



## 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.

The nine-member Highlands County Tourist Development Council (TDC) is an appointed advisory group tasked with making recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on how the TDT funds should be spent to achieve the County's tourist development goals. More information about the TDT can be found in the enabling legislation, Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes.

### Why Tourism Development?

Tourism is an economic development tool that provides great benefits to the citizens of Highlands County including job creation, sales and gasoline taxes, plus millions of dollars in ad valorem tax revenue paid by local tourism businesses, all which help pay for the quality of life we enjoy. So, while overnight visitors pay the TDT, the approximate \$150 million in direct spending that visitors pay annually to local businesses does much more.

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.

## APPLICATION DEADLINE AND GUIDELINES

Applications will be reviewed 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. The application **must be completely filled out**. Not Applicable or N/A should be marked if needed. Completed applications will be date stamped and added to the TDC agenda in the order that they are received. **To be considered for the maximum award available, applications shall be submitted at a MINIMUM of six (6) months prior to the Event start date.**

The TDC Staff and TDC will review funding for Community Event Funding Requests as outlined below:

### Submittal & Meeting Schedule for New 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: Lori Krinsky  
501 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, FL 33870 or email to: [LKrinsky@highlandsfl.gov](mailto:LKrinsky@highlandsfl.gov).  
Questions? Call (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.

## **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).

## **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.***

## 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.

### 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](http://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**

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 as a form of payment, a copy of both the front and back of canceled check must be provided. Written confirmation from vendor that the 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 chief officer.

## **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.

# **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 Lori Krinsky at the Highlands County Tourist Development Council (TDC) at [LKrinsky@highlandsfl.gov](mailto:LKrinsky@highlandsfl.gov) or call (863) 402-6909.

# SMART Objective Worksheet

Draft Goal:

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

Final Goal:

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**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)

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

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**

Upload Event Budget (both revenue and expenditures)  
Upload 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**

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

**7. Visitor Survey**

Upload Visitor Survey

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)**

Upload 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.

<b>Income Source &amp; Type</b>	<b>Income Amount</b>
<b>TOTAL ADDITIONAL INCOME</b>	\$
<b>TOTAL INCOME ALL SOURCES</b>	\$

**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).

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

## 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.

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

\_\_\_\_\_ 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.

\_\_\_\_\_ The funding request is within the limits as outlined in the Grant Rules & Guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant understands 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.

\_\_\_\_\_ The funds Applicant receives will ONLY be used in accordance with the eligible and ineligible uses of funds. (See pages 5-6)

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant understands and certifies that Applicant has its main place of business located in Highlands County (as confirmed on W-9).

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant will provide the Visit Sebring office with a Certificate of Insurance (COI) naming “Highlands County Tourism Office” as additionally insured no later than 10 days before the event begins.

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant has included a detailed marketing plan for the Event.

\_\_\_\_\_ As an authorized representative of Applicant, the person submitting this documentation acknowledges that he/she is also the person required to execute the contract and prepare the post event analysis for this Event/Project, as well as receive payment.

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant acknowledges that any material made or received by Highlands County in connection with Applicant’s 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. Applicant acknowledges that it cannot dictate to Highlands County what material is open to public inspection or the circumstances under which material is deemed confidential.

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant understands that as a requirement to receiving funding, Applicant will execute a release to permit Highlands County TDC to photo and/or record the Event and Applicant must make Event invitees aware of this and make the signing of a release a requirement to participate in the Event.

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant understands that all funds it receives are subject to audit by the Highlands County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative as Highlands County may designate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Applicant understands that this event may require a Highlands County Special Event Permit, and it is up to the applicant to complete that permit request and pay the required permit fee 90 days before Event start date.

*Authorized Agent:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Title:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Authorized Agent Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_



## CERTIFICATION OF APPLICANT

(Must be signed, notarized and submitted to TDC office)

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 Date

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Its:

(Title)  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Before me this day personally appeared \_\_\_\_\_ (name) as  
\_\_\_\_\_ (title) of APPLICANT to me well known or produced identification  
\_\_\_\_\_ (type of ID) and who executed the foregoing instrument, and who  
acknowledged that he/she did so freely and voluntarily for the uses and purposes herein  
expressed.

Witness my hand and seal (date)

My Commission expires (date)

Signature of Notary