



Visit
Tallahassee

LEON COUNTY **Tourist Development Council**

Thursday, May 7, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
Leon County Office of Resource Stewardship - The Gathering Room
1907 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee FL 32301

MEETING AGENDA

- I. Call to Order – **Chair**
- II. Request for Additional Agenda Items – **Chair**
- III. Public Comment
- IV. Items for Consent Approval – **Chair**
 - February 5, 2026, Meeting Minutes (T1)
 - Financial Reports: Division Budget FY 2026 YTD and the Tourism Development Tax Collections and Smith Travel Report (T2)
 - Marketing Communications and Agency Activity, Visitor Services, Meetings & Group Sales, and Sports Sales Staff Reports (T3)
- V. General Business – **Chair**
 - Downs & St. Germain Research Presentation: FY26 Q2 Economic Impact and the World Athletics Cross Country Championships (WXC) Economic Impact Report (T4)
 - Proposed FY27 Event Grant Programs - Funding Recommendation, Updated Guidelines and Brief Overview of SB1134 (T5)
 - Appointment of the TDC Grants Review Committee
 - Process to Appoint a TDC Member or Designee to the COCA Grant Review Panel (T6)
 - Proposed FY27 Tourism Budget (T7)
 - Proposed Adjustment to the FY26 TDC Meeting Schedule/Venue (T8)
 - Tallahassee Sports Council Update
 - Marketing – Summer Programs Highlights
 - Update on Conference Center Need in the Market
 - Concert Update
 - COCA Update
- VI. Executive Director's Report – **Kerri Post**
 - Board of County Commissioners Upcoming Agenda Items
 - Update on Future WXC Events
 - Amtrak Office Building Repair and Current Office Annex Space Updates
- VII. Additional Business: "For the Good of the Cause" – **Chair**

Next TDC Meeting:

Thursday, July 9, 2026, 9:00 A.M.

County Commission Chambers



LEON COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 5, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

Leon County Office of Resource Stewardship - The Gathering Room
1907 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee FL 32301

The Leon County Tourist Development Council met for a regular meeting with Chairperson Michelle Personette presiding. Council members present were County Commissioner Bill Proctor, Mayor Pro Tem Curtis Richardson, City Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox, Russell Daws, Joshua Brock, Carolanne Savage, and Liaison Amanda Heidecker. Liaison Kathleen Spehar participated by zoom, and Emily Johnson-Truitt and Matt Thompson were absent.

Tourism Staff present: Kerri Post, Jon LaBarre, Scott Lindeman, Genesis Leggett, Taylor Wheaton, Bryan Smith, Renee Jones, Trisha Enfinger, and Shelby Bishop.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Request for Additional Agenda Items: None

Public Comment: None

Consent:

Chair Personette entertained a motion for approval for the three items on Consent:

1. Meeting Minutes from November 6, 2025.
2. Financial Reports: Division Budget FY 2026 YTD and the Tourism Development Tax Collection and Smith Travel Report
3. Marketing Communications and Agency Activity, Visitor Services, Meetings & Group Sales, and Sports Sales Staff Reports

County Commissioner Bill Proctor moved, seconded by Russell Daws, for approval of the items on Consent. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

General Business:

Downs & St. Germain Research Presentation: FY 2025 Economic Impact Report – Jordan Turner presented the FY 2026 Q1 Economic Impact Report with performance metrics showing a normalization from Q1 FY25, which was inflated by Hurricanes Helene and Milton (Sept/Oct 2024) bringing evacuees and relief workers. Occupancy for FY 2026 Q1 is below the quarterly average by -14.3%, ADR is up 3.0%, and TDT collections are down -10.5% from Q1 FY25. Vacation Rentals (VRs) now comprise a significant portion of the lodging market with over 1000 units. Visiting friends and family remains the #1 reason to visit Tallahassee with sporting events coming in second for the quarter. It was noted travel for Festivals and Events was the #2 reason to visit for the quarter. The 12% share of meetings and business/conference travel was discussed as a growth opportunity, relating to the need for a dedicated conference center. Visitor feedback rating the destination 8.2 out of 10 remained steady. Discussion ensued to add the year-over-year change to the slide containing *Main Reason for Travel* and track vacation rental annual availability.

Worlds Athletics Cross Country Championships 2026 Recap – Taylor Wheaton and Amanda Heidecker presented a recap of the January 10, 2026, Worlds Championship event which attracted over 10,000 attendees, brought in nearly 500 elite athletes representing 47 countries, with a projected local economic impact expected to be more than \$4 million. Domestic marketing earned a media value of \$16.8 million, over 250 earned media stories and generated more than 2 billion media impressions. International marketing figures will be received later in the year from World Athletics. Additional domestic travel and attraction visitation figures will be included in the full recap once all information is received. The Fun Run had nearly 1,700 participants consisting of children of some of the World Athletics runners and staff, Community runners, Middle and High Schoolers including 5 regional school teams and 29 Corporate Teams. Sebastian Coe, World Athletics President, was quoted as saying “.... it’s probably safe to say that we are really in the cross-country capital of the United States, if not the world...” which has generated strong global praise about the event. Discussion ensued on the long term prospect of hosting the global event and potentially sending a local delegation to recap the WXC26 success and “pitch” hosting again to the World Athletics Council in Poland in March.

Concert Update – Ms. Post presented the concert updates and shared planning for the 2026 concerts is well underway with four concerts booked for spring: Toto, Lake Street Dive, Earth, Wind and Fire, and Alabama Shakes with Lamont Landers, with more shows in negotiation for fall. Discussion ensued.

Tallahassee Sports Council (TSC) Update – Amanda Heidecker – Ms. Heidecker presented the recommendations from the Sports Council for the 2nd Cycle Grants with five out of seven grant events being approved for \$7,709. All funded events met the minimum scoring threshold of 70/100 and demonstrated potential for visitor room nights. Two events were deemed ineligible: one applicant’s post-event data for last year showed only five room nights and the second did not meet criteria for attracting out-of-county visitors.

Russell Daws moved, seconded by Commissioner Curtis Richardson, for the approval of the Sports Council 2nd Cycle Grants for \$7,709. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

COCA Updates – Kathleen Spehar reported a 21% increase in social media views from non-followers and a 40% click-through rate on newsletters. Ms. Spehar announced that over 1 million TDT dollars has been distributed to 34 local arts organizations. Additional announcements included Mickey Faust Theater moving to a new downtown location, new murals are being installed in Frenchtown, Downtown and the Southside, and COCA will be partnering with the Downtown Improvement Authority on a new 8-concert series from April to September.

Executive Director’s Report – Ms. Post presented the following updates:

- The Amtrak Station renovations are currently on schedule for summer completion, the roof is nearly finished, and the interior work will begin soon. We anticipate moving in late summer.
- Legislative Session is well underway with four TDT related bills filed, although none are currently scheduled for committee hearings.
- Tallahassee received a major feature story from *Good Grit* Magazine regarding Tallahassee’s culinary scene highlighting The Monroe, The Huntsman, Backwoods Crossing, Charlie Park, Black Radish and Leon’s at Lake Ella with the strategic effort to attract Michelin Guide attention.
- Additionally, the World Athletics Cross Country Championships event was the cover story for the Destinations Florida Magazine *Tourism Today*, the state’s tourism industry publication.

