

Jefferson County
Tourist Development Council

GENERAL SPECIAL EVENT GRANT PROGRAM

POLICIES, APPLICATION and POST-EVENT REPORTING FORM

Approved by

Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners
Jefferson County Tourist Development Council

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ATTACHED:

- Application
- Certification and Compliance Statement
- Post-Event Reporting Form

**Jefferson County Tourist Development Council
Special Event Grant Program**

I. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

The Jefferson County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Jefferson County Code Article 3, Sections 32-54. The TDC administers funds collected from a local option tourist development tax on occupied transient lodging sales, i.e., hotels/motels, bed and breakfast facilities, campgrounds and long and short-term vacation rentals such as those found on Airbnb and Vrbo. The funds are designated to promote Jefferson County as a preferred visitor destination with emphasis in the following markets: special events, cultural activities, nature-based activities, weddings, and amateur sporting events.

The TDC allocates funds from its annual budget to a grant program for local groups and organizations that coordinate events with a demonstrated history of visitor impact or significant potential to draw visitors to the area. The Special Event Grant Fund is administered and scored by the TDC. The grants are awarded by the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

A “Special Event” shall be defined as a new or existing organized concert, exhibition, festival or fair, which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and in which general public interest is manifested. For the purpose of this grant program, the public interest should extend to Jefferson County residents and to those living outside Jefferson County who would consider visiting the destination and staying overnight to observe or participate.

Each application will be evaluated against established criteria. The number and extent of these grants will be dependent upon the availability of designated funds. Ideally, the funds allocated by the Jefferson County BOCC will eventually be returned through an increase in transient lodging sales and the tourist development tax generated from those sales.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICIES

- A. Grant funds are intended to supplement the sponsoring organization’s event budget.
- B. Funding is not intended to support administrative costs or non-public events. Funding is intended to support marketing and promotional efforts.
- C. Grant applications will only be received during the advertised cycle. One application will be accepted per event. In the case that a Special Event Grants application is received outside of the Tourist Development Council’s designated submission dates and grant funds are still available in the budget, the Council may elect to consider the request.
- D. Organizers should encourage stays at Jefferson County lodging when promoting their events.
- E. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for approved actual expenditures. An exception may be made, on a case-by-case basis, for vendors who, because of the nature of services provided, require payment in advance. **Payments will not be made to the awardees of the grant.** If the event occurs near the end of the fiscal year, request for reimbursement must be received by September 30th.
- F. A Post-Event Report must be submitted. The report must include tracking statistics regarding out-of-town visitors and their overall impact on the local economy, particularly on transient lodging facilities and occupancy. **Failure to submit a Post-Event Report will result in disqualification for future support.**
- G. Any funds granted will be subject to audit by the Jefferson County BOCC.

- H. Recognition of the Jefferson County Tourist Development Council must be included where appropriate on all printed material and the organization’s website referred to in public relations activities. A camera-ready logo will be provided. Failure to include the logo may be cause for disallowing reimbursement of that portion of the grant.
- I. Allowable expenses shall include promotion, marketing, and paid advertising for the event (including labor contracted for these services) that reaches beyond Jefferson County with potential to drive overnight visitation. Item #15 of the Application requires all applicants to describe how the grant funds will be used. Any changes to the items submitted in #15 MUST be submitted in writing to the TDC and will not be allowed without approval from the TDC.
- J. The maximum amount of funds awarded in a grant is \$500. The TDC will award four grants per cycle.

III. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The intent of the Special Event Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract visitors to Jefferson County impacting the commercial lodging industry, hotels/motels, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, vacation rentals, as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other businesses. To be considered for funding, the following criteria have been established:

- 1. Each application must include a signed Certification and Compliance page.
- 2. Events must take place in the current fiscal year for which they are applying for funding.
- 3. The event must have the potential to bring or have a history of bringing out-of-town visitors.
- 4. The event must use or promote only lodging establishments within Jefferson County.

