



Community Event Grant Funding Program Guidelines & Application

This program is administered by the Highlands County Tourist Development Council (TDC), which is overseen by the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners. Approved by TDC on April 30, 2020.

The Florida 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 Highlands County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created in 1995 pursuant to Highlands County Ordinance 95-4, and operates in accordance with Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes. The county's 4% Tourist Development Tax (TDT) is levied on occupied transient lodging sales, i.e. hotels/motels, campgrounds and other short-term rental properties. The TDT Revenues are designated to promote Highlands County as a preferred visitor destination and assist with increasing tourism to the county in the non-peak tourism months.

Uses of the Tourist Development Tax are restricted by Florida Statute and County Ordinance. Simply put, the TDC's Grant Program is permitted only as a means of advertising and promoting tourism. **Therefore, events funded through this program must demonstrate the intent and effect of attracting visitors to Highlands County.**

What is the Community Event Grant Program?

The Community Event Grant Program is a TDC-funded grant program for events in Highlands County that provide community-based entertainment and recreation from April-December for locals and visitors in Highlands County; encourage increased local and visitor spending; reinforce a positive image of Highlands County; amplify the experience economy; leverage and promote the Sebring brand; and provide added value to Highlands County visitors while they are visiting Highlands County. Criteria for the Community Grant Program includes:

1. Minimum number of event attendees: 500+ verified attendees
2. Maximum funding: \$2,500 (years 1-3); \$1,250 (years 4-6)
3. Applicant's contribution: 1:1 cash matching for all grant funds requested. In-kind matching will not be accepted.
4. Eligible organization: non-profit organizations in Highlands County
5. Application period: Once per year; must be 120 days before event
6. Selection of recipient: based on scoring
7. Funding: Grant funds can only be used for reimbursable marketing outside Highlands County; 75% must be digital online advertising

TDT funding of Highlands County community events and ongoing programs should be provided only on a limited term basis, as "seed funding," not as a perpetual revenue source. That objective for TDT funding is to encourage organizations to develop their programs in ways that help events become self-sufficient in their promotional expenses. In doing so, funding can be available to assist other events and help enhance the overall community product.

Some Community Events attract large numbers of day visitors with little to no overnight room night stays. Those community events have a positive effect in contributing to the vitality of Highlands County and are therefore attractive to potential tourists. Therefore, the TDC may support those events that are open to the public through non-grant/non-monetary avenues, such as:

- Fulfillment of area tourism information
- Visit Sebring promotional material
- Request for Proposal (RFP) distribution
- Public relations support
- Photo/video support
- Social media/calendar/website listing
- Referrals to County/City departments
- Research data collection
- Consultation to grow events to attract overnight visitors

To request funding support as a Community Event, an organization (Applicant) must prepare an application as part of the competitive annual award cycle **AND** attend the TDC meeting where the grant request is considered.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The number and amount of each Community Event Funding Program award will be dependent upon the availability of funds and specific allocations associated within the annual TDC budget. TDC funding support of a Community Event is reviewed and recommended yearly based on documented performance.

Maximum funding for a Community Event is \$2,500 for years 1-3 of the event; \$1,250 for years 4-6 of the event. For purpose of TDC funding programs, a year #1 event is defined as a specific event named in the application that has not been previously held in Sebring/Highlands County in any form.

The Community Grant Funding Program will receive a set budget each year and each Applicant's project will be ranked based on the project's scores from the point system outlined in the application. Funds will be recommended in order from project ranked #1 until the budget has been used.

EXAMPLE: If \$10,000 is budgeted for the Community Event Funding Program, and the applications scored and ranked in the top 5 are eligible for and utilize that budgeted \$30,000, then applications scored and ranked #6 and higher will not receive funding.

Awards will be funded on a sliding scale reflective of the point values outlined in the section titled Community Event Funding Program Application. For example, if Applicant requests \$2,500 and scores 45 (averaged) out of 100 points, the maximum amount of funding Applicant will be recommended to receive is \$1,125 (45% of \$2,500).