Additional Business: “For the Good of the Cause” – Commissioner Proctor proposed maintaining dual Tourism office spaces retaining the current temporary office space on the 8th floor at the county-owned downtown Annex building for business meetings with the rationale being the 8th floor office is more professional and better suited for private high-level meetings, while the Amtrak station is ideal for visitor walk-ins. Staff will investigate feasibility and report back to the TDC.

Commissioner Williams-Cox raised the idea of hosting future TDC meetings in the ORS Gathering Room until Amtrak Room 1858 is available and equipped. Discussion ensued and staff will present an updated FY26 meeting schedule at the next meeting. The earlier Conference Center discussion was also revisited and staff will provide update at the next meeting on any potential new meeting space opportunities and re-engaging/elevating the discussion going forward.

Chairperson Personette – Meeting Adjourned at 10:49 a.m.

Attest: Michelle Personette, Chairperson

Attest: Shelby Bishop, Witness

<p><u>Next TDC Meeting:</u> Thursday, May 7, 2026, 9:00 A.M. Leon County Office of Resource Stewardship The Gathering Room</p>

Leon County Tourist Development Council
Statement of Cash Flow
Period Ending March, 2026

4-Cents Collections

Acct # REVENUES	YTD			% Revenue	
	Actuals	March Actuals	FY 2025/26 Budget	Received	Variance
312100 Local Option Tax (4-cents)	\$ 3,775,233.40	\$ 694,976.19	\$ 7,218,100.00	52%	(3,442,867)
312110 Local Option (1 -cent)	\$ 943,827.71	\$ 173,744.05	\$ 1,897,150.00	50%	(953,322)
361320 Tax Collector FS 219.075	\$ 12,112.44	\$ -	\$ -	0%	12,112
361111 Pooled Interest Allocation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 236,550.00	0%	(236,550)
365000 Merchandise Sales	\$ 10,071.98	\$ 3,716.46	\$ 9,795.00	103%	277
366500 Special Event Grant Reimbursements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 150,000.00	0%	(150,000)
366930 Other Contributions/Partnerships	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%	-
361300 Interest Inc/FMV Adjustment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%	-
369900 Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 291,104.85	\$ 90,572.36	\$ 407,550.00	71%	(116,445)
399900 Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 303,197.00	\$ -	\$ 303,197.00	100%	-
Total Estimated Receipts	\$ 5,335,547.38	\$ 963,009.06	10,222,342	52%	(4,886,795)

Acct # EXPENDITURES	YTD			FY 2025/26		% Budget Spent	Under/ (Over)
	Actuals	March Actuals	FY 2025/26 Adopt. Budget	FY 2025/26 Adj. Budget			
<i>Administration (301)/Marketing (303)</i>							
51200 Salaries & Wages	\$ 468,846.13	\$ 70,662.14	\$ 1,016,532.00	\$ 1,010,014.00	46%	\$ 541,168	
51250 Regular OPS Salaries & Wages	\$ 46,330.00	\$ 7,718.80	\$ 210,042.00	\$ 189,570.00	24%	143,240	
51500 Special Pay	\$ 12.62	\$ -	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,700.00	0%	3,687	
52100 FICA	\$ 37,145.45	\$ 5,607.52	\$ 91,224.00	\$ 92,614.00	40%	55,469	
52200 Retirement Contributions	\$ 85,228.59	\$ 12,987.13	\$ 199,159.00	\$ 198,949.00	43%	113,720	
52210 Deferred Compensation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,566.00	\$ 1,566.00	0%	1,566	
52300 Life & Health Insurance	\$ 101,146.89	\$ 18,141.08	\$ 244,421.00	\$ 242,307.00	42%	141,160	
52400 Workers Compensation	\$ 775.06	\$ 108.60	\$ 4,606.00	\$ 3,789.00	20%	3,014	
53400 Other Contractual Services	\$ 825,911.07	\$ 214,002.74	\$ 643,711.00	\$ 986,711.00	84%	160,800	
54000 Travel & Per Diem	\$ 6,602.50	\$ 837.97	\$ 108,890.00	\$ 116,590.00	6%	109,988	
54100 Communications Services	\$ 42.90	\$ -	\$ 9,600.00	\$ 9,600.00	0%	9,557	
54101 Communications - Phone System	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 102.00	\$ 102.00	0%	102	
54200 Postage	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	0%	15,000	
54400 Rental & Leases	\$ 1,023.00	\$ -	\$ 31,090.00	\$ 31,090.00	3%	30,067	
54505 Vehicle Coverage	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 747.00	\$ 873.00	0%	873	
54600 Repair & Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,597.00	\$ 6,597.00	0%	6,597	
54601 Vehicle Repair	\$ 997.48	\$ 240.00	\$ 1,136.00	\$ 1,125.00	89%	128	
54700 Printing	\$ 1,420.38	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	5%	28,580	
54800 Promotional Activities	\$ 12,025.40	\$ 2,642.28	\$ 41,299.00	\$ 41,299.00	29%	29,274	
54860 TDC Direct Sales Promotions	\$ 7,419.00	\$ -	\$ 73,958.00	\$ 98,958.00	7%	91,539	
54861 TDC Community Relations	\$ 23,731.00	\$ 7,731.00	\$ 54,632.00	\$ 94,632.00	25%	70,901	
54862 TDC Merchandise	\$ 2,925.77	\$ -	\$ 41,254.00	\$ 41,254.00	7%	38,328	
54900 Other Current Charges	\$ 2,440,655.40	\$ 311,596.99	\$ 1,609,720.00	\$ 2,180,189.00	112%	(260,466)	
54948 Other Current Chrg - Amphitheater	\$ 236,743.01	\$ 38,733.00	\$ 598,780.00	\$ 598,780.00	40%	362,037	
55100 Office Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,692.00	\$ 12,692.00	0%	12,692	
55200 Operating Supplies	\$ 1,917.47	\$ -	\$ 16,625.00	\$ 16,625.00	12%	14,708	
55210 Fuel & Oil	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 498.00	\$ 335.00	0%	335	
52250 Uniforms	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	0%	11,000	
55400 Publications, Memberships	\$ 11,874.98	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 49,296.00	\$ 49,296.00	24%	37,421	
55401 Training	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	0%	13,000	
56400 Machinery & Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%	-	
58160 TDC Local T&E	\$ 4,200.86	\$ 904.60	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00	120%	(701)	

