



2020 – 2021 SPECIAL EVENTS PARTNERSHIP GRANT GUIDELINES

IMPORTANT DATES (Cycle 2, FY2021)

- **Jan. 11, 2021** **Application Opens**
- **Feb. 1 – 3, 2021** **Optional Review Period**
- **Feb. 5, 2021** **Application Deadline**
(applications due no later than 5PM EDT)
- **April 7, 2021** **Award Notification**
- **April 15, 2021** **Grant period begins**
- **Sept. 30, 2021** **Grant period ends**

**The above time line is subject to change.*

OVERVIEW

The County's ("County") intention is to strengthen and promote Cultural Assets through the creation of a Cultural Assets Commission charged with growing and supporting Special Events ("Events") that encourage place-making and community-building via the Special Events Partnership Grant Program. The Special Events Partnership Grant Program is a merit-based reimbursement grant program that supports arts and cultural Events throughout the County and is available only to nonprofit organizations. Eligible Events should communicate the authentic County story, activate public spaces, enrich the lives of residents and leverage private sector financial support while aligning to economic development objectives of achieving greater patron spending and maximizing visitation to our market.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Special Events Partnership Grant funding, the applicant must be a nonprofit organization classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt, charitable organization under one of the following sections of the United States Internal Revenue Code: 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), or 501(c)(6).

To be an eligible project, a Special Event must:

- Be a one-day event, a multi-day event occurring on consecutive days, or a related series of events over an extended period
- Be inclusive (no limits on who may purchase tickets or attend)
- Take place in Hillsborough County
- Be held in a publicly-visible location
- Not already receive County funding through certain County programs. Refer to the "Leveraging County Funding" section of this policy.

Note: Events may be ticketed or non-ticketed.

Examples of eligible Events:

- Art Festivals
- Local Food Festivals
- River Celebration Events
- Film Festivals
- Celebration of Local Authors
- Music Festivals
- Local Community Historic Events

Examples of ineligible Events:

- Trade shows, conventions, conferences, workshops, classes etc.
- Annual lunches, galas, conferences, holiday parties, etc.
- Class or family reunions
- Sporting events
- Beauty pageants
- Events organized around political or religious purposes
- Festivals or events based solely on alcohol, drugs, sexually oriented content, etc.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All applications will be evaluated according to the criteria below which relate to the applicant's overall ability to successfully accomplish the Program Objective described earlier in this document. The Commission will develop a points-based system to score each application based on the following criteria:

1. Administration Ability
 - Quality of the Event Plan
 - must include event marketing, business, and logistics planning
 - Ability to describe the target audience for the proposed event and demonstrate
 - knowledge about how best to engage with them
 - Feasibility of accomplishing the project as described

- Completeness and clarity of application
2. Fiscal Management
 - Quality of the financial plan and event feasibility
 - Explanation of how grant funds will be spent to cover the costs
 - Budget by major categories
 - Past County funding and other County funding being sought for the current application
 - The degree to which the request is reasonable
 - Demonstration of a broad base of financial support
 - Ability to raise private support, and build and establish sustainable partnerships
 - Accuracy and prudence of all budgets
 3. Ability to Strengthen and Promote Cultural Assets
 - The extent to which the event:
 - Is consistent with the program objectives
 - Fosters a vibrant community
 - Creates a sense of community
 - Contributes positively to place-making
 - Catalyzes the evolution of cultural engagement and civic pride
 - Promotes the rich history, heritage, amenities, natural environment and authentic characteristics that make the County special
 - Supports the programming and use of local parks, public spaces and amenities
 - Encourages partnerships between organizations, members of the community and businesses – creates positive entanglements that drive greater collaboration among cultural assets
 4. Quality of Team
 - Experience as successful event delivery agents
 - Ability to produce a well-planned and safe event, including the ability to effectively manage costs, attract event attendees, and obtain necessary permits, clearances, insurances, and event authorizations in a timely manner
 - Past event success and reliability
 - No evidence of any sustained complaints relative to past events from residents, vendors, attendees or staff
 - Financial stability of the applicant organization
 5. Economic Impact and Community Benefit
 - Description of clear and measurable outcomes of the following event impacts:
 - Attract visitors – increase tourism revenue
 - Economic Impact of event to local vendors
 - Return-on-investment to the community for the public investment
 - Promotion of the County as a destination

