



Grant Programs

Policy

1.0 Summary

The Florida Sports Foundation (“FSF”) administers grant programs to support Florida communities and host organizations in attracting and hosting qualifying sports events that advance the State of Florida’s sports tourism and economic development objectives.

2.0 Governance

The Florida Sports Foundation (“FSF”) administers grant programs to support Florida communities and host organizations in attracting and hosting qualifying sports events that advance the State of Florida’s sports tourism and economic development objectives.

The Foundation’s grant programs are authorized pursuant to **Florida Statutes §§ 288.1229 and 320.08058** and are designed to:

- Generate measurable **out-of-state visitation and tourism-related economic impact**;
- Deliver a documented **Return on Investment (ROI)** to the State of Florida;
- Strengthen Florida’s statewide **sports tourism economy**;
- Enhance Florida’s **national and international visibility** as a premier sports destination; and
- Ensure responsible stewardship of public funds through **transparent, competitive, and data-driven decision-making**.

3.0 Definitions

Average Daily Spend (ADS)

The estimated amount that an individual will spend during the span of a day. Each Sports Destination Partner has a table entry associated with their organization.

Community Support

A cash-contribution by an entity of local government or Florida Sports Industry Partner/Regional Sports Commission in good standing. (Also known as Matching Funds)

Destination Partner

See *Sports Industry Partner*.

Economic Impact (EI)

Any of several measures of change in the local economy, including output, earnings, employment, or revenue.

Entity Director

The head of the Destination Partner/Sports Industry Partner organization with signing authority.

Major Event Grant

The Major Grant Program is designed to assist communities and host organizations in attracting sports events, which will generate significant economic impact for the state of Florida.

Events that will be considered for grant funding include amateur or professional athletic events, or other categories approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors. When awarding grants, the Foundation places emphasis on economic impact, community support and image value to the state.

Major Sports Events

Major sports event include, but not limited to championship or all-star contests of Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, the National Football League, the National Hockey League, Major League Soccer, the men's and women's National Collegiate Athletic Association Final Four basketball championship, a horseracing or dog racing Breeders' Cup, and other sporting events that have a substantially similar economic impact on the State of Florida as approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors.

Minor Event Grant

The Minor Grant Program ([320.08056](#) Specialty license plates.– (9)(b)) is designed to attract sports events, which will generate significant economic impact for the state of Florida.

Events that will be considered for grant funding include amateur or professional athletic events, or other categories approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors. When awarding grants, the Foundation places emphasis on out-of-state economic impact, community support and image value to the state.

Multiplier

The expected change in output, earnings, or employment for each one-dollar change (million dollar change for employment) in direct impact.

Out-of-State

A classification of visitors that do not reside in the state of Florida.

Output

The value of sales of goods and services by local businesses. The output is the increase in sales directly and indirectly attributable to the event.

Revenue

The income of local government from taxes, fees, and sales of goods and services. The revenue impact is the increase in local government income directly or indirectly attributable to the event, less any expenditures of local government funds to attract or support it.

Return on Investment (ROI)

Return on investment, per person, for this event.

Rights Holder

A person or organization that has a legal right (or rights), especially to perform, publish, film, or televise a particular work, event, etc. Generally, the professional team that is organized and registered as a business or corporation. (*Oxford Languages*, <https://languages.oup.com/>, accessed January 5, 2026)

Signature Event

Each year the Florida Sports Foundation hosts a series of annual events, including the Florida Senior Games, the Sunshine State Games, the Governor's Baseball Dinner, the Florida Sports Summit, and Florida Sports Day at the Capitol. Each of these events are considered a signature event.

Sports Industry Conference Assistance (SICA)

The Florida Sports Foundation's (Foundation) Sports Industry Conference Assistance (SICA) Program is designed to assist communities in attracting legitimate event rights holders to market the state of Florida and generate viable event sales leads. The SICA goal is to host Event Business opportunities throughout the State. Conferences that will be considered for assistance include trade shows, conferences, or association meetings whose attendees include legitimate event rights holders willing to conduct business in Florida.

Sports Industry Partner

The organizing body for the event who is also a contributing member of the Foundation.

Youth

An individual 18 years of age or younger.

4.0 Grant Programs

Events that will be considered for grant funding include amateur or professional athletic events, or other categories approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors. When awarding grants, the Foundation places emphasis on out-of-state economic impact, community support and image value to the state. The event must have the potential to bring out-of-state visitors that use commercial lodging establishments in the State of Florida.