GRANT PROGRAM CRITERIA

- Event must take place in Highlands County and be accessible to the public & disabled persons.
- Application must be considered by the TDC at least 120 days before the event takes place.
- All materials submitted with applications for grant funding will become - subject to disclosure and open to inspection in accordance with the requirements of the *Florida Public Records Law* in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, except information exempt from disclosure pursuant to Section 125.0104 (9)(d)(2), Florida Statutes and other any other applicable provision of law.
- Requesting organization must be located in Highlands County (per W9) and limited to organizations that qualify under Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Service Code as not-for-profit organizations.

- Maximum funding for a Community Event is \$2,500 for years 1-3 of the event; \$1,250 for years 4-6 of the event.
- Applicant is required to provide matching monetary amounts equivalent to 100% of the award amount.
- Multiple events by the same organization must be separate and distinct applications with separate summaries, marketing plans and budgets.
- All event expenditures are on a reimbursable basis only. No funds will be advanced in anticipation of the receipt of an invoice.
- Applicant is not to contact members of the TDC or Highlands County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in order to provide a fair and equitable process of consideration of each applicant. Applicants who do contact TDC or BOCC members regarding their application will be suspended from receiving funding for a minimum of one year.
- Grant requests that do not receive a recommendation for funding by the TDC will not be considered again by the TDC, BOCC or any county staff until the following fiscal year.
- Applications must conform to the guidelines specified by the TDC. Applications that do not conform to these guidelines will not be considered for grant funding. Funding limits are subject to approval by the TDC, which makes its recommendations to the BOCC.
- TDC funds used for advertising and promotion of special events must be placed in media or targeted audiences outside of Highlands County.
- Organizations receiving TDC Community Event Grant Funds are required to have their advertising pre-approved by the TDC staff in advance of placement.
- Applicant may not receive funding from more than one TDC grant program for the same Event.

MATCHING FUNDS

Regardless of the funding amount awarded for the Event, the award will not exceed Applicant's documented expenditures. Applicant is required to provide matching monetary amounts equivalent to 100% of the award amount.

APPLICATION DEADLINE AND GUIDELINES:

Applications will be reviewed quarterly at TDC meetings as outlined in the schedule below. Applications are due no later than the deadlines listed herein. If the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, then the applications are **due the last County business day prior to the posted deadline**. One application will be accepted per Event/Project. The application **must be completely filled out**. Not Applicable or N/A should be marked if needed. **To be considered for the maximum award available, applications shall be submitted at a MINIMUM of six (6) months prior to the Event/Project start date.** Exceptions can be made for tournaments with late notice by host organization.

The TDC Staff and TDC will review funding for Community Event Funding Requests as outlined in the chart on the next page.

Submittal & Meeting Schedule for Community Event Funding

Grant Application Submittal Deadline	TDC Meeting*
October 10	Last Thursday in October
January 10	Last Thursday in January
April 10	Last Thursday in April
July 30	Second Thursday in August

ALL FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRE FINAL APPROVAL BY THE HIGHLANDS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS *Dates are subject to change

You may e-mail, mail or hand deliver the **ORIGINAL** application to:
Highlands County Tourist Development Council (TDC)
Attn: Reagan Fultz
501 S. Commerce Ave.
Sebring, FL 33870
RFultz@highlandsfl.gov
(863) 402-6909

*If date(s) above fall on a weekend or holiday, items are due on the prior business day.
**Dates subject to change.

MEETING ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

Recipients of Community Event Funding Program funds are required to meet at least once (in person or via phone) with TDC staff to review marketing plans and coordinate marketing efforts.

Applicants requesting funding are required to attend the assigned TDC meeting in which an Applicant's application will be reviewed. During that TDC meeting, an Applicant must present a 1-2 minute "update" and respond to questions from the TDC. ***Failure of an Event representative to attend the specified TDC meeting will result in removal of the Applicant's application from the TDC's consideration.***

REVIEW PROCESS

The TDC will review each request brought forth by the TDC staff. Applicant requesting funding is required to attend (either in person or via conference call) and must offer a 1-2 minute "update" at the assigned TDC meeting in which the application comes up for review and respond to questions from the TDC. ***Failure of an Event/Project representative to attend the specified TDC meeting will result in the application being removed from the TDC's consideration.***

Tourist Development Tax funds are intended to supplement, not replace Applicant's Event budget. Applicant must recognize that not every application will be funded either fully or partially. A limited amount of funds is available. The grant application process is a highly competitive process and applications will be reviewed and scored on specific criteria.