Acct #	EXPENDITURES	YTD	March	FY 2025/26	FY 2025/26	% Budget	Under/
		Actuals	Actuals	Adopt. Budget	Adj. Budget	Spent	(Over)
Administration (301)/Marketing (303)							
58320	Sponsorship & Contributions	\$ 52,575.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 86,431.00	\$ 86,431.00	61%	33,856
Advertising/Public Relations (302)							
53400	Other Contractual Services	\$ 972,650.00	\$ 87,987.22	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 2,115,000.00	46%	\$ 1,142,350
54900	Other Current Charges & Obligations	\$ 20,820.26	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00	83%	\$ 4,180
55408	Machinery and Equip 1,000-19,999	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%	\$ -
Special Events/Grants (304)							
58300	Grants & Aids	\$ 43,198.62	\$ 19,060.00	\$ 800,000.00	\$ 800,000.00	5%	756,801
Welcome Center CIP (086065)							
56200	Building	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 208,101.00	\$ 208,101.00	0%	208,101
56410	Intfstructure Less Than 200,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	0%	50,000
Countywide Automation (470)							
54110	Com-net Communications	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,958.00	0%	11,958
54600	Repairs and Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,015.00	0%	7,015
Risk Allocations (495)							
54500	Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,924.00	0%	12,924
54506	Property Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,171.00	0%	7,171
Indirect Cost (499)							
54900	Indirect Cost Charges	\$ 374,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 374,000.00	100%	-
Line Item Funding - (888)							
58214	Cultural Facilities Grant Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	-
58215	Local Arts Agency Program	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,679,693.00	\$ 1,897,150.00	0%	1,897,150
Transfers (950)							
591001	Transfer to Fund 001	\$ 5,159.84	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,959.00	\$ -	25,799
591305	Transfer to Fund 305	\$ 78,333.34	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 470,000.00	\$ -	391,667
Salary Contingency (990)							
59900	Other Non-operating Uses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	-
	Reserve for Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	-	-
	Total Expenditures	\$ 5,863,712.02	\$ 807,461.07	\$ 9,443,502	\$ 12,197,466	48%	(6,333,754)

Acct #	EXPENDITURES (305)	YTD	March	FY 2025/26	FY 2025/26	% Budget	Under/
		Actuals	Actuals	Adopt. Budget	Adj. Budget	Spent	(Over)
58100	Aids to Government Agencies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 547,561.00	0%	547,561
	Total Expenditures	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 547,561.00	0%	547,561

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT
As of March 31, 2026**

REVENUES

1 - Revenue for the 4-cent collections \$ 3,775,233.40 Collections are on track to meet budget though collections are down (2%) compared to FY25 through Q2 FY26

2 - Revenue for the 1-cent collections \$ 943,717.71

3 - Revenue collected in Advance \$ 291,104.85 and is a combination of World XC Accommodations, Sponsorships and other Sports related ticket revenue

EXPENSES

Continued World XC expenses increased significantly during Q1 FY26 as expected and are reflected in Other Contractual Services (302-53400 and 303-53400) and Other Current Charges (303-54900). As discussed in previous TDC meetings Staff is working with OMB and Administration to make adjustments to replenish the remaining FY26 programming funds used to produce the World XC event.

Leon County Tourist Development Council
Local Option Tourist Development Tax Collections
(Bed Tax Revenues)

