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Leon County Division of Tourism  
**2026 Tourism Event Grant  
Orientation Workshop**

# Event Definitions/Descriptions

## Sports Events

A new or existing sporting event, exhibition, competition, team training conference or celebration which is conducted according to a pre-arranged schedule and of interest to the general public and to those living outside Tallahassee/Leon County who would visit and stay overnight to observe or participate.

## Special Events

A new or existing organized concert, exhibition, festival, fair, conference or celebration is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and of interest to the general public and to those living outside Tallahassee/Leon County who would visit and stay overnight to observe or participate.

# What's New for FY 2026?

- Grant application window has been extended 45 days to August 7.
- Applicants are prohibited from applying for both a Tourism and COCA grant for the **same** event.
- Grant Rating Criteria has been updated.
- Grantees awarded \$10,000 or more may receive an economic impact report from Downs & St. Germain.
- Marketing opportunities.



# FY2026 Tourism Event Grant Requirements

To Receive Tourism Event Grant Funding, Event(s) Must:

- Occur between October 1, 2025 & September 30, 2026 in Leon County
- Comply with Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes for the utilization of Tourist Development Tax funds
- Have the potential to bring in overnight tourists
- Demonstrate paid out-of-market advertising; Special events must use at least 20% of grant award on paid out-of-market advertising
- Not occur during specific peak dates
- Be registered in Sunbiz, unless the organization is a government entity

# Tourism Grant Process Timeline

Process	Date
Grant Cycle Opens (45 day window)	Tuesday, June 24, 2025
Workshop for Grant Applicants	Tuesday, July 8 <sup>th</sup> 10:00am.-In Person Tuesday, July 15 <sup>th</sup> 11:00pm.-via Teams Thursday, July 31 <sup>st</sup> 5:00pm.-viaTeams
<b>Deadline for Application Submittal</b>	Thursday, August 7, 2025 at 5 p.m.
TDC Grant Review Committee Public Meeting Special Event Grants Only! <b>*Applicants Strongly Encouraged to Attend*</b>	Tuesday, August 26 <sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. the ORS Gathering Room 1907 S. Monroe
TDC Consideration and Final Approval	Thursday, September 11, 2025

# **FY 2025-2026 Blackout Dates for Event Grants**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>October 3-4, 2025</b>	FSU Football Game vs. Miami
<b>October 10-11, 2025</b>	FSU Football Game vs. Pittsburgh
<b>October 18-19, 2025</b>	FAMU Football Game (FAMU Homecoming)
<b>October 31 – November 1, 2025</b>	FSU Football Game vs. Wake Forest (Homecoming)
<b>November 14-15, 2025</b>	FSU Football Game vs. Virginia Tech
<b>December 12, 2025</b>	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
<b>January 5 – 11, 2026</b>	World Athletics Cross Country Championships
<b>January 13 – March 13, 2026</b>	Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)
<b>May 2-3, 2026</b>	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
<b>Weekends beginning August 28 – September 26, 2026</b>	Potential FSU/FAMU football games



# Tourist Development Council (TDC)

The TDC funds two grant programs: Visit Tallahassee Tourism and COCA.

Applicants found to have submitted applications to both the Visit Tallahassee Tourism and COCA Grant Programs for the same event, must withdraw the application from either the Tourism or COCA Grant program to continue to be considered for the current cycle of grant funding.