It is important to note that grants are not recurring and not to be considered as a funding source for budgeting purposes.

FSF administers the following grant programs on a **quarterly** cycle, subject to availability of funds and approval by the FSF Board of Directors. All grants that are awarded are fulfilled after the Post-Event report is received and may be reduced if the actual attendance is less than projected.

4.1 Major Grant Program

The Major Grant Program is designed to assist communities and host organizations in attracting sports events, which will generate significant out-of-state economic impact for the state of Florida. The presumptive maximum allowable grant amount is **\$300,000** for events generating a minimum of an ROI of \$150:1 and an economic impact of at least **\$5,000,000**, provided, however, that the maximum allowable grant amount may be increased, subject to availability of funds and approval by the FSF Board of Directors, for Grants that promote and develop the sports industry and related industries.

4.1.1 Minimum Eligibility Thresholds

To be considered under the Major Grant Program, an event must demonstrate:

- Minimum **\$5,000,000** in out-of-state economic impact
- Minimum ROI of **\$150:\$1**, calculated using the Foundation's standardized methodology
- Minimum **4,000** out-of-state hotel room nights.

Events projecting over **\$10,000,000** in economic impact and over **5,000** room nights may be required to present to the Foundation's Board of Directors.

4.1.2 *Local Community Financial Support*

Applicants must document local community support equal to at least twice the amount of the grant request, provided by:

- Local government entities; and/or
- FSF Sports Industry Partners in good standing

4.1.3 *Bidding Standard*

A formal bid process is preferred when applicable. Minor Grant Program

The Minor Grant Program (**320.08056 Specialty license plates.— (9)(b)**) provides grant awards up to **\$100,000** typically for events that do not exceed Major Grant program impact thresholds, for events generating a minimum of an ROI of **\$100:1** and an economic impact of at least **\$500,000**.

4.1.4 *Minimum Eligibility Thresholds*

To be considered under the Minor Grant Program, an event must demonstrate:

- Minimum of **\$500,000** in out-of-state economic impact
- Minimum ROI of **\$100:\$1**, calculated using the Foundation's standardized methodology
- Minimum of **600** out-of-state hotel room nights.

4.1.5 *Local Community Financial Support*

Applicants must document local community support equal to at least the amount of the grant request provided by:

- Local government entities; and/or
- FSF Sports Industry Partners in good standing

4.2 **Sports Industry Conference Assistance (SICA)**

The Florida Sports Foundation's Sports Industry Conference Assistance (SICA) Program is designed to assist communities in attracting legitimate event rights holders to market the state of Florida and generate viable event sales leads. The SICA goal is to host Event Business opportunities throughout the State. Conferences that will be considered for assistance include tradeshow, conferences, or association meetings whose attendees include legitimate event rights holders willing to conduct business in Florida.

The Foundation's SICA Program operates through its Sports Industry Partnership program, which encompasses all regions of the state of Florida.

Events will not be considered, unless approval is granted before the application process, for any of the SICA Programs.

Applications are available by request. SICA assistance funds are limited and funding is available and awards are contingent upon available resources.

5.0 Availability of Funds

All funding for event grants is contingent upon the continued availability of an annual appropriation by the Legislature of the State of Florida or such other funding source used by FSF to fund the Grant.

If funding extends beyond the FSF's current fiscal year that begins on July 1 of each year and ends on June 30 of each succeeding year, performance and payment during subsequent fiscal periods is contingent upon sufficient funds being appropriated by the State of Florida or such other funding source used by FSF to fund the Grant.

FSF shall be the final determiner of the availability of such funds. In the event of a state revenue shortfall, the total funding may be reduced accordingly.

6.0 Eligibility Requirements

6.1 Eligible Applicants

Applications must be submitted by a Foundation approved non-profit Sports Industry Partner (Sports Commission or Convention & Visitors Bureau) in good standing.

Event rights holders may not apply directly to FSF. Foundation staff may assist rights holders in identifying the appropriate partner but do not advocate for or prepare applications.