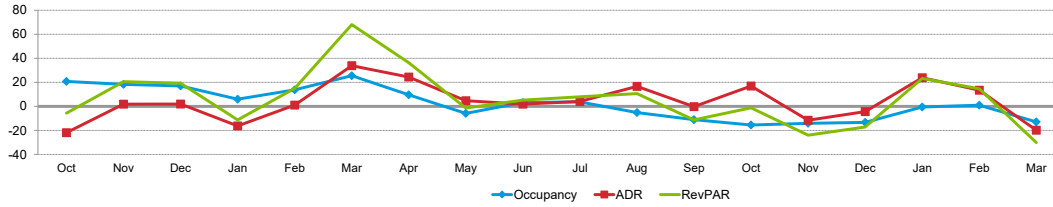
	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
FY2021/2022 (3-cents)	369,226.11	476,937.04	389,494.17	296,423.63	364,996.61	408,289.23	424,815.31	480,785.08	349,360.01	359,333.87	369,813.17	442,474.54	4,731,948.78
(1-cent - 4th Penny)	123,075.37	158,979.01	129,831.39	98,807.88	121,665.54	136,096.41	141,605.10	160,261.69	116,453.34	119,777.96	123,271.06	147,491.51	1,577,316.26
(1-cent - 5th Penny)	123,075.37	158,979.01	129,831.39	98,807.88	121,665.54	136,096.41	141,605.10	160,261.69	116,453.34	119,777.96	123,271.06	147,491.51	1,577,316.26
Total	615,376.85	794,895.07	649,156.95	494,039.39	608,327.68	680,482.05	708,025.51	801,308.46	582,266.69	598,889.79	616,355.29	737,457.57	7,886,581.30
Gain/Loss - Month: 3 cent	101%	130%	122%	72%	100%	84%	44%	32%	24%	8%	6%	5%	
Gain/Loss - YTD: 3 cent	101%	116%	118%	107%	106%	102%	90%	78%	71%	62%	55%	49%	
Year to date: 3-cent	369,226.11	846,163.15	1,235,657.32	1,532,080.96	1,897,077.56	2,305,366.79	2,730,182.10	3,210,967.18	3,560,327.19	3,919,661.06	4,289,474.24	4,731,948.78	
Year to date: 1-cent (4th)	123,075.37	282,054.38	411,885.77	510,693.65	632,359.19	768,455.60	910,060.70	1,070,322.39	1,186,775.73	1,306,553.69	1,429,824.75	1,577,316.26	
Year to date: 1-cent (5th)	123,075.37	282,054.38	411,885.77	510,693.65	632,359.19	768,455.60	910,060.70	1,070,322.39	1,186,775.73	1,306,553.69	1,429,824.75	1,577,316.26	
FY2022/2023 (3-cents)	453,134.99	526,249.19	436,616.96	292,669.34	366,445.39	390,021.67	554,820.97	442,251.68	469,912.57	371,463.79	324,449.23	479,915.40	5,107,951.16
(1-cent - 4th Penny)	151,045.00	175,416.40	145,538.99	97,556.45	122,148.47	130,007.22	184,940.32	147,417.23	156,637.52	123,821.26	108,149.74	159,971.80	1,702,650.39
(1-cent - 5th Penny)	151,045.00	175,416.40	145,538.99	97,556.45	122,148.47	130,007.22	184,940.32	147,417.23	156,637.52	123,821.26	108,149.74	159,971.80	1,702,650.39
Total	755,224.98	877,081.98	727,694.93	487,782.24	610,742.33	650,036.12	924,701.61	737,086.13	783,187.61	619,106.31	540,748.72	799,859.00	8,513,251.95
Gain/Loss - Month: 3 cent	23%	10%	12%	-1%	0%	-4%	31%	-8%	35%	3%	-12%	8%	
Gain/Loss - YTD: 3 cent	23%	16%	15%	12%	9%	7%	11%	8%	10%	10%	8%	7.9%	
Year to date: 3-cent	453,134.99	979,384.18	1,416,001.13	1,708,670.47	2,075,115.86	2,465,137.54	3,019,958.50	3,462,210.18	3,932,122.75	4,303,586.53	4,628,035.76	5,107,951.16	
Year to date: 1-cent (4th)	151,045.00	326,461.39	472,000.38	569,556.83	691,705.29	821,712.52	1,006,652.84	1,154,070.06	1,310,707.59	1,434,528.85	1,542,678.59	1,702,650.39	
Year to date: 1-cent (5th)	151,045.00	326,461.39	472,000.38	569,556.83	691,705.29	821,712.52	1,006,652.84	1,154,070.06	1,310,707.59	1,434,528.85	1,542,678.59	1,702,650.39	
FY2023/2024 (3-cents)	501,642.16	641,951.80	474,424.27	337,883.86	445,931.47	449,321.58	432,559.64	414,883.62	521,518.88	425,752.72	359,424.47	511,712.17	5,517,006.63
(1-cent - 4th Penny)	167,214.05	213,983.93	158,141.42	112,627.95	148,643.82	149,773.86	144,186.55	138,294.54	173,839.63	141,917.57	119,808.16	170,570.72	1,839,002.21
(1-cent - 5th Penny)	167,214.05	213,983.93	158,141.42	112,627.95	148,643.82	149,773.86	144,186.55	138,294.54	173,839.63	141,917.57	119,808.16	170,570.72	1,839,002.21
Total	836,070.26	1,069,919.66	790,707.12	563,139.76	743,219.11	748,869.30	720,932.74	691,472.70	869,198.13	709,587.87	599,040.78	852,853.62	9,195,011.05
Gain/Loss - Month: 3 cent	11%	22%	9%	15%	22%	15%	(22%)	-6%	11%	15%	11%	7%	
Gain/Loss - YTD: 3 cent	11%	17%	14%	14%	16%	16%	9%	7%	7%	8%	8%	8%	
Deposit 5-cent @97%	810,988.15	1,037,822.07	766,985.91	546,245.57	720,922.54	726,403.22	699,304.76	670,728.52	843,122.19	688,300.23	581,069.56	827,268.01	8,919,160.72
Year to date: 3-cent	501,642.16	1,143,593.95	1,618,018.22	1,955,902.08	2,401,833.55	2,851,155.13	3,283,714.77	3,698,598.39	4,220,117.27	4,645,869.99	5,005,294.46	5,517,006.63	
Year to date: 1-cent (4th)	167,214.05	381,197.98	539,339.41	651,967.36	800,611.18	950,385.04	1,094,571.59	1,232,866.13	1,406,705.76	1,548,623.33	1,668,431.49	1,839,002.21	
Year to date: 1-cent (5th)	167,214.05	381,197.98	539,339.41	651,967.36	800,611.18	950,385.04	1,094,571.59	1,232,866.13	1,406,705.76	1,548,623.33	1,668,431.49	1,839,002.21	
FY2024/2025 (3-cents)	537,896.80	584,930.03	543,621.40	361,296.11	397,692.70	484,782.70	608,732.11	496,679.60	490,647.83	444,026.75	608,454.83	565,690.90	5,884,451.77
(1-cent - 4th Penny)	179,298.93	194,976.68	181,207.13	120,432.04	132,564.23	161,594.23	202,910.70	165,559.87	163,549.28	148,008.92	122,818.28	188,563.63	1,961,483.92
(1-cent - 5th Penny)	179,298.93	194,976.68	181,207.13	120,432.04	132,564.23	161,594.23	202,910.70	165,559.87	163,549.28	148,008.92	122,818.28	188,563.63	1,961,483.92
Total	896,494.66	974,883.39	906,035.66	602,160.19	662,821.17	807,971.16	1,014,553.52	827,799.34	817,746.38	740,044.59	614,091.39	942,818.16	9,807,419.61
Gain/Loss - Month: 3 cent	7%	(9%)	15%	7%	-11%	8%	41%	20%	(6%)	4%	3%	11%	
Gain/Loss - YTD: 3 cent	7%	(2%)	3%	4%	1%	2%	7%	9%	7%	7%	6%	7%	
Deposit 5-cent @97%	869,599.82	945,636.89	878,854.59	584,095.38	642,936.53	783,732.03	984,116.91	802,965.36	793,213.99	717,843.25	595,668.65	914,533.62	9,513,197.02
Year to date: 3-cent	537,896.80	1,122,826.83	1,666,448.23	2,027,744.34	2,425,437.04	2,910,219.74	3,518,951.85	4,015,631.45	4,506,279.28	4,950,306.04	5,318,760.87	5,884,451.77	
Year to date: 1-cent (4th)	179,298.93	374,275.61	555,482.74	675,914.78	808,479.01	970,073.25	1,172,983.95	1,338,543.82	1,502,093.09	1,650,102.01	1,772,920.29	1,961,483.92	
Year to date: 1-cent (5th)	179,298.93	374,275.61	555,482.74	675,914.78	808,479.01	970,073.25	1,172,983.95	1,338,543.82	1,502,093.09	1,650,102.01	1,772,920.29	1,961,483.92	
Notes:													
FY2025/2026 (3-cents)	480,715.46	586,961.78	423,119.67	341,271.11	492,973.52	537,352.73	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,862,394.27
(1-cent - 4th Penny)	160,238.49	195,653.93	141,039.89	113,757.04	164,324.51	179,117.58	-	-	-	-	-	-	954,131.42
(1-cent - 5th Penny)	160,238.49	195,653.93	141,039.89	113,757.04	164,324.51	179,117.58	-	-	-	-	-	-	954,131.42
Total	801,192.44	978,269.63	705,199.45	568,785.19	821,622.53	895,587.88	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,770,657.12
Gain/Loss - Month: 3 cent	(11%)	0%	(22%)	(6%)	24%	11%	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	
Gain/Loss - YTD: 3 cent	(11%)	(5%)	(11%)	(10%)	(4%)	(2%)	(19%)	(29%)	(36%)	(42%)	(46%)	(51%)	
Deposit 5-cent @97%	777,156.67	948,921.54	684,043.47	551,721.63	796,973.85	868,720.24	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,627,537.41
Year to date: 3-cent	480,715.46	1,067,677.24	1,490,796.91	1,832,068.03	2,325,041.54	2,862,394.27	2,862,394.27	2,862,394.27	2,862,394.27	2,862,394.27	2,862,394.27	2,862,394.27	
Year to date: 1-cent (4th)	160,238.49	355,892.41	496,932.30	610,689.34	775,013.85	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	
Year to date: 1-cent (5th)	160,238.49	355,892.41	496,932.30	610,689.34	775,013.85	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	954,131.42	
Notes:													
	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	

Tab 2 - Trend Leon County, FL

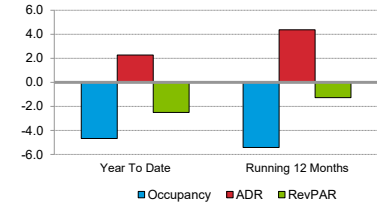
Currency: USD - US Dollar

Visit Tallahassee
For the Month of March 2026

Monthly Percent Change



Overall Percent Change



Occupancy (%)	2024			2025									2026					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
This Year	74.7	69.5	60.1	61.4	73.5	76.3	67.1	61.4	67.9	59.8	64.6	55.4	63.1	59.7	52.1	61.2	74.2	66.5
Last Year	61.9	58.7	51.4	58.0	64.6	60.8	61.3	65.3	65.8	57.7	68.1	62.2	74.7	69.5	60.1	61.4	73.5	76.3
Percent Change	20.8	18.3	17.0	6.0	13.8	25.6	9.6	-5.9	3.2	3.7	-5.1	-11.0	-15.5	-14.1	-13.3	-0.5	1.0	-12.9

