reporting that showcases the reach for the Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program Event/Program, while including the OMCVCB/MCBCC logo block in each of its marketing platforms, coupled with a significant integrated marketing spend. All creative elements must be pre-approved. This marketing plan is for application review



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purposes only and does not constitute approval of those elements.

Florida State Statutes Section 125.0104 requires “evidence” that tax revenues expended on art/cultural destination promotions reflect quantifiable/measurable data that the tourist who participates in the activity is from “outside the county of his or her permanent residence.” The Proposal needs to objectively demonstrate what portion of the applicant’s patrons are tourists that come to enjoy the applicant’s cultural events from outside of Marion County.

The OMCVCB reserves the right to approve any additional sponsors that will share in media exposure to ensure brand integrity.

SECTION IV. Sustainability and Growth Potential.

This section will be worth up to 10 points

Include detailed information outlining the event’s/program’s community support. Also, provide information outlining a plan to grow the event/program and subsequently, attract additional visitors in future years.

SECTION V. Provide a detailed Proposal Budget.

This section will be worth up to 10 points

Failure to provide a detailed budget will result in the Proposal being removed from Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program consideration.

Include event-specific income and expense information with a clear indication of where matching funds are coming from.

The TDC reserves the right to negotiate with organizations or make funding amounts contingent upon issues relative to event scheduling. If your events dates are changed after you have submitted your signed Agreement, your award will be automatically terminated unless you have notified the OMCVCB and MCBCC/TDC 90 days in advance of the program/event and received written permission prior to announcing the new date.

Applicant requesting funding is required to attend in person and must offer a three (3) minute “update” at the assigned TDC meeting in which the application will be voted upon. ***Failure of an Event/Project representative to attend the specified TDC meeting will result in the application being removed from consideration.***

MEETING REQUIREMENTS

All recipients of Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program funding are required to meet at least twice per year (in person or via teleconference) with representatives from the Ocala/Marion County VCB to review marketing plans and coordinate marketing efforts. As part of the cooperative marketing efforts, the event planner must provide 20 tickets (or other negotiated amount) to the OMCVCB to be used for promotional purposes.

Miscellaneous Submission Directions

Upon acceptance of your Letter of Intent, one printed hard copy of the Proposal as well as Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program Application Summary containing original signature(s) of the Authorizing Official(s) must be submitted (via mail to 109 W Silver Springs BLVD Ocala, FL 34475) or hand delivery) to the OMCVCB prior to applications being forwarded to the Rank and Review Committee. EARLY SUBMISSIONS ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED. The OMCVCB will conduct a “technical review” of Proposals and notify organizations of deficiencies. Applicants will be notified of any deficiencies and will have 72 hours to



Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program

correct the deficiencies. Applications will only be given **one** technical review. The technical review only includes required forms and documents. The technical review will not correct math or typographical errors in the Proposal.

The OMCVCB cannot assure any applicant their Proposal will be funded. After the technical review period, 15 hard copies of the Proposal and Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program Application Summary must be delivered to the OMCVCB (via mail to 109 W Silver Springs BLVD Ocala, FL 34475 or hand delivery) to be distributed to the Rank and Review Committee for their review and scoring.

CONTRACT PARAMETERS

All contracts are for one year. No contracts are guaranteed to be renewed. The County fiscal year begins October 1st of each year and runs through September 30th of the following year.

Contract Reporting Requirements

Once the TDC award recommendations have been reviewed and subsequently approved by the Board of County Commissioners, all contracts will be issued by and returned to the OMCVCB office. Final Reports and all reimbursement requests are to be submitted to the OMCVCB office.

A final report must be submitted with reimbursement requests within 60 days after the program/event concludes.

Included in the Final Report must be a documented assessment of results measured against the program goals listed as well as the applicant's program and event attendance inclusive of tourism projections as stated in the Proposal.