Applicants must notify the TDC of any changes (i.e. date, venue, event content etc.) to their Event/Project plans in writing at least **60 days prior** to the Event start date. Failure to do this can result in termination of the contract and jeopardize future funding. Early notification of changes is necessary to properly

promote programs through various marketing platforms and the TDC's website www.VisitSebring.com. The TDC would have to vote to accept these changes and maintain or adjust funding accordingly.

All information provided to the TDC in conjunction with the Community Event - Funding Program Guidelines will become subject to disclosure and available for public inspection in accordance with the *Florida Public Records Law*, in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes,, except information exempt from disclosure pursuant to Section 125.0104 (9)(d)(2), Florida Statutes and other any other applicable provision of law.

RECORD KEEPING AND AUDIT

- A successful Applicant is hereinafter referred to as the “Recipient”.
- Recipient agrees to allow TDC staff access to the Event for the purpose of determining economic impact and return on investment. If tickets are required for the Event, Recipient is required to collect from the ticket purchased either a street address or email address along with the purchaser's name for the purpose of permitting the TDC to conduct a survey of the purchaser about attendance at the Event. Recipient must cooperate with the TDC staff and/or contractors in providing email addresses of ticket buyers and vendors for the purpose of conducting surveys.
- Upon approval of funds, Recipient shall provide media passes for use by TDC staff to attend and cover the Event for marketing and public relations purposes.
- All contracts are subject to programmatic and financial audit by the Highlands 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 may become a public record. Recipient shall acknowledge funding by Visit Sebring in all advertising and publicity for the Event. Acknowledgement may be achieved by: Including recognition of Visit Sebring where appropriate on all printed material, Recipient's website and in public relations activities. A camera-ready Visit Sebring logo will be provided to Recipient. 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/ACCOUNTABILITY:

1. Within 60 days after the completion of the Event/Project, Applicant must submit the following:
 - a. Completed Post Event Report (Page 9-10)
 - b. Room Night Verification Forms (Page 8) reporting all room nights generated by the event. This includes all staff, competitors, volunteers, spectators, officials, etc. that stayed in paid accommodations, verified directly by a hotel, motel, or vacation rental.
 - c. Invoice from Grantee to Visit Sebring / Highlands County for reimbursement of TDC/BCC approved funds (addressed to Visit Sebring / Highlands County Tourist Development Council).
 - d. Collateral supporting the expenses grantee is requesting reimbursed (Vendor receipt(s); or Invoices/Orders with proof of payment in form of front and back copy of cleared check, online payment confirmation, credit card receipt or bank statement). Please refer to Eligible/Ineligible Use of Funds from grant application.
 - e. Copies/samples of advertising or promotional materials TDC funds are reimbursing expenses for, and proof of Visit Sebring logo included in said advertising or promotional item.

2. If original award amount must be prorated due to the actual room nights being less than the guaranteed room nights, an updated invoice will be required with the new award amount.
3. The TDC will conduct audits to promote accuracy of attendance and room nights reported in Post Event Report.
4. Incomplete reports will not be considered. A request for an extension of the 60-day deadline will require approval from the part of the Tourist Development Council.

ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS:

Community Event funds **can only** be used for reimbursable, out-of-county marketing and advertising expenses, of which 75% of those expenses must be used for digital, online marketing.

Advertising and publicity, in compliance with the second bullet point below, designed to increase participation, attendance and awareness of the Event by those residing outside of Highlands County:

- Digital, online marketing targeting audiences outside of Highlands County (must be 75% of your TDC funding request)
 - Examples include: Geofencing, re-targeting, SEM/SEO, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), targeted E-mail blasts, etc.
- Other approved out-of-county advertising methods that are not considered digital, online advertising include: print ads, printed collateral materials (flyers, posters, banners), radio ads, television ads, digital or print billboards, etc.
- The Visit Sebring logo and name inclusive shall be included on all digital and printed material associated with the Event and shall list Visit Sebring as a sponsor of the Event.

INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS:

1. Prize money, scholarships, awards, plaques, trophies, certificates
2. T-shirts or promotional items
3. Any and all travel expenses. (Includes, but is not limited to, car rental fees, airline tickets, hotels/accommodations, toll fees, food, luggage fees, etc.)
4. Private entertainment, food, beverages, or any type of concession
5. Annual operating expenditures
6. Legal, medical, security, engineering, accounting, auditing, planning or other consulting services
7. Employee salaries
8. Rental items: tents, barricades, toilets, etc.
9. Real property or capital improvements to facilities
10. Tangible personal property including but not limited to office furnishings or equipment
11. Interest or reduction of deficits and loans
12. Expenses incurred or obligated prior to before or after the grant Event/Project period;
13. Advertising & promotional materials distributed at the Event site or after the Event;
14. Receptions or social functions
15. Sales tax;
16. Website design
17. Ongoing or annual facility maintenance.

CONCLUSION:

Applicants are encouraged to not contact members of the TDC, Board of County Commissioners or non-TDC County staff in order to provide a fair and equitable process of consideration of each applicant. Applicant may make contact with TDC staff to address any concerns or deliver updates. Additionally, the Event director, fiscal administrator or other contact person may be called upon by TDC staff at any time during the review process.

TDC meetings are held (unless otherwise noticed) on the last Thursday of October, January, April and, and the second Thursday of August. Applicant is required to attend the TDC meeting (either in person or via phone) for which the Event application is scheduled for review. This will be the only opportunity to speak directly to the TDC in regard to the Event application.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

Community Event Grant Program

Applications will be scored by TDC staff with a maximum score of one hundred (100) points per applicant. These staff scores will accompany the grants when presented to the TDC for voting.

I. Commitment to the Expansion of Tourism in Highlands County – Maximum 25 points

Purpose: Grant will be evaluated based on evidence of the overall tourism impact of out-of-county tourists. Expectation of the required number of estimated overnight room nights & event attendees should be shown & supported by the event marketing plan & any previous event attendee history. Applicant must explain how they will verify event attendees.

1. High Impact (25 points): Multi-day event that expects to attract 50+ estimated overnight room nights and/or 500+ attendees with verification that at least 20% of attendees reside outside Highlands County.
2. Medium Impact (15 points): One-day event that expects to attract 25+ estimated overnight room nights and/or 500+ attendees with verification that at least 10% of attendees reside outside Highlands County.
3. Low impact (5 points): One-day event that expects to draw less than 25 estimated overnight room nights and/or 500+ attendees with no verified information of how many attended reside outside Highlands County.

II. Soundness of Proposed Event – Maximum 25 points

Purpose: The grant request is evaluated based on the event illustrating clearly identified objectives, other additional funding sources being used and an out-of-county advertising plan. Please use the SMART Objective Worksheet (on page 9) to complete this section.

1. Objectives are clearly defined on SMART Objective Worksheet (5 points)
2. Objectives are not defined well or not defined on SMART Objective Worksheet (0 points)

Additional Funding Sources/Budget

1. Specific additional funding sources defined on application & confirmed for funding (10 points)
2. Additional funding sources identified but not confirmed for funding (5 points)
3. Not defined or confirmed on the application (0 points)

Out of County Advertising/Marketing Plan

A well-defined marketing plan will include details on market research, target market, positioning/brand perception, competitive analysis, market strategy/tactics, budget and metrics/measurables.

1. Specifically defined on the application (10 points)
2. Identified but not specifically defined on the application (5 points)
3. Not defined on the application (0 points)

III. Stability and Management Capacity – Maximum 25 points

Purpose: The grant request is evaluated based on the event having a proven record or demonstrated capacity of the organization to successfully develop resources, effectively plan, organize and implement the proposed event.

