



## 2019 – 2020 SPECIAL EVENTS PARTNERSHIP GRANT GUIDELINES

### IMPORTANT DATES (for Cycle 2)

- **Dec. 30, 2019**      **Application Opens**
- **Jan. 27 – 29, 2020**      **Optional Review Period**
- **Jan. 31, 2020**      **Application Deadline**  
(applications due no later than 5PM EDT)
- **Feb. 21, 2020**      **Award Notification**
- **April 1, 2020**      **Grant period begins**
- **Sept. 30, 2020**      **Grant period ends**

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

### **ELIGIBILITY (For Applicant and Special Event)**

To be an eligible applicant, an applicant must:

- Be legally incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation, with a designated tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) or 501 (c)(6) of the United States Internal Revenue Code
- Be able to obtain all permits

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 of time
- 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. *See the "Leveraging County Funding" section of these guidelines for more details.*

Note: Events may be ticketed or unticketed

## 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
- Block parties
- Beauty pageants
- Events organized around political or religious purposes
- Festivals or events based solely on alcohol, drugs, sexually oriented content, etc.

## PARTNERSHIP CATEGORIES AND FUNDING REQUEST CAPS

There are two categories under this program:

- Pilot Effort Special Event Partnership (“Pilot Effort”)  
**The maximum amount available for the Pilot Effort category is \$50,000.**
- Next Level Special Event Partnership (“Next Level”)  
**The maximum amount available for the Next Level category is \$100,000.**

The **Pilot Effort** category is intended for new and emerging events. This is defined as an event first held no earlier than three calendar years from the year of the application date, or sooner. For example, if the application due date is July 6, 2018, then an Event which first occurred at any time from January 1, 2015 on an annual basis is eligible for the Pilot Effort category.

The **Next Level** category is intended for established Events (those not eligible under the “Pilot Effort” category) 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.

Neither category is intended to support status quo event offerings, as in this Program is not for maintaining an Event as it currently exists. This program is intended for new, emerging events and significantly expanding the impact of existing events.

## **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. 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**

Under both categories, 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 is at a minimum of 3:1 for Pilot Efforts and 4:1 for Next Level. For example, if an event falls under the Pilot Efforts category (3:1 ratio) and this event has total cash expenses of \$100,000, then the maximum grant amount is \$25,000. If an event falls under the Next Level category (4:1 ratio) and this event has total cash expenses of \$100,000, then the maximum grant amount is \$20,000.

## **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 measureable 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

- a. The following criteria may, or may not, be considered when making a funding recommendation:
  - i. 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
  - ii. 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

## 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 date and time 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 staff to address questionable elements of the application before final applications are submitted to the Cultural Assets Commissioners for review. Staff has the authority to make Courtesy Meetings mandatory to be an eligible applicant, or strongly encouraged of eligible applicants. 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.

### **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.

## **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. With proper documentation acceptable to the County, an applicant may receive a maximum of 25 percent of the total award before completion of the Event described in the application (the "Pre-Event Amount".) The Pre-Event Amount will only be paid as a reimbursement for actual expenses incurred and paid by the applicant. The remaining funds are only available after completion of the Event described in the application and Agreement. **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.**

## **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, nor will the cost be eligible to be credited as part of the entity's matching shares, 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.**

- The grant period for Cycle 1 starts on October 1 and ends on March 31. To be eligible for Cycle 1, the Event must occur between these dates
- The grant period for Cycle 2 starts on April 1 and ends September 30. To be eligible for Cycle 2, the Event must occur between these dates.

## **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

## **HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION**

All grant applications are to be submitted by the deadline. To access all required application materials, please visit: [www.HCFLgov.net/SEPG](http://www.HCFLgov.net/SEPG)

**All applications must be submitted via Dropbox. To access the Dropbox link, click the “Submit Application Materials” button located at the bottom of the grant homepage.**

A completed application must include:

- Application Form
- Project Budget & Event History Forms
- Event Plan (business, marketing and logistics plans)
- Most Recently Filed IRS Form 990
- Organization Financials for the past two years
- Two Letters of Support
- Additional Materials (i.e. event collateral, promotional materials, event agendas)