- Benefit of the event to residents - overall residents or only a benefit to a specific segment or interest
 - Impact on the visibility and awareness of Hillsborough County internally and externally
 - Degree to which the event has broad-based community appeal or support
6. Other Considerations
- The following criteria may, or may not, be considered when making a funding recommendation:
 - Whether or not the event will occur in a geographic area in an area of the community which may be targeted from time to time by the County
 - Whether or not the event will occur during a time that corresponds to a "slow period" for other community events, conventions, or visitors in general

FUNDING

There are three funding categories under this program:

CATEGORY 1

- Total event budget less than \$100,000
- Required match of 2:1

CATEGORY 2

- Total event budget less than \$500,000
- Required match of 3:1

CATEGORY 3

- Total event budget is at or above \$500,000
- Required match of 4:1

Applicants will be automatically assigned to the appropriate category after review of applications. **The maximum award amount available for Applicants to the Special Events Partnership Grant program is \$100,000.**

This grant program is intended for Events that are seeking to grow and enhance their offerings above and beyond their current level to significantly increase attendance, community-wide impact and appeal. It is the intent that these partnerships are investments in noticeable growth in the Event's impact to bring greater returns to the community.

Leveraging County Funding

One of the major objectives of this grant program is to achieve funding transparency by combining County funding for existing events into one combined ask as part of the Cultural Assets Program funding award. It is encouraged that the applicant considers this Program as a "one-stop shop" for County funding support. An Applicant organization is not eligible for funding through this grant program if the organization already receives funding directly from the County for operations and/or program support.

If the Applicant organization currently receives funding from Visit Tampa Bay through its "Festivals and Events" funding mechanism which provides a declining level of funding over generally a five-year period, or through the Arts Council of Hillsborough County's "re-grant" process for the same project submitted for this application within the same fiscal year as the Event, then the Applicant is ineligible to accept an award from the SEPG Program. However, the Applicant has the right to decline any funding offered by Visit Tampa Bay or the Arts Council through the above named-programs, making the Applicant eligible to accept an award of funds from the SEPG Program. The Applicant organization can also accept sponsorships from Visit Tampa Bay (or any County-funded organization). A sponsorship for the sake of these guidelines is defined as funding offered by Visit Tampa Bay to the organization in exchange for tangible benefits.

It is highly encouraged that the Applicant notifies both Visit Tampa Bay and the Cultural Assets Commission if the Applicant expects to receive funding from both entities, to ensure there is no conflict. (Note: if the Applicant is an organization that currently receives funding from Visit Tampa Bay's multi-year "Festivals and Events" program, the Applicant must choose to either continue accepting their funding from Visit Tampa Bay, or to decline this funding and accept any funds awarded through the SEPG program – the Applicant cannot accept both)

Required Matching Funds

Applicants must demonstrate a leveraging of the County's investment such that the ratio of other support (not including other County funding) for actually incurred event expenses to County investment meets the required match for the appropriate funding category. For example, if an event has total cash expenses of \$100,000, then the applicant falls under Category 2, and the maximum grant amount the applicant is eligible for is \$25,000. The applicant must demonstrate that they have incurred \$25,000 in event expenses eligible for reimbursement while also documenting \$75,000 worth of matching expenditures to meet the 3:1 matching funds requirement. In-kind services, donated materials, and volunteer labor can total an amount that exceeds no more than 50% of an Applicant's match.

Reimbursement of Actual Expenses

Funds available to the applicant as part of an Agreement are reimbursements for actual expenses incurred and paid by the applicant, and consistent with the Matching Fund

requirement described in this document. **An applicant may opt to receive a maximum of 25% of the total award prior to the Event start date described in the application (the “Pre-Event Sponsorship”.)** The Pre-Event Sponsorship can only be used for actual cash expenses incurred and paid by the applicant. Applicants must document expenditure of the Pre-Event Sponsorship prior to submitting any reimbursement requests for the remainder of grant funds awarded. The remaining funds are only available after completion of the Event described in the application and Agreement and are issued as a reimbursement for actual cash expenses. Reimbursements are dollar for dollar. Applicants will not be reimbursed for expenses covered by in-kind support, however, in-kind support can be counted towards the required Matching Funds. All reimbursement requests and necessary documentation of expenditures must be submitted to the County within 120 days following the Event date of completion as specified in the Funding Agreement between the applicant and the County.