Year To Date			
2024	2025	2026	
61.0	70.3	67.1	
64.2	61.0	70.3	
-4.9	15.3	-4.7	

Running 12 Months			
2024	2025	2026	
60.8	66.3	62.7	
61.6	60.8	66.3	
-1.3	8.9	-5.4	

ADR	2024			2025									2026					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
This Year	137.73	149.37	113.92	114.16	133.37	155.79	138.75	140.31	111.94	104.33	146.73	149.62	161.06	132.16	108.93	141.33	151.37	124.98
Last Year	176.28	146.58	111.76	136.37	132.01	116.36	111.54	133.96	109.86	100.20	125.81	150.01	137.73	149.37	133.92	114.16	133.37	155.79
Percent Change	-21.9	1.9	1.9	-16.3	1.0	33.9	24.4	4.7	1.9	4.1	16.6	-0.3	16.9	-11.5	-4.4	23.8	13.5	-19.8

Year To Date			
2024	2025	2026	
128.06	136.04	139.13	
123.32	128.06	136.04	
3.8	6.2	2.3	

Running 12 Months			
2024	2025	2026	
127.90	128.95	134.60	
120.21	127.90	128.95	
6.4	0.8	4.4	

RevPAR	2024			2025									2026					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
This Year	102.90	103.74	68.49	70.15	97.99	118.93	93.16	86.22	76.06	62.39	94.86	82.83	101.70	78.85	56.75	86.43	112.34	83.11
Last Year	109.05	86.03	57.41	79.07	85.26	70.75	68.33	87.44	72.30	57.77	85.71	93.35	102.90	103.74	68.49	70.15	97.99	118.93
Percent Change	-5.6	20.6	19.3	-11.3	14.9	68.1	36.3	-1.4	5.2	8.0	10.7	-11.3	-1.2	-24.0	-17.1	23.2	14.6	-30.1

Year To Date			
2024	2025	2026	
78.13	95.69	93.29	
79.12	78.13	95.69	
-1.2	22.5	-2.5	

Running 12 Months			
2024	2025	2026	
77.82	85.44	84.35	
74.07	77.82	85.44	
5.1	9.8	-1.3	

Supply	2024			2025									2026					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
This Year	199,578	191,700	198,090	196,819	177,772	198,679	192,270	198,679	192,270	198,679	198,679	192,270	198,679	192,270	198,679	193,719	174,972	196,633
Last Year	198,059	191,670	203,639	203,639	183,932	203,639	197,070	203,639	196,380	201,376	203,763	197,190	199,578	191,700	198,090	196,819	177,772	198,679
Percent Change	0.8	0.0	-2.7	-3.3	-3.3	-2.4	-2.4	-2.4	-2.1	-1.3	-2.5	-2.5	-0.5	0.3	-2.2	-1.6	-1.6	-1.0

Year To Date			
2024	2025	2026	
591,210	573,270	565,324	
575,280	591,210	573,270	
2.8	-3.0	-1.4	

Running 12 Months			
2024	2025	2026	
2,354,314	2,362,056	2,322,839	
2,352,370	2,354,314	2,362,056	
0.1	0.3	-1.7	

Demand	2024			2025									2026					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
This Year	149,111	133,143	119,083	120,938	130,622	151,674	129,062	122,086	130,633	118,814	128,443	106,442	125,456	114,718	100,930	118,464	129,860	130,752
Last Year	122,528	112,488	104,610	118,072	118,798	123,819	120,717	132,916	129,237	116,115	138,811	122,713	149,111	133,143	119,083	120,938	130,622	151,674
Percent Change	21.7	18.4	13.8	2.4	10.0	22.5	6.9	-8.1	1.1	2.3	-7.5	-13.3	-15.9	-13.8	-15.2	-2.0	-0.6	-13.8

Year To Date			
2024	2025	2026	
360,689	403,234	379,076	
369,064	360,689	403,234	
-2.3	11.8	-6.0	

Running 12 Months			
2024	2025	2026	
1,432,519	1,565,080	1,455,690	
1,449,491	1,432,519	1,565,080	
-1.2	9.3	-7.0	

Revenue	2024			2025									2026					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
This Year	20,536,822	19,887,756	13,566,524	13,806,719	17,420,705	23,628,657	17,911,774	17,130,186	14,623,521	12,396,407	18,847,037	15,926,284	20,206,069	15,160,877	10,994,511	16,742,339	19,657,170	16,341,757
Last Year	21,598,724	16,488,663	11,691,302	16,101,166	15,682,499	14,407,200	13,464,900	17,805,531	14,198,241	11,634,403	17,464,142	18,407,722	20,536,822	19,887,756	13,566,524	13,806,719	17,420,705	23,628,657
Percent Change	-4.9	20.6	16.0	-14.3	11.1	64.0	33.0	-3.8	3.0	6.5	7.9	-13.5	-1.6	-23.8	-19.0	21.3	12.8	-30.8

Year To Date			
2024	2025	2026	
46,190,865	54,856,081	52,741,265	
45,513,474	46,190,865	54,856,081	
1.5	18.8	-3.9	

Running 12 Months			
2024	2025	2026	
183,222,744	201,822,121	195,937,932	
174,237,122	183,222,744	201,822,121	
5.2	10.2	-2.9	

Census %	2024			2025									2026					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Census Props	67	66	66	65	65	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	65	65	65	65
Census Rooms	6438	6390	6390	6349	6349	6409	6409	6409	6409	6409	6409	6409	6409	6409	6249	6249	6249	6343
% Rooms Participants	92.5	92.3	92.3	92.9	92.9	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	95.4	95.4	95.4	95.5

A blank row indicates insufficient data.

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Visit
Tallahassee
Pretty. Unexpected.

AT A GLANCE



FY 2026 Media Value
YTD: \$130,000.

Media Value Oct. - Dec.
\$130,000.



FY 2025 Earned Media Stories
YTD: 32

Media Stories Oct. - Dec.: 32



Social Media Followers

Facebook: 130,520

Instagram: 40,404



Consumer E-Newsletters

Sent: 3 YTD: 8



Welcome to Tallahassee,
Bananas Fans! 🍌🍌

VT Marketing created a dedicated visitor information landing page shared with **65,000+** ticket holders traveling to Tallahassee.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

January - March 2026

Scott Lindeman, Senior Marketing Director

Genesis Leggett, Marketing Communications Director

Bryan Smith, Digital Content Director

Renee Jones, PR & Marketing Specialist

HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY

- Attended **Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Conference Annual Breakfast** to network with community business leaders and advocate for the importance of tourism to the local economy.
- Assisted **VISIT FLORIDA** to coordinate a video shoot at Florida's historic Capitol Museum, Mission San Luis and the First Capitol replica log cabin in Cascades Park in celebration of America250.
- Distributed **Black History Month** press-release highlighting Tallahassee's African American history and culture.
- Attended the **Florida Sports Tourism Day** at the Capitol to advocate for sports tourism and the positive economic effects sport events has on Tallahassee and the State of Florida.
- Attended the **Visit Florida Tourism Day** at the Capitol to advocate for the Tourism industry. Had face to face meetings with Rep. Allison Tant and Rep. Gallop Franklin's staff to solicit support for the Tourism and Hospitality industry and to continue protections of TDT use statewide.
- Renewed partnership with **Wheel the World**, adding 10 partners to reach nearly 30 accessible listings with national exposure.
- Initiated a website refresh for the **Adderley Amphitheater** in partnership with the Leon County Community and Media Relations team. Launching Summer 2026, to boost concert awareness and streamline ticket purchases.