Digital Presence – Considerations --How well is the applying event represented on online, digital platforms designed to attract tourists? For example, does the applying event describe the destination in an enticing way to attract visitors? Does the applying event provide a host hotel or hotel recommendations? Does the applying event suggest other activities to do in the area?

- a. Event has a mobile-friendly website that is current on website design trends and actively posting quality content (at least once a week) on at least one social media channel as the event itself (not host organization) (10 points)
- b. Has event-specific website with event specific URL and an Event Page on Facebook (5 points)
- c. No event-specific website or social media presence (0 points)

Event History Documentation – Consideration -- Were all the TDC grant documentation requirements submitted and adhered to as published in policy?

1. All documentation was properly submitted, and grant funds were appropriately used as outlined in the grant request (10 points)
2. Documentation was submitted but incomplete and/or grant funds not fully used as outlined on the grant request. (5 points)
3. Documentation was not submitted as required and/or grant funds not used as agreed. (0 points)

Visitor Survey – Considerations -- Does the event plan to use a visitor survey to capture data for future improvements and was a sample copy provided in the application package?

1. Yes, a sample survey was included in the application with an agreement to share zip code information with the TDC following the event. Survey should capture attendee information that is helpful to capture visitor data, such as home zip code, feedback on event, length of stay in destination, quality of experience, location of stay at hotel or other accommodations, etc. (5 points)
2. No survey planned (0 points)

IV. Quality of Proposed Event – Maximum of 25 points

Purpose: The grant request is evaluated based on the event's attraction of visitors to Highlands County with a high-quality guest experience (prior to arrival through departure) thereby providing a significant economic benefit to Highlands County.

1. High Impact – Recurring event with increasing levels of participation and significant economic impact. Event uses a systemic approach to data collection and analysis, such as attendee survey, hotel room night verifications, data capturing website and digital communication with evaluations, etc. (25 points)
2. Medium Impact – Recurring event with steady level of participation and economic impact. Has digital presence but not capturing or evaluating data in an effort to attract more visitors. (15 points)

3. Low impact – First year event with level of impact unknown, does have positive anticipated level of participation and economic impact to the county OR a recurring event with a declining level of participation, low economic impact to the county, and no or very little digital presence. (5 points)

Bonus Points

Up to 10 additional points may be earned for submission of a quality Special Event Emergency Response Plan. Submissions should include traffic and parking plans, inclement weather plan; security plans; evacuation plans; hazard identification and mitigation tactics; identified leadership roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships; emergency response procedures; etc.

For all questions related to the Community Grant Program and the application, please contact Reagan Fultz at the Highlands County Tourist Development Council (TDC) at RFultz@highlandsfl.gov or call (863) 402-6909.

SMART Objective Worksheet

Draft Goal:

Definition	Your Objective
Specific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I want to accomplish with this event? Why? • What is the desired result? 	
Measurable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you quantify (numerically or descriptively) success? • How will you measure progress? 	
Achievable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills are needed? • What resources are necessary? • What factors impact goal achievement? • Does the goal require the right amount of effort? 	
Relevant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the goal aligned with the overall mission or strategy to increase economic activity in Highlands County? 	
Time-bound <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much time will be available to complete this SMART Objective? • Is the deadline realistic? 	

Final Goal:

**HIGHLANDS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (TDC)
COMMUNITY EVENT FUNDING REQUEST APPLICATION**

Amount Requested from TDC: \$ _____

1. General Organization Information

Name of Organization: (must be non-profit and submit verification)

Event Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Postal Code:

Phone:

Website:

Contact Name:

Contact Email Address:

Contact Phone:

Contact Cell Phone:

Requesting Organization's Net Reported Assets in most recent completed fiscal year. Please attach file.

2. Event Information

Name of Event:

Date(s) of Event (Events held in January-March are not eligible):

Time(s) of Event:

Location of Event:

Website:

Social Media handles:

Projected number of Event Attendees (please explain how attendee numbers will be verified):

 Local (Highlands County) Attendees:

 Out-of-Town Attendees:

Projected number of Vendors:

Projected number of hotel room nights:

TDC Event Marketing Grant Request: (Must be 1:1 match)

What method was used to determine your projected numbers for this event?