**Only apply to the grant program that best matches your event!**

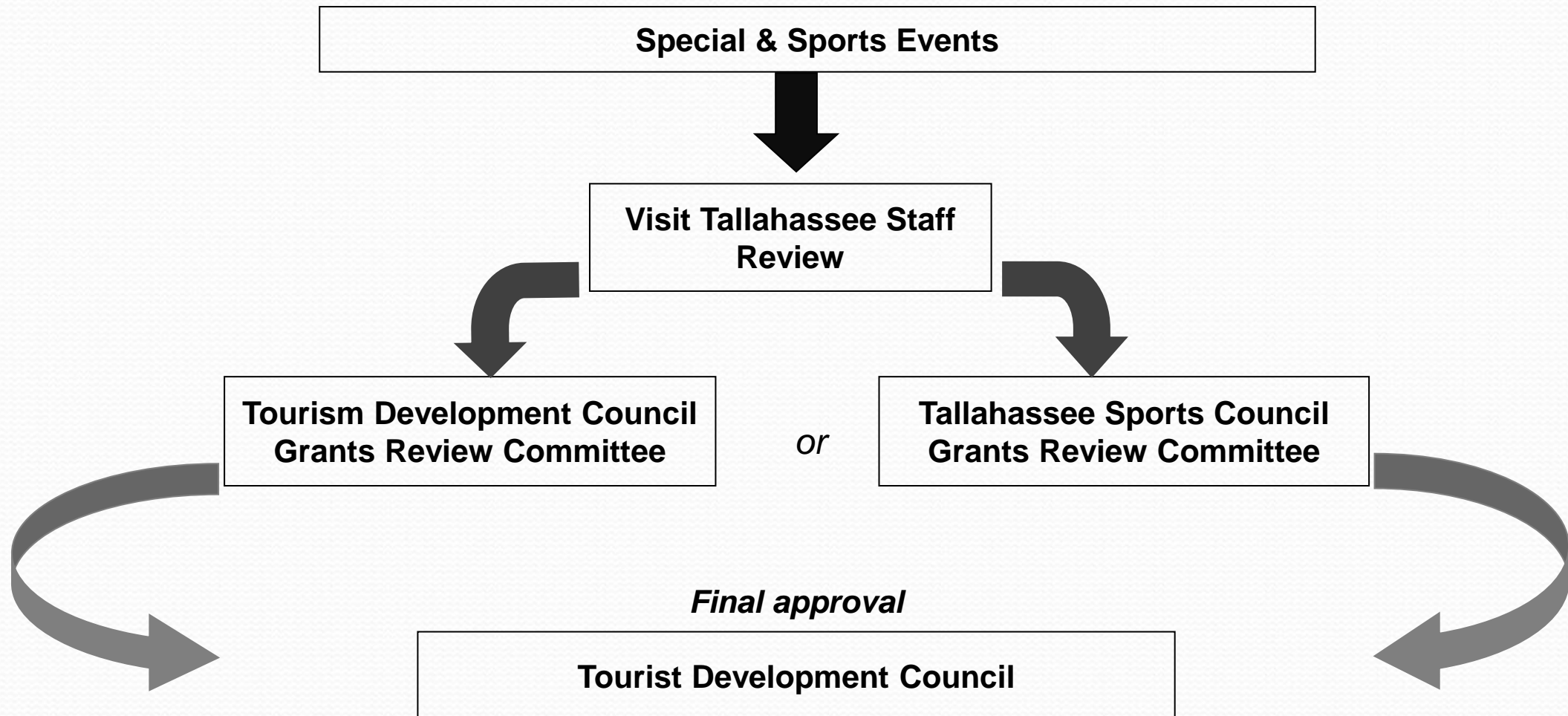


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# Tourism Grant Application & Award Process





# Funding Ranges

Special & Sports Events	
Estimated Room Nights	Funding Range
Less than 100	\$0 - \$2,999
100 – 199	\$3,000 - \$5,999
200 – 499	\$6,000 - \$10,499
500 – 1,000	\$10,500 – \$17,499
1,001 – 1,499	\$17,500 – \$26,250

# Special Events Application Rating Criteria

Room Night Generation	Event dates coincide with shoulder seasons or periods of low-occupancy and have potential of generating Tallahassee/Leon County overnight lodging during periods of low occupancy. The process used for estimating room nights and an achievable plan for documenting overnight hotel stays is provided in the application. Past performance of applicant and/or event. Event does not occur during peak visitor periods as defined in the grant policies.	30
Destination Enhancement and Community Impact	Description of how the event will elevate and differentiate the destination and increase overall economic and community impact.	25
Marketing Plan	For most events, the application contains a well-defined, thorough, and realistic marketing plan which includes strategies for attracting out-of-county tourists. <b>OR</b> , for events excluded from the 20% paid out-of-market advertising, the applicant provides a well-defined, thorough and realistic outreach plan to their event participants. <b>ALL</b> plans must include the planned usage of the combined Visit Tallahassee/Leon County logo or audible mention of Visit Tallahassee/Leon County funding support for the event.	25
Funding Need and Budget	An appropriate statement of need for funding and a complete budget are included for the event. The budget must include at least 20% of the budget appropriated for out-of-market advertising, unless the event has been designated as exempt by Visit Tallahassee from this 20% requirement.	10
Description, Event Sustainability	Event description includes event goals, a plan for measurement of success, and a statement of event sustainability and growth.	10
Total possible points:		100