Any funded event or activity that fails to file reports required in the application will not be eligible for TDC funding during the next funding period. An applicant may choose to withdraw from the program without penalty, however, **under no circumstances will reimbursement payment be made for an event with reports outstanding.**

Eligible Use of Funds:

Funds MAY be used for:

1. Promotional Expense
 - a. Promotional expenses in conjunction with the event to increase participation and bring visitors outside of Marion County to the event.
 - b. Advertising and publicity outside of the Marion County area to increase participation, attendance and awareness of the event and generate hotel room nights. Eligible forms of media include
 - i. Print
 - ii. Radio
 - iii. Online Media
 - iv. Television Advertisements
 - v. Outdoor Signage/Banners
 - vi. Poster/Flyers/Brochures
 - vii. Artwork/Graphic Design
 - viii. Media Events



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- ix. Direct Mail/Event Banners
 - x. Printing Collateral
 - c. OMCVCB logo block and name inclusive on all digital and printed material associated with the event and listed as a sponsor of the event including t-shirts, event merchandise, and or give away items.
2. Operational Expense
- a. Operational expenses are only allowable when they logically and defensibly can be attributed purely to the development/production of the event that specifically targets and promotes out-of-town visitors to come to Marion County. These are reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the County Attorney's office.

Record Keeping and Audit

Funding recipients agree to allow OMCVCB staff access to their program or event for the purpose of determining economic impact and return on investment. If tickets are required for the program or event, the funding recipient is required to collect either a street address or email address along with the purchaser's name for the purpose of surveying the purchaser about attendance at the program or event. Recipients must cooperate with the OMCVCB staff and/or contractors in providing email addresses of ticket buyers and vendors for the purpose of surveying.

Upon approval of funds, the applicant must provide media passes for use by OMCVCB staff to attend and cover the event for marketing and public relations purposes.

All contracts are subject to programmatic and financial audit by the Marion County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other County staff or authorized personnel. All programmatic and financial documents that are part of the contract are subject to county inspection and made public record.

Recipients must acknowledge funding by the OMCVCB in all advertising and publicity for the event or program. That can be achieved in the following ways:

- Recognition of the OMCVCB must be included where appropriate on all printed material as well as the organization's website and referred to in public relations activities. A camera-ready logo will be provided. All printed materials with the logo block must be presented with the reimbursement request.

The TDC reserves the right to request additional information beyond that requested in the funding application/guidelines.

REIMBURSEMENT

Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for approved actual expenditures upon completion of the Event/Program. Proof of payment must be provided. Proof of payment may be submitted in the form of a "paid" vendor credit card receipt or a check. If a check is used, a copy of both the front and back of cleared check must be provided. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided. Requests for reimbursement must be signed by Applicant's authorized agent.

- Partners will be required to submit a detailed final report, including specific information about marketing placements (inclusive of the OMCVCB logo) and results, additional dollars spent, copies of invoices, and proof of payment.

Arts and Cultural Destination Enhancement Funding Program

- Partners will be required to provide specific information about how out-of-county visitation data is collected. Partners may use admission, ticket sales, etc. to track visitation, and will be expected to allow a representative from the OMCVCB's research firm to have access to survey a sample of visitors as mutually agreed upon by the OMCVCB, the Partner, and OMCVCB's research firm. This can be done via brief on-site interviews, email or website questionnaires post-event.
- Funds may be used solely as reimbursement for marketing projects intended specifically to bring visitors from out-of-county (Eligible Use of Funds). Any use of funds for items not listed or approved will result in reimbursement for those items being denied. Failure to comply with the required reporting will impact future funding decisions and allocations.
- Funding is to be expended only within the timeframe outlined as part of the approval and within the cycle for which it was approved.
- All project printed and digital materials, signage or advertising must contain the appropriate logo.
- Funded organization must agree to partner with and/or provide access to the OMCVCB research partners to conduct on-site or email surveys/data collection.
- Funded organization must list/announce OMCVCB as sponsor (if applicable).
- Funded organizations must have a listing on the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau website (ocalamarion.com). If the organization is not on the website, applicants must advise the OMCVCB staff as part of the application process to ensure this requirement is met prior to funding approval.
- A current signed IRS form W-9 must accompany the application when submitted to the OMCVCB for consideration. A Substitute Form W-9 and/or a Tax-Exempt approval letter will not replace the requirement for a signed W-9.
- Applicant's organization will be required to add Marion County Board of County Commissioners and its employees as an additional insured to their General Liability policy. A Certificate of Insurance with Marion County listed as an additional insured must be submitted to OMCVCB two weeks (14 days) after the Marion County contract for funding is approved by the Board of County Commissioners. (Insurance is an absolute requirement. No other insurance policies will be considered as a substitute for the General Liability policy.)