FEBRUARY

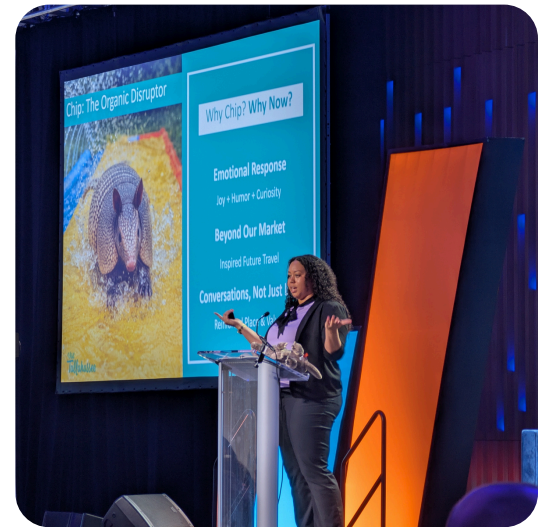
- Tabled at the **Bank of America Tallahassee Marathon** expo as a presenting sponsor, sharing visitor information to participants.
- Attended the **Florida Adventure Travel Network** networking event presented by VISIT FLORIDA to connect with travel and tour operators from around the region.



HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY CONTINUED:

- Following the successful Birmingham Media Mission, staff hosted **@PalateForCulture** (Jasmine Ruffin) for an in-depth Tallahassee tour—resulting in a viral Instagram reel with 200K+ views and counting.
- Presented the first of 4 spring concerts by welcoming rock legends **TOTO** to the Adderley Amphitheater.
- Collaborated with the **Savannah Banana's** to create an official visitor resource page on VisitTallahassee.com with hotels, restaurants and entertainment recommendations. This content was promoted to all ticket holders in attendance.
- Partnered with the **Savannah Banana's K-Club** to and promote special offerings and Banana-themed deals around Tallahassee.
- Marketing Communications Director, Genesis Leggett and Digital Content Director, Bryan Smith attended the **Destinations International Marketing & Communications Summit** in Cleveland, Ohio. Genesis presented a case study on a positive destination disruption, highlighting the Tallahassee Museum's animal ambassador, Chip the Armadillo's viral social media content, which evolved into a strategic partnership with the Tallahassee Museum



MARCH

- Participated in **Visit Florida** digital fireside chat with CEO Bryan Griffin and DMO representatives from around the state to share updates on current legislation and key initiatives for the coming year.
- Completed production of the **2026 Visitor Guide**. Distribution to take place in April.
- Assisted a film production out of Atlanta on a location scouting day for a potential future mini-series to be filmed in part in Tallahassee.

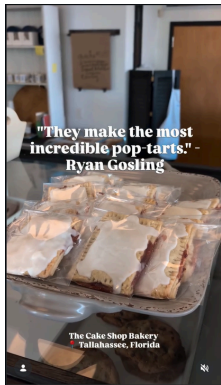


ON THE HORIZON

- **Spring Concerts** at The Adderley Amphitheater
 - Lake Street Drive, April 23
 - Earth, Wind & Fire, April 24
 - Alabama Shakes, April 28
- **May 4th:** National Travel and Tourism Week partner luncheon
- **June 1 - July 4:** Beyond Your Block: America 250 Edition
- Tallahassee Restaurant Week



Digital Marketing Highlights

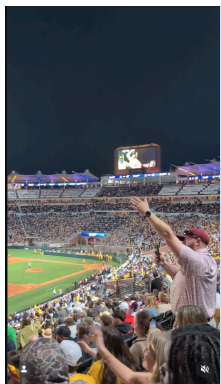
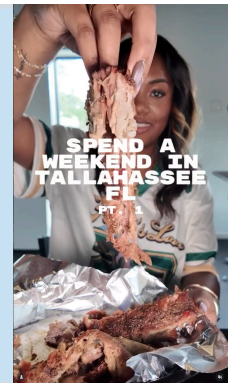


The "Pop Tart" Viral Moment

The viral buzz surrounding Ryan Gosling's late-night praise for The Cake Shop Bakery's "popped tarts" provided a premier opportunity to showcase culinary flair to a massive audience. By amplifying this organic moment across social media, the content secured over 209,000 views and 13,000 interactions across Facebook and Instagram, and notably, a remarkable 8.7% engagement rate per impression on Instagram. This success was driven by the staff's ability to engage with local partners in real-time, effectively converting national celebrity recognition into a significant win for Tallahassee-Leon County's digital presence.

Destination Discovery: Amplifying Local Partners

Visit Tallahassee partnered with content creator @palateforculture, showcasing local partners during Black History Month. The campaign reached a wide audience, garnering 275,782 views and 34,500 interactions, highlighting local businesses such as Earley's Kitchen, Rare Bird Interiors, Black Radish, and the FAMU Black Archives. The content sparked a lively conversation, with many planning to visit these featured locations firsthand. This partnership effectively demonstrated Tallahassee's growth and reinforced its status as a modern, culturally rich travel destination.



Social Media Impact: Savannah Bananas

The arrival of the Savannah Bananas in Tallahassee generated significant digital momentum, as showcased by a high-energy recap video that captured fans' excitement and the stadium's electric atmosphere. This viral content resonated deeply with our audience, amassing 154,000 views and 3,600 interactions across our social media platforms. By highlighting the seamless integration of a major touring event with our local sports culture, the post effectively positioned Tallahassee as a premier destination for unique, large-scale entertainment.

DIGITAL MARKETING KPI

2025/2026 GOALS	ANNUAL GOAL	QUARTERLY RESULT	% OF GOAL
Maintain an average open rate of over 35% for consumer email campaigns.	35%	40%	N/A
Net increase annual Facebook followers by 25,000	25,000	1993	29%
Net increase annual Instagram followers by 2,500	2,500	1644	132%
Increase annual Mobile App downloads by 1,000	1,000	423	81.5%

Public Relations

- **15.9 Million** people reached, estimated value of **\$234K**.
- Amplified Tallahassee's culinary scene through print coverage with **Taste of the South** and a multi-channel partnership with **Good Grit**, resulting in the February Issue's cover story, digital story, and social media exposure through eight posts.
- **Mission San Luis** was featured as one of the top 10 Best Open-Air Museums in USA Today's 10Best Awards.
- Promoted spring concerts, **Alabama Shakes** and **Earth Wind and Fire**, through two radio promotions reaching drive-market audiences in Mobile, AL and Jacksonville, FL.
- Secured spring break publicity reaching a regional audience with **Modern Boca Mom** and a national audience with Travel and Tour World.
- Hosted content creator, **@PalateForCulture**, which resulted in two Instagram Reels, Two TikTok Videos, Two Facebook Reels, and 14 Instagram stories, impacting a highly engaged audience with 318.1K+ total impressions across posts.