# Sports Events Application Rating Criteria

Room Night Generation	Event dates coincide with shoulder seasons or periods of low-occupancy and have potential of generating Tallahassee/Leon County overnight lodging during periods of low occupancy. The process used for estimating room nights and an achievable plan for documenting overnight hotel stays is provided in the application. Past performance of applicant and/or event. Event does not occur during peak visitor periods as defined in the grant policies.	45
Destination Enhancement and Community Impact	Description of how the event will elevate and differentiate the destination and increase overall economic and community impact.	25
Marketing Plan	For Events with open attendance, the application contains a well-defined, thorough, and realistic marketing plan which includes strategies for attracting out-of-county. <b>OR</b> , for Events with a targeted group of participants, the applicant provides a well-defined, thorough and realistic outreach plan to their event participants. <b>ALL</b> plans include the planned usage of the combined Visit Tallahassee/Leon County Sports logo or audible mention (for radio advertising) of Visit Tallahassee/Leon County funding support for the event.	10
Funding Need and Budget	An appropriate statement of need for funding and a complete budget are included for the event.	10
Description, Event Sustainability	Event description includes event goals, a plan for measurement of success, and a statement of event sustainability and growth.	10
Total possible points:		100



# Grant Request Amount Matching Funds Policy

**If the requested grant amount is \$10,000 or more, the applicants' budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar match (in-kind services will not be allowed).**

## **FOR EXAMPLE:**

**You are awarded \$22,000.**

**You must provide proof of total spending of at least \$27,500 = \$22,000 + \$5,500 (25% match)**

Grantees receiving \$10,000 or more in funding may receive an Economic Impact Study. Grantees who are awarded \$10,000 or more will be notified if they will receive this report, or if they will need to track their event's attendees and room nights.

# Application – Additional Information

- Total attendance:

- Out of Town visitors/tourists
- Participants
- Performers/Officials/Trainers

Total Event Attendance Estimate

27

- Hotel/Lodging assistance available:

Has a Hotel Been Secured for the Event? \*

☐ Yes

☒ No

Request Assistance from Visit Tallahassee Staff to Secure Room Blocks?

☒ Yes

☐ No

- Marketing assistance/opportunities will be available to applicants awarded a Special Events grant.



# Application – Expenses

*Consider what expenses are allowable when compiling your event's budget.*

## **Allowable Expenses:**

- Promotion, marketing and paid advertising/ media buys that reach outside Tallahassee/Leon County with potential to drive overnight visitation.
- Event production and technical expenses.
- Site fees/costs (venue rentals, insurance).
- Contract help such as performers, judges, parking attendants, and athletic trainers.
- Rights fees, sanction fees, non-monetary awards, and travel expenses for guest speakers, performers, judges, event officials, or referees, including lodging.

## **Unallowable Expenses:**

- General and administrative expenses.
- Building, renovating and/or remodeling expenses.
- Permanent equipment purchases.
- Debts incurred prior to the fiscal year of the grant period.
- Food or beverages (includes catering).
- Paid advertising that primarily reaches only Tallahassee/ Leon County and its residents.
- Lodging or travel expenses for attendees.
- In-kind services.
- Monetary awards.
- Raffle prizes.



# Application – Approved Logo Use



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**SPORTS**



The Leon County/Visit Tallahassee logo must be included on all printed and online advertisements and promotional materials for the event. A draft or design proof **MUST BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED** by the Leon County Division of Tourism / Visit Tallahassee.

# Online Application

## Leon County Tourism Grant Program

The Leon County Division of Tourism (Visit Tallahassee) annually funds groups and organizations that coordinate events with a history of (or significant potential for) attracting visitors to the area who stay overnight in commercial lodging.