3. Event History

Date of Most Recent Past Event:

Location of Most Recent Past Event:

Number of Attendees:

Number of Vendors:

Estimated Economic Impact:

How did you estimate the economic impact?

Hotel Room Nights Generated by this event:

How many years has the event existed in Highlands County?

What method was used to capture the number of attendees?

What method was used to capture the number of vendors?

What method was used to capture the number of hotel room nights?

Of the number of attendees, how many were day visitors (tourists/visitors from outside of Highlands County, but not staying overnight in hotels)?

4. Event Information

Share 3 Event Objectives (must be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant, Time-bound)

Examples Not acceptable: To create goodwill within our community OR to boost local awareness of our organization.

Examples Acceptable: Create an event experience that will generate 100 room nights, a 30% increase over last year, by using a digital marketing campaign that will run 1 month prior to our event and will target southeast Georgia, Orlando and Tampa.

5. Event Funding

Please attach Event Budget (both revenue and expenditures)
Please attach Sponsorship Plan/Commitments

What alternative source of funding will you seek if your request is not eligible for funding?
Are you requesting funding or event assistance (in-kind) from any other government entity in Highlands County? If yes, please list name of entity and amount allocated:

6. Event Marketing Plan

Please attach Event Marketing Plan (include size/length of advertisement, distribution channel(s) used, when advertisements will appear, targeted audiences, etc.)

7. Visitor Survey

Please attach Visitor Survey

(Circle yes or no) Yes No I am willing to share the zip code and event feedback data I collect at this event with Highlands County's TDC staff.

8. Emergency Plan (optional)

Please attach Emergency Plan (traffic and parking plans, inclement weather plan, security plan, evacuation plans, etc.)

EVENT BUDGET SUMMARY

Income Sources (TOTAL Sponsorship & In-Kind Donation):

Tourist Development Council Request:

Highlands County TDC cannot be the sole source of income. Please list all event income, including paid sponsorships. Be sure to also include any monetary and in-kind assistance provided from local and state public agencies (i.e. Police, City, CRA, VISIT FLORIDA, Florida Department of State, etc.). Use additional sheets if necessary.

Income Source & Type	Income Amount
TOTAL ADDITIONAL INCOME	\$
TOTAL INCOME ALL SOURCES	\$

EVENT EXPENSES

Provide an itemized list indicating the intended use of TDC funds at the bottom of this page. Please be as detailed as possible, including intended digital marketing tactics, promotional materials, etc. and the dollar amount that will be expended (tentatively) for each category. This is the total amount of the funds you have requested. Use additional sheets if necessary. Please do not request TDC pay for items that are on the list of Ineligible Expenses (see pages 5-6).

TOTAL EXPENSES: Please list all projected expenses, not including TDC Funds.	*
Expense Type	Expense Amount
	0
	0
	0
	0
	0
	0
	0
	0
	0
TOTAL EXPENSES	*
	\$
	0
Intended Use of Tourist Development Tax Funds	Amount
	0
	0
	0
	0
	0
TOTAL EVENT EXPENSES	\$

Grant Application Checklist

Please initial next to each item and fill in the blanks below. This list must accompany your grant application.

Initials

_____ This application is being submitted at least four months (120 days) prior to the event start.

Date of Event: _____

Date of Application: _____

_____ I understand that the reimbursement request must be completed and submitted to the Tourism Office with all back up and supporting material no later than 60 days after the event ends, which will be on _____ (date 60 days after event ends).

_____ I will obtain the signatures of the organization's President & Secretary on the proposed grant contract by _____. (date one week after the application is submitted to and accepted by the Tourism Office)

_____ I understand that the "Visit Sebring" logo must appear in any print advertisements that are funded by the TDC. For digital ads, the "Visit Sebring" logo must either be featured on the advertisement or on website/landing page linked to the ad or the ad must link to the TDC's website, VisitSebring.com. I will also use the #VisitSebring hashtag on at least one event social media post.