6.2 Eligible Event Types

Eligible events may include, but are subject to Board approval:

- Amateur and youth sporting events
- Collegiate sporting events
- Olympic-pathway or National Governing Body events
- Professional all-star games or championship events
- Other event categories approved by the FSF Board of Directors

6.3 Ineligible Events and Funding Restrictions

All events must meet the minimum standards for each category

- **Major Events**
 - Economic Impact minimum of **\$5,000,000**
 - ROI of a minimum of **\$150:\$1** for Major Events
- **Minor Events**
 - Economic Impact minimum of **\$500,000**
 - ROI of a minimum of **\$100:\$1** for Minor Events

In addition, the following events are not eligible for FSF funding:

- Events that fail to meet minimum economic impact, ROI, or scoring thresholds
- Events that do not comply with FSF policies, procedures, or statutory requirements

7.0 Event Application Submission and Deadlines

7.1 Submission Method

All event grant applications must be submitted online through the FSF Grants Portal. Once submitted, the applicant will receive a submission notification from the Grants Portal.

Any additional documentation or presentation materials can be attached to the applications via the Grants Portal.

7.2 Quarterly Deadlines

The following deadlines are all due by 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

- **July 10** – Events held between October 1 and December 31 of the same year. The Board will render a decision on these applications at the September Board meeting.
- **October 10** – Events held between January 1 and March 30 of the same year. The Board will render a decision on these applications at the December Board meeting.
- **January 10** – Events held between April 1 and June 30 of the same year. The Board will render a decision on these applications at the March Board meeting.
- **April 10** – Events held between July 1 and September 30 of the same year. The Board will render a decision on these applications at the April Board meeting.

Event Occurs	Deadline	Board Decision
January 1- March 30	October 10	December
April 1- June 30	January 10	March
July 1- September 30	April 10	June
October 1- December 31	July 10	September

No applications will be accepted beyond the deadline except in a case of extreme circumstances.

**Short notice events may be considered at the Foundation's discretion.*

***If the deadline falls on a weekend, then the applications are due no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday **before** the deadline.*

7.3 Application Details

Each application must be thorough and complete. Incomplete applications may be rejected.

Please refer to the **Grant Application policy** for detailed information on each section of the application.

8.0 Application Scoring & Evaluation

Each application will be scored against a corresponding rubric ensures transparency and consistency.

Applications must meet minimum scoring thresholds to be considered for funding.

8.1 Core Evaluation Categories

- Economic Impact & ROI (30 points)
 - Major Events
 - Economic Impact minimum of \$5,000,000
 - ROI of a minimum \$150:\$1 for Major Events
 - Minor Events
 - Economic Impact minimum of \$500,000
 - ROI of a minimum \$100:\$1 for Minor Events
- Out-of-State Visitation (25 points)
 - Major Events
 - 4,000 Room nights
 - Minor Events
 - 600 Room nights
- Florida Visibility Strategy (15 points)
- Attendance & Community Impact (10 points)
- Health & Fitness Programming (5 points)
- Youth Engagement (5 points)
- Budget & Matching Funds (5 points)
- Organizational Readiness (5 points)

8.2 Bonus Points

Bonus Points are worth 2–3 points each and may be awarded for:

- Rural or underserved location
- Sustainability initiatives
- Military inclusion
- Off-season scheduling
- First Time/Relocated Events
- Demonstrated Need for Funding

8.2.1 Rural or Underserved Location

The location of the event is in a rural community. The Florida Department of Commerce [Office of Rural Initiatives](#) provides the below definition of a “Rural Community” per [Florida Statute 288.0656](#) as

1. A county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
2. A county with a population of 125,000 or fewer which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.
4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or fewer and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based

industries, located in a county not defined as rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in paragraph (c) and verified by the department.

(c) “Economic distress” means conditions affecting the fiscal and economic viability of a rural community, including such factors as low per capita income, low per capita taxable values, high unemployment, high underemployment, low weekly earned wages compared to the state average, low housing values compared to the state average, high percentages of the population receiving public assistance, high poverty levels compared to the state average, and a lack of year-round stable employment opportunities.

Please visit the [Office of Rural Initiatives](#) for exact locations and more information.

8.2.2 *Sustainability Initiatives*

Sustainability refers to initiatives to benefit the environment such as:

- Recycling Programs
- LEED Certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a certification program through the [U.S. Green Building Council](#))
- Optimize Energy Performance
- Protect and Conserve Water
- Enhance the Indoor Environment
- Reduce the Environmental Impact of Materials

8.2.3 *Military Inclusion*

Including the recognition of active service or veteran members of the military can be accomplished by, but not limited to:

- Recognizing members prior to the start of a game (e.g., the announcer requests all military to rise so they can be recognized for their service)
- Military Discounts
- Recognize military personnel in the program, schedule, or other materials associated with the event

8.2.4 *Off-Season Scheduling*

Off-season is in reference to the event location’s tourism cycle. Applicants are requested to provide their off-season months on the application.