Easy Weekend Getaway to Tallahassee: Earth, Wind & Fire



Easy 102.9 and [Visit Tallahassee](#) have your chance at an Easy Weekend Getaway to see Earth, Wind & Fire! **Listen weekdays (starting 3/30) at 8am, 10am, Noon, 2pm & 5pm for keywords to enter using the form below!**



TTW THE TRAVEL AND TOUR WORLD

Tallahassee Beats Destin, Orlando, Naples, Fort Lauderdale, Doral, Savannah and More Offering Best Hotels in This Spring Break: Here is How US Hospitality Sector is Changing Fast

Tallahassee is emerging as the ultimate destination this Spring Break, according to **Travel and Tour World**. While traditional hotspots like Destin and Orlando have long been considered the go-to, Tallahassee is making its mark by offering a unique range of attractions and family-friendly accommodations. The city's diverse mix of historic sites, outdoor adventures, and vibrant local scene is attracting a new generation of travelers looking for a more authentic and relaxing vacation experience.

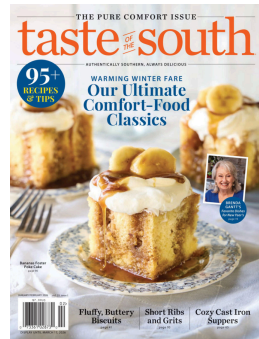
For many, Tallahassee's appeal lies in its rich history and scenic beauty, offering a perfect blend of relaxation and exploration. The city's historic downtown, with its charming architecture and local shops, provides a glimpse into the past. Meanwhile, the nearby natural areas offer endless opportunities for outdoor recreation, from hiking through state parks to enjoying the views from the water.

Whether it's an exciting outdoor adventure or a relaxing escape, Tallahassee has everything on the top of your mind. This Spring Break, it's time to discover the beauty of Tallahassee and see why it's the perfect destination for your next getaway.

Tallahassee: Where Adventure Meets History for an Epic Family Spring Break

Experience Florida's rich history and scenic beauty in the heart of the state. Tallahassee offers more than just a beautiful view - it's an experience steeped in history and filled with outdoor adventures. From exploring the city's historic landmarks to enjoying the views from the water, Tallahassee has it all. Just a short drive from downtown Tallahassee.

THE ZIMMERMAN AGENCY



PUBLIC RELATIONS KPI 2024/2025 GOALS

18 National features spotlighting the destination in roundup or dedicated articles	61%	11
15 media and influencer experiences coordinated through individual stays (proactively secured by Zimmerman as well as opportunistic leads with Visit Florida and other partners) along with one group FAM	127%	19
Negotiate 6 Radio, TV, social and/or in-book promotions in key markets	67%	4
Secure 3 Dedicated Top Market Placements (eg. South Florida, Texas, Atlanta etc.)	200%	6
Secure 3 Niche Articles - spotlighting outdoor (birding, biking, hiking), food & beverage, and accessible travel.	100%	3



WXC Tallahassee 26 - Marketing & Public Relations Success

Completed the execution of a year-long marketing and PR campaign in support of the World Athletics Cross Country World Championships.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Generated local awareness through **12 broadcast** segments across WTXL, WCTV, and Live in Tallahassee.
- Secured national publicity with articles in **The Stride Report, Runner's World, Sports Travel Magazine,** and multiple syndications in **Yahoo, MSN, and Newsbreak.**
- Distributed a targeted wire press release that landed **184 stories** across the Southeast region.
- Hosted content creator, **@BelowAverageRunning,** during WXC Tallahassee 26 which resulted in 3 Instagram Reels, 3 TikTok Videos, and 19 Instagram Stories.
- Hosted **The Stride Report** and **Boulder Daily Camera** during WXC Tallahassee 26, resulting in two print and six digital stories in addition to 24 social posts across the publications' platforms.

COVERAGE AT A GLANCE

Combined Potential Reach
3 BILLION



Domestic Earned Media Value
\$16.8 MILLION



Organic Articles
250 and counting



World Athletics Cross Country Championships leaves lasting impact on Tallahassee

The championships drew double the expected attendance with over 10,000 spectators and athletes from 50+ countries, positioning Leon County for future international competitions.



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (WTXL) — The World Athletics Cross Country Championships in Tallahassee exceeded expectations, drawing more than 10,000 spectators and boosting the local economy.

- Athletes from more than 50 countries competed in the championships.
- County leaders say parts of the championship course are here to stay.
- Watch the video below to hear from county officials.



Tallahassee hosts World Athletics Cross Country Championships, drawing over 10,000 spectators

Leon County exceeds economic projections as international runners compete at Apalachee Regional Park.



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (WTXL) — Tallahassee's World Athletics Cross Country Championships drew 10,000+ spectators, exceeding economic projections with an expected \$4.3M impact.

- 10,000+ tickets were sold for the World Athletics Cross Country Championships.
- The big event was held at Apalachee Regional Park.



A sneak peek into Saturday's World Cross Country Championship course



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (WCTV) — In 2023, Tallahassee was approached by USA Track and Field to consider hosting the World Cross Country Championships, so they selected a site. Six years later, we're back in Tallahassee.

Since 2008, Apalachee Regional Park has hosted over 100 championships, but this weekend, the course will look a lot different. The starting line? A replica of the old State Capitol, 100 feet long, 100 feet tall, and the course? A representation of the state of Florida.

"The athletes will look like they're coming down the steps of the Capitol when they open that up," said Amanda Heibacker, Leon County's Director of Parks and Recreation.

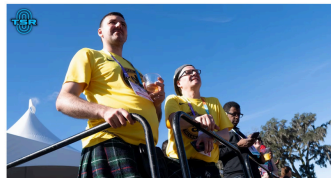
The next element? A color course that represents the theme parks of Central Florida, a ramp that's ten feet tall and 100 feet long, and how they'll "climb" to the finish area (besides of the golf course).

"They're going to have to think what's the best path?" said Heibacker. "How do I get across the quickest?"



These Scottish Friends Have Been To Five Continents To Watch The World Cross Country Championships

Scottish natives David John Condra and Niall Walker wore matching kilts and bright-yellow shirts on Saturday in Tallahassee. They continued their streak as fans of the world's top cross country event.



TALLAHASSEE, Florida — For David John Condra and Niall Walker, few things are more relaxing than a day at the park watching the globe's very best runners zoom around an obstacle-laden course with eyes on fast times and hardware.

In fact, for much of the World Cross Country Championships at Apalachee Regional Park on Saturday, the East Kilbride residents of Scotland stood against a rail inside a VIP tent, a golden ale in their hands, enjoying the scene and weather.