_____ I have included an IRS **W-9 Form** and a copy of the Florida Division of Corporations form with the application.

_____ I understand that someone representing this grant application must be available at the TDC meeting when it considers the application for funding or the application will not be considered.

_____ I understand that no expenses incurred before the TDC recommends approval of the grant application will be reimbursed under any circumstances. I also understand that no funding has been approved until the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approves execution of the Grant Contract and that no expenditures will be reimbursed if the BOCC does not approve execution of the Grant Contract.

_____ I understand that reimbursements following the event will only be made for itemized, authorized expenses approved by the BOCC in the fully executed Grant Contract.

_____ I understand each reimbursement request must include copies of paid invoices, screenshots of digital ads, copies of the ad/tear sheets, invoice for reimbursement amount to the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners, copy of front and back of cleared checks paying for advertising, and outreach figures identifying the number of people your ad reached outside Highlands County and inside Highlands County.

_____ I certify that the funding request is within the limits as outlined in the Grant Rules & Guidelines.

_____ I understand that the Event must have 500+ verified attendees to be eligible for funding. Event organizer(s) must conduct and compile their own attendee surveys and verifications.

_____ I agree that the funds I receive will ONLY be used in accordance with the eligible and ineligible uses of funds. (pages 3-4)

_____ I understand understands and certify that my business/organization has its main place of business located in Highlands County (as confirmed on W-9).

_____ I have reviewed the **Highlands County Special Event Permit Flow Chart** and will proceed with any required county permits. (Contact: Rachel Barry; (863) 402-6638)

_____ I have included a list of my business/organization's current Officers and/or Board members (if applicable) with the application.

_____ I will provide the Visit Sebring office with a Certificate of Insurance (COI) naming "Highlands County Tourism Office" as additionally insured no later than 15 days before the event begins.

_____ I have included a detailed **Marketing Plan** for the Event.

_____ As an authorized representative of Applicant, I (the person submitting this application) acknowledge that I am also the person required to execute the contract and prepare the **Post-Event Report** (page 9-10) for the Event within 60 days after completion of event to receive payment. This report should include: total number of attendees, information regarding where attendees came from, feedback about destination (what did they like/not like).

_____ I acknowledge that I am required to submit documentation that confirms my authority to act on behalf of the Applying Organization, such as a corporate resolution or a copy of a record from the State of Florida Division of Corporations that lists me (the person submitting the Application) as an officer who has statutory authority to represent and bind the Applying Organization.

_____ I acknowledge that any material made or received by Highlands County in connection with my request for Program funding is a public record and subject to public inspection unless there is a legislatively created exemption that makes it confidential and not subject to disclosure. I acknowledge that I cannot dictate to Highlands County what material is open to public inspection or the circumstances under which material is deemed confidential.

_____ I understand that as a requirement to receiving funding, I will execute a release to permit Highlands County to photo and/or record the Event and I must make Event invitees aware of this and make the signing of a release a requirement to participate in the Event.

_____ I understand that all funds received are subject to audit by the Highlands County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative as Highlands County may designate.

_____ I understand that this event may require a Highlands County Special Event Permit, and it is up to me to complete that permit request and pay the required permit fee.

Authorized Agent: _____

Title: _____ *Date:* _____

Authorized Agent Signature: _____

CERTIFICATION OF APPLICANT

Applicant has reviewed this Application for Funds from the Highlands County Tourist Development Council. Applicant is in full agreement with the information contained herein. To the best of Applicant's knowledge, the information contained in this Application and its attachments is accurate and complete.

Applicant Name: _____

Date: _____

By: _____
(Signature)

Its: _____
(Title)

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me by means of physical presence or online notarization this ____ day of _____, 20__ by _____ (name) as _____ (title) for _____ (applicant, name of party on behalf of whom instrument was executed).

(NOTARY SEAL)

(Signature of Notary Public-State of Florida)

(Name of Notary Typed, Printed, or Stamped)

Personally Known _____ OR Produced Identification _____

Type of Identification Produced