Applications must meet minimum scoring thresholds to be considered for funding.

8.2.5 *Demonstrated Need for Funding*

The applicant may explain how the requested grant funding fulfills a critical need that materially supports the successful execution of the event.

8.2.6 *Score Allocations*

Each criterion has a total point value assigned. Each criterion is assigned to a category of binary or non-binary.

8.2.7 *Criterion Categories and Classes*

Non-binary criteria include criteria where only two (2) options exist – yes or no. Either the criterion is present or it is not.

Binary criteria include criteria that can be divided into three classes – High, Medium, Low. Each section’s value is defined as:

- **High** –
 - Total points for the criterion are assigned
 - The application reflects an excess of the minimum value for the criterion
- **Medium** –
 - The midpoint value for the criterion is assigned
 - The application reflects the minimum value for the criterion
- **Low** –
 - The minimum point value for the criterion is assigned
 - The application is lacking the minimum value for the criterion

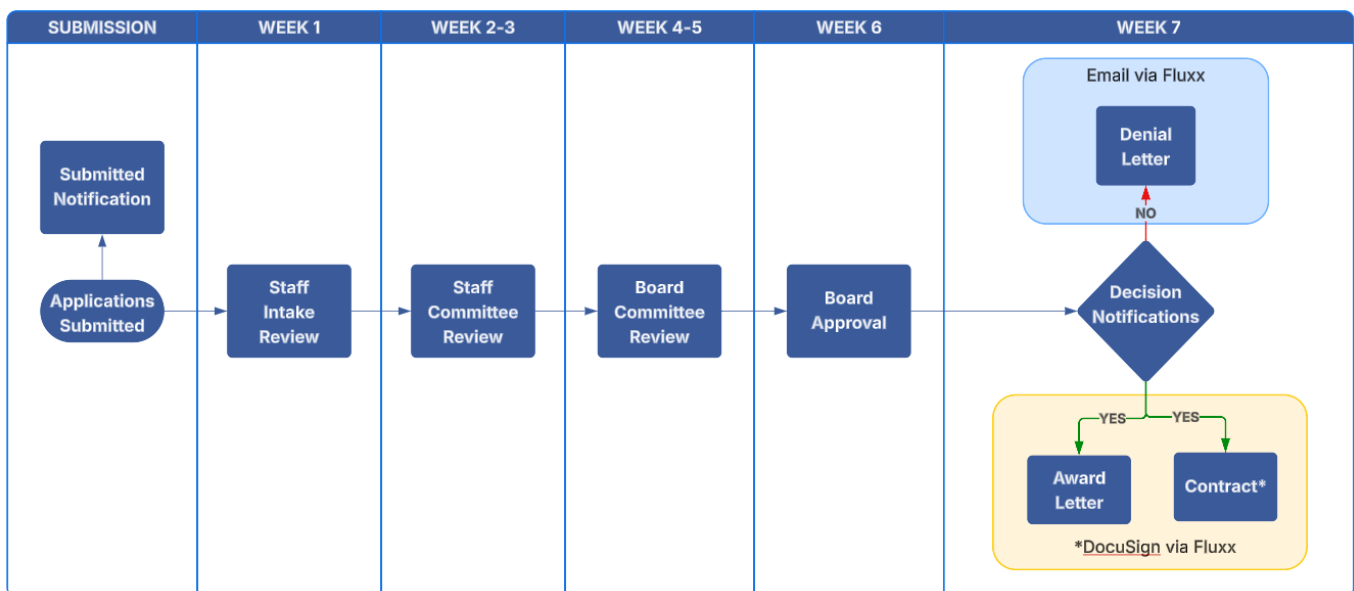
The below scale references the **High-Medium-Low allotment** based on total points for the criterion. It is important to note that if the application does not meet the criterion, it will be assigned zero (0) points.

Points	High	Medium	Low
30	30	15	5
25	25	13	5
10	10	5	1
5	5	3	1
3	3	2	1

Further scoring detail is supplied in the [Scoring Matrix with High-Medium-Low](#) document.

9.0 Grant Review Workflow

Grant applications are collected through the posted closing date via the Fluxx portal. Following the closing date, the applications proceed through the overall processes below.