The Leon County Tourism Grant Program is administered by the Leon County Tourist Development Council and designated advisory groups including the TDC Grant Review Committee and the Tallahassee Sports Council.



**SUBMIT A 2025/2026 SPECIAL  
AND SPORTS GRANT >**

**SUBMIT A 2024/2025 POST EVENT REPORT >**

**SUBMIT A 2024/2025 SECOND  
CYCLE POST EVENT REPORT >**



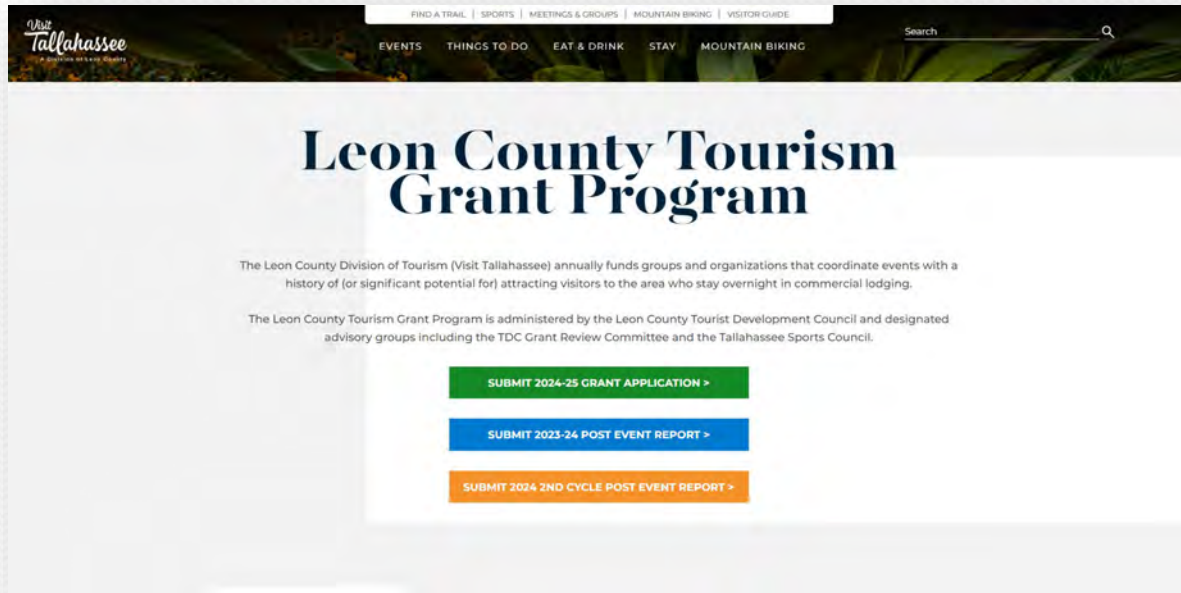
# Grant Funding Agreement



- Once approved, all grantees are required to provide these documents:
  - The County's Substitute W-9 and voided check (if new grantee).
  - Notarized affidavit attesting the organization is against human trafficking.
- The agreement will be sent via DocuSign for your signature.



# Grant Information is Located at [VisitTallahassee.com/Grants](https://www.visittallahassee.com/grants)



In addition to the online application the following support materials are available for download:

- Grant Guidelines
- Important dates and deadlines
- Downloadable forms including budget template, visitor tracking forms and marketing information.
- Grant Workshop recording (after July 15)
- Logos and branding graphics

# Need Assistance? We are here to help!

For Special Event Grant application questions

Wendy Halleck - [Wendy.Halleck@VisitTallahassee.com](mailto:Wendy.Halleck@VisitTallahassee.com)  
(850) 606-2331

For Sports Event Grant application questions

Taylor Walker - [Taylor.Walker@VisitTallahassee.com](mailto:Taylor.Walker@VisitTallahassee.com)  
(850) 606-2317

Contracts, post event reports, and payment of awards

Julie Trezek - [Julie.Trezek@VisitTallahassee.com](mailto:Julie.Trezek@VisitTallahassee.com)  
(850) 606-2315



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING



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