IV. RATING CRITERIA AND PROCESS

Each grant application will be reviewed by staff to ensure that all required information and materials have been provided. Failure to provide all the required items will result in disqualification. Please review the application carefully as incomplete applications will not move to the scoring stage. Following staff review, the applications will be turned over to the TDC for scoring. The TDC will score each application on a 100-point scale based on the following:

RATING AREA	DESCRIPTION	POSSIBLE POINTS	SCORE	NOTES
Tourism Development	Proposal has potential or previously proven ability to generate visitation to Jefferson County that may include overnight stays in the County’s commercial lodging	35 points		
Tourism Development	Proposal contributes to overall appeal of Jefferson County as preferred visitor destination through its event offerings	35 points		
Event Evaluation	Proposal includes event goals and objectives	15 points		
Event Evaluation	Proposal includes method for documenting and evaluating outcomes in Post-Event Report (i.e., # of attendees, participant survey, etc.) *	15 points		*See examples in Appendix
Mission Alignment	Event aligns with organization’s mission. If NO , application is automatically ineligible for consideration regardless of points awarded.	YES / NO		
Allowable Expense Criteria	Funds requested meet grant criteria of allowable expenses. If NO , application is automatically ineligible for consideration regardless of points awarded.	YES / NO		
Post-Event Report	Post-Event Report submitted. If NO , funds will not be released regardless of points awarded.	YES / NO		
			TOTAL SCORE	

V. APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Complete application submitted within appropriate submission window.
2. TDC ranks applications and votes on grant awards and organizations are notified.
3. Events is held; Post-Event Report is submitted.
4. TDC Coordinator makes payment request to Jefferson County BOCC.

VI. SPECIAL EVENT GRANT TIMELINE

PROCESS	CYCLE 1 OCT. – DEC.	CYCLE 2 JAN. - MARCH	CYCLE 3 APRIL - JUNE	CYCLE 4 JULY – SEPT.
Grant Cycle Opens	August 1	November 1	February 1	May 1
Application Deadline	October 1	January 4	April 1	July 1
Review/Awards made by TDC	October TDC meeting	January TDC meeting	April TDC meeting	July TDC meeting
Payment Requests Processed*	Submittal of Post-Event Report	Submittal of Post-Event Report	Submittal of Post-Event Report	Submittal of Post-Event Report

**The condition to be met for funding is the submittal of the Post-Event Report. Funds will not be released until the Report is completed and received by the TDC.*

In the event that a Special Event Grant application is received outside of the Tourist Development Council’s designated submission dates, the Council may elect to consider the request if Special Event Grant funds are still available in the budget.

VII. VISITOR TRACKING and POST-EVENT REPORTING

The Post-Event Report is required in order for grant funds to be released.

In order to assess the impact of events on Jefferson County lodging, retail and restaurants, the TDC emphasizes the importance of tracking overnight and day visitor attendance, event participant ratings and sales information (levels, not numbers) from shops and eateries during special events.

Event attendance and participant opinion measurement are the responsibility of the host organization.

However, the TDC recognizes it is difficult for organizations to gauge local economic impact; therefore, TDC staff will follow up with lodging, retail shops and restaurants to get anecdotal sense of the economic impact the event had on Jefferson County (i.e., event sales compared to previous weeks or the same weekend in the previous year, etc.).

VIII. CONCLUSION

To be considered for a Special Event Grant, submit the original application by the deadline noted in section **VI. - SPECIAL EVENT GRANT TIMELINE** to:

Jefferson County Tourist Development
450 W. Walnut Street
Monticello, FL 32344

Hard copies and emailed applications accepted.
Submit to tsterling@jeffersoncountyfl.gov

IX. APPENDIX

Examples of methods that might be used to **document attendance numbers** at Special Events include:

- Registration forms
- Tickets collected at entrance
- Actual head count/clicker counter at entrance

Examples of methods that might be used to **document participant opinions** include:

- Brief, printed post-event questionnaire – circle or checkmark answers to 3 key questions upon exit
- Roaming interviews – volunteers can pose questions to a random sample of attendees while the event is going on, or at the end of the event
- Email survey after the event, if emails were collected in advance for registration

Examples of items that might be used to **evaluate the event** include:

- Rating Scale with numbers: *On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the BEST, please rate...*
- Rating Scale with statements: *How likely are you to attend this event next year? or How likely are you to recommend this event to a friend?*
 - *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree*
- Write-in responses: *Please tell us what you liked most about this event; or Please tell us what could be improved next time.*