9.1 Staff Intake Review

FSF staff reviews applications for:

- Completeness and eligibility
- Program threshold compliance
- Alignment with policies and statutory authority

FSF will not contact applicants to request missing information.

FSF staff will forward all complete applications to the Grant Selection Committee for review.

9.2 Internal Grant Recommendation Committee Review

Each committee member independently reviews and scores each application using corresponding standardized rubric.

Reviewers document notes identifying applications requiring clarification or discussion.

The Grants Manager aggregates all scores into a consolidated scoring summary.

The Internal Grant Selection Committee meets to:

- Review aggregated scores
- Discuss reviewer notes
- Determine applications meeting funding thresholds

9.2.1 Substantial Differences in Scoring

For those applications that have been scored and the **total scores** for the application differ by **twenty (20)** or more points, those members who originally reviewed the application will meet to resolve the discrepancy.

9.3 Internal Grant Recommendation Committee Award Recommendations

The Internal Grant Recommendation Committee may recommend reducing the requested award amount to:

- Maximize the number of funded events and/or
- Improve ROI and program balance

9.4 Board Grant Committee Packet

In addition to any associated public notifications, the Staff will prepare a collections of documents for the Board Grant Committee.

9.4.1 Agenda

The agenda for the Board Grant Committee will contain the following information:

- Sunshine Guidelines & Public Record Notice
- Welcome & Roll Call
- Overview of Evaluation Framework
- Grant Committee Summary of Recommended Grants
 - Total Count of Applications Received
 - Total Count of Applications Recommended

- Total Amount Requested
- Total Amount Recommended
- Total Projected Economic Impact
- Total Return on Investment
- Total OOS visitation
- Grant Applications Recommendations Discussion
- Fiscal Impact & Budget Availability
 - Total Amount of Funds Available in Grant Cycle Quarter
- Approval of Grant Applications
- Motion(s) to approve recommendations (with any conditions) and forward to the full Board.
- Public Comments
- Closing Remarks
- Adjournment

9.4.2 *Applications*

All applications and application attachments submitted for the grant cycle either as PDF copies or access within Fluxx.

9.4.3 *Summary Spreadsheet*

The summary spreadsheet will include:

- Fluxx ID Number
- Partner Name
- Event Title
- Event Start Date
- Event End Date
- Amount Requested
- Recommended Amount
- Projected Economic Impact
- Return on Investment
- OOS Visitors
- Application Score

9.5 **Board Grant Committee Review**

A Board committee meets to:

- Review all applications and scoring
- Review staff recommendations
- Assemble recommendations for the full Board meeting

9.6 **Board Approval**

Final grant application approval authority rests solely with the Foundation's Board of Directors.

Applicants are requested not to contact the Foundation's Board of Directors or Committee members.

10.0 Applicant Communications & Transparency

FSF will issue a grant contract for all Board approved grants. The grant contract may contain other various requirements not listed herein and is subject to change per legislative session.

The contract grant period will indicate the post event report due date.

10.1 Audit

All funds granted will be subject to audit by the State of Florida Office of the Auditor General, Chief Financial Officer and Office of the Chief Inspector General and the FSF's independent auditor. By signing the contract, the grantee agrees to retain and maintain all records in connection with the event for a period of five (5) years.

10.2 FSF Communication

Within one week following the Board of Director's meeting, FSF will issue a formal notification letter to all applicants indicating:

- Approval or denial status; and
- Final application score.
- FSF will issue a grant contract for all Board approved grants.

10.2.1 Grant Agreement (Contract)

The Grant Agreement (Contract) may only be issued for grants approved by the Board of Directors. It may contain other various requirements not listed herein and is subject to change per legislative session.

The contract grant period will indicate the post event report due date.

When applicable, the Grantee will agree to market and sell our Specialty License Plates, including, but not limited to, ads placed in programs and booking the [DMV FLOW Mobile](#) at the site of the event.

10.3 Grantee Communication

- Grantee agrees to return the contract signed by an authorized individual within 30 days.
- Once contracted, a certificate of insurance listing FSF as additional insured must be submitted within 15 days, with a minimum liability of \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- When applicable, the Grantee will include an FSF Benefit Agreement for the event.
- The Grantee will notify the FSF immediately if the event is canceled, postponed or rescheduled.

11.0 Applicant Support & Training

FSF will conduct quarterly grant workshops to:

- Explain program requirements
- Review scoring criteria and common deficiencies
- Provide guidance on strengthening future applications
- FSF may, at its discretion, offer post-decision meetings after Board approval to review applications and provide feedback

Workshops are informational only and do not guarantee funding.