Allowable Expenditures

Allowable expenditures for reimbursement include such items as:

- Artistic, administrative, technical salary support and/or consultant fees related to the proposed program, project or event
- Honoraria
- Event production costs (includes direct in-market expenses associated with the Event entertainers such as their hotel expenses, etc.)
- Equipment rental
- Expendable supplies/materials
- Marketing
- Printing
- Publications
- Space rental

Non-Allowable Expenditures

Non-allowable expenditures for reimbursement include such items as:

- Application preparation
- Repayment of prior debt or deficit reduction, debts, contingencies, fines and penalties, interest and other financial costs
- Building, renovating or remodeling of facilities or capital items
- Travel or transportation costs to cover expenses for event staff travel
- Presenting programs/activities outside of Hillsborough County
- Alcohol
- Hospitality (food and drink) and parties/social events for event staff, volunteers, etc.
- Charitable contributions or donations

Grant Time Limits

Unless specifically recommended by the Commission and approved by the BOCC, funding for an approved Event is limited to the period it is proposed and budgeted in the application and/or subsequent Agreement. Extensions are granted only in special cases. Event expenditures must take place during the grant period specified in the formal Agreement with the County. Event planning may begin before a funding request is approved/awarded and a funding agreement signed. However, the entity cannot be reimbursed for any cost incurred prior to the approval of award recommendations by the Cultural Assets Commission. No cost incurred after the grant period has expired will be eligible for payment within the time period specified in the grant agreement.

There are two funding cycles per fiscal year under this grant program, and applicants who receive funding in Cycle 1 are eligible to apply for Cycle 2. All events must occur between November 13 – September 30 within the County's FY2021 fiscal year. For example, the application period for Cycle 1 closes in September of 2020, therefore projects must occur between November 13, 2020 – September 30, 2021. If the application period for Cycle 2 occurs midway between these dates, the project must still occur by September 30, 2021.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Development

The application for this program may be modified from time to time as deemed necessary by the Cultural Assets Commission.

Call for Applications

A call for applications ("Funding Cycle") may occur at least twice every fiscal year.

Optional Review Period

The Optional Review Period is an opportunity for applicants to submit a draft application to program Staff within a sufficient amount of time to allow Staff to offer suggestions and ask questions prior to the application being officially submitted. Staff strongly encourages eligible applicants to submit a draft application during the Optional Review Period.

Application Deadlines

Completed applications that are not delivered to the Commission by the deadline established administratively by Staff will be considered LATE and not eligible for consideration.

Application Review

Staff will review all applications submitted during a Funding Cycle for completeness and consistency with the program objectives. Additional information may be requested by Staff at any time during the internal review process. Failure on the part of the applicant to provide information at any time during the final application review and/or Courtesy Meeting process will result in rejection of the application for the Funding Cycle in which it was originally submitted.

Courtesy Meeting

A Courtesy Meeting is an opportunity for applicants to meet with County staff PRIOR to submission of an application to address eligibility, and to gain a full understanding of the program guidelines including the matching funds requirement, allowable expenses, and the reimbursement process. Applicants are strongly encouraged to set up a Courtesy Meeting with County staff prior to completing an application. The Courtesy Meeting is a service and in no way guarantees that an application will be recommended for funding by the Commission.

Award Process

The appointed Cultural Assets Commission will review all applications and decide on funding recommendations at their publicly-noticed meeting. The Commission's recommendations will then be forwarded to the BOCC for final approval. The BOCC has full discretion and authority when deciding final funding amounts regardless of the Commission's recommendations.

The Cultural Assets Commission will score applications based on five criteria:

- Ability to strengthen and promote cultural assets
- Organizational capacity
- Administrative ability and planning
- Fiscal management
- Economic Impact

A point system is used to score applications, and an Applicant can earn a maximum of five points per category and a maximum total score of 25 points. An Applicant's final score is the average of individual scores submitted by each member of the Cultural Assets Commission. The Applicant's award amount will be determined by the following formula:

Award maximum (based on total event budget) X % of top score = Award amount

Total Score	% of Highest Possible Score	Amount Requested	(Amount Requested) X (% of Highest Possible Score) = Award Recommendation
25	100%	\$50,000	\$50,000
15	60%	\$50,000	\$30,000

Applications scoring less than 10 points will not be funded.

**Funding Process
after approval by the Cultural Assets Commission and the BOCC**

The applicants selected to receive funding must enter into a formal Funding Agreement (“Agreement”) with the County. The Agreement specifies the dollar amount awarded, scope of work, agreed Project budget, how outcomes will be measured, contract duration, the terms of funding and other terms and conditions. All funding agreements will be approved by the BOCC.

BOCC AUTHORITY

The BOCC has full discretion and authority when deciding final funding amounts regardless of the Commission’s recommendations.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

All grant applications are to be submitted by the deadline. Applicants can apply online by visiting:

<https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/HillsboroughCountyFIEconDev/Participant>

Applicants will need to create a login to access the participant portal and the grant application.