12.0 Reimbursement & Post-Event Requirements

12.1 Performance Requirement (Post-Event)

Events must achieve at least 80% of projected impact to receive the full award.

If performance exceeds minimum thresholds but falls below 80%, reimbursement may be prorated.

Natural disasters or extraordinary circumstances will be reviewed case-by-case.

All grants are reimbursement only.

12.2 Allowable Expenses

Reimbursement is issued only after verification of allowable expenses, as identified below:

- Promotion, marketing & programming
- Paid advertising & media buys
- Production & technical expenses; officials
- Site fees, venue rentals, costs (contract help)
- Rentals, insurance, rights fees, bid fees*, sanction fees, non-monetary awards

**Bid Fees are the only expense accrued prior to the grant period*

12.3 Disallowed Expenses

The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement:

- General and administrative expenses
- Building, renovating and/or remodeling
- Permanent equipment purchases
- Debts incurred prior to the grant
- Programs which solicit advertising
- Hospitality or social functions including meals or banquets
- Travel expenses
- Prize money or cash compensation provided to event participants

12.4 Submission Method

Post-Event Reports must be submitted online through the Grants Portal. A Post Event Report must be submitted:

- Within 90 days of event completion; or
- By September 1 for June events (due to quarterly reporting requirements)

Late Post-Event Reports may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but a request for an extension must be submitted in writing and include reasonable justification.

12.5 Proof of Payment

Funds will be made available by the FSF to the Grantee, as reimbursement for paid invoices, which are supported by canceled checks/payments dated within the grant period, upon receipt and review of a completed Post Event Report. Proof of payment includes:

- A copy of the invoice
- Canceled checks, (front & back), and dated within the grant period, except for pre-paid bid fees, or proof of electronic funds transfers
- Inter-government transfers, dated with the grant period, and which details the payment number, payee, the event date, and/or the invoice

12.6 Visitor and Room-Night Documentation

Documentation must include tracking backup (such as reporting from the hotels contracted for the event) for attendees or teams and hotel room nights.

12.7 Branding and Benefit Requirements

Proof that the FSF logo and/or banner was displayed, inserted into program advertising, and/or included in any public service announcements and social media. Examples for submission include:

- URLs and screenshots from social media postings
- Digital photos of logo and banner placement
- Digital copies of program advertising
- URLs or digital recordings of any broadcast (television or internet)

If television spots for the event were part of the benefits, then a schedule of airtime should be included.

13.0 Contact Information

If questions arise, anyone can contact the Foundation via email or by phone.

Grants@PlayinFlorida.com
(850) 577-7200

14.0 Metrics

Metric	Type	Data Source
Economic Impact Generated*	\$	Approved Grant Applications
Approved Grants	%	Approved Grant Applications
Approved Grants	\$	Approved Grant Applications
Grant Applications	#	All Grants in a Cycle
Taxes Generated	\$	All Grants in a Cycle
Return on Investment	\$	Approved Grant Applications
Bids	#	All Grants in a Cycle
Hotel Nights Generated	#	Approved Grant Applications
Out-of-State Visitors	#	Approved Grant Applications

15.0 Related

Grant Applications Policy

Grant Scoring Rubric

16.0 History

Revised	June 18, 2026	Division	Grants
Effective	June 18, 2026	Owner	Maicel Green

Document any changes to this procedure, including reviews, below.

Date	Contributor	Comments
12/26/2025	Maicel Green Charlotte Cowen Pamela Manley	Initial draft
2/19/2026	Pamela Manley	Final clarifications
2/27/2026	Pamela Manley	Scoring clarifications
3/25/2026	Pamela Manley	Per the direction of the Board Meeting on March 25, 2026 Removed all references to the “but for” the grant, the event would not be successful Removed references to Mature Events Removed references to small, rural markets from the Minor grant program Added “presumptive” clarification to reference of grant caps Expanded definition of Major Event Removed references to prize money from Eligibility Added reference to prize money in Disallowed Expenses Removed reference for additional State funding from Eligibility First Time/Relocated Events added to Bonus Points and removed from core rubric criteria Demonstrated Need for Funding added to Bonus Points and removed from Eligibility Added guidance for scores that contain a 20- point or more difference between scores
6/18/2026	Board of Directors	Approved during the FY26 – Q4 meeting.