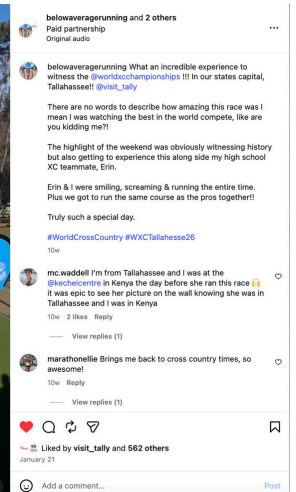
World Athletics Cross Country Championships Reveals 2026 Logo

Event will take place in Tallahassee, Florida, on January 10



With the World Athletics Cross Country Championships heading to Tallahassee, Florida, in less than 200 days, the official logo for the event has been revealed.

The design "reflects Florida's beauty, energy and distinct character." The WXC Tallahassee 26 logo highlights the Sunshine State and features an orange, the state fruit, and orange blossoms, the state flower. The logo also includes the sabal palm, Florida's state tree.





AT A GLANCE

2025-2026 Grant Program

48 Legacy, Special & Sports events held

2 Special events forfeited

18 Post Event Reports processed

(\$43,199 paid of \$800,000 grant budget)



Visitor Services

Visitor Guides Distributed:

FYTD: 5,816

January - March: 2,789

Group Services and Welcome Bags

FYTD: 25 requests servicing 3,547 visitors

January - March: 13 requests servicing 2,482 visitors

Visitor Center Walk-Ins: 1,026

Visitor Center Calls: 342



Gift Shop Sales:

FYTD: \$11,956.94

January - March: \$6,689.76

VISITOR SERVICE & GRANT MANAGEMENT

January - March 2026

Visitor Services Director

Julie Trezek, Grants & Contracts Manager

MISSION STATEMENT

Enrich the destination experience for visitor, engage the local community, and increase knowledge of Tallahassee/Leon County as a tourism destination.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Represented Visit Tallahassee at events—including the **MDSM Conference, Pridefest, and Springtime Tallahassee**—using a spin wheel and 10% off Visitor Center Gift Shop coupons to engage attendees and increase visibility for the gift shop.
- Promoted **The Adderley Amphitheater** concerts with eye-catching signage in Cascades Park, including an A-frame and video display graphics.
- Collaborated with local, regional and state agencies to add new brochures to the **Visitor Information Center**.
- Enhanced window displays to improve customer attraction, contributing to a **286% increase in shirt sales** (from 29 to 112 compared to Jan-Mar last year).
- Reorganized shirt shelving by removing baskets, adding clear size labels, and introducing color-coded hanger tags, creating a cleaner display and making it easier to find the right size.
- Reorganized backroom storage with enclosed cabinets—improving **safety, capacity, and efficiency**.



Staff engages with visitors and residents at local events.

ON THE HORIZON

- Recruitment and on-boarding of new Visitor Services Director
- Participate in community events by hosting Visit Tallahassee booth or table at events including Chain of Parks Art Festival, Word of South, Visit Florida Welcome Center Summer Showcase.
- Introduce new merchandise tied to "America 250 Florida", including postcards, magnets, mugs, shot glasses, and bandanas for stuffed animals.
- Develop a new T-shirt design featuring concert posters from artists who have performed at the Adderley Amphitheater.
- Develop an e-commerce platform on the Visit Tallahassee website for sale of Tallahassee themed merchandise.





Visit
Tallahassee
Pretty. Unexpected.

GOAL AT A GLANCE

Meetings & Groups FY 2026

Room Nights Goal:

14,000

Meetings & Groups

YTD Room Nights: 6,045

OUT AND ABOUT

Promoted Tallahassee as a meetings destination at the **“Rooted in Florida” client event** on March 24, 2026 collaborating with 14 Florida DMOs to engage 65 association decision-makers. The networking event included experiential activations and an AI-powered photo booth to drive destination awareness, strengthen industry relationships, and generate qualified interest for future meetings and conventions.



MEETINGS & GROUP SALES

January - March 2026

Janet Roach, Meetings & Group Sales Director

MISSION STATEMENT

Promoting meetings, conventions, and group travel through strategic engagement with planners, decision makers, and targeted audience segments, while collaborating with local industry partners to create memorable experiences for group visitors to positively impact the local economy.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hosted the **North Florida Chapter of the American Society of Travel Advisors annual meeting and tradeshow**, welcoming travel trade professionals for a destination immersion experience that highlighted Tallahassee's dining, outdoor, and cultural assets through curated site visits and partner collaboration to strengthen advisor relationships and future visitation pipeline.
- Visit Tallahassee hosted 40 meeting planners at the **Florida Society of Association Executives Meeting Planner Roundtable** luncheon discussing the topic of Strategic Communiations on March 24, 2026 at Casa Grande Latin Fusion.
- Exhibited and conducted 33 appointments with **tour operators, wholesalers, and travel advisors at Florida Huddle**, Feb 3-5, 2026 along side Tallahassee Museum partner, Allison Ashcroft.
- Engaged with the adventure travel industry at **AdventureCONNECT**, hosted at the Tallahassee Automobile Museum in partnership with VISIT FLORIDA, to identify opportunities expanding the reach to key adventure segments and drive group and leisure visitation.
- Participated in prescheduled one-on-one appointments with **25+ association, corporate, and fraternal meeting planners from across the U.S. at Rendezvous South** (March 3–5), showcasing Tallahassee's strengths as a meetings destination through targeted conversations and destination highlights.





Taylor Wheaton, Senior Sports Director
Taylor Walker, Sports Director
Bailey Geason, Assistant Sports Director

GOAL AT A GLANCE

FY 2025-2026

Room Nights Goal: 25,000

YTD Room Nights: 20,858



Taylor Walker speaking at the opening ceremonies for the Kayak Adventure Series



An angler in the Kayak Adventure Series Showing off their catch

On the Horizon

- **April 11th -12th & 18th -19th :** United States Bowling Congress Memorial Mixed Tournament at Capital Lanes
- **April 11th -12th :** Florida Interscholastic Cycling League Mountain Bike Race at JR Alford Greenway
- **April 12th-19th :** Tallahassee Tennis Challenger at Forest Meadows Tennis Complex
- **May 8th - 9th :** FHSAA Beach Volleyball State Championship at the FSU Beach Volleyball Courts

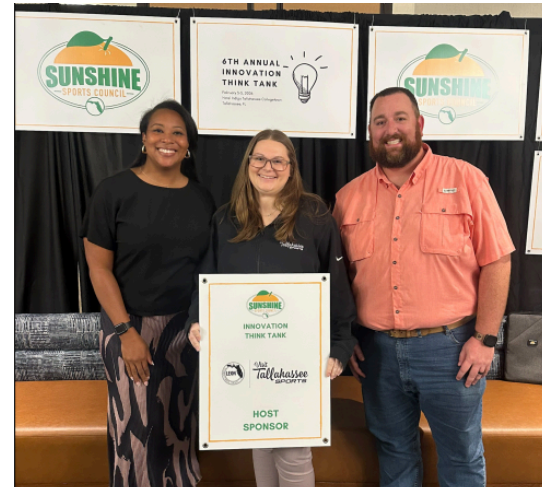
HIGHLIGHTS

- January 10th: Successfully hosted the **World Athletics Cross Country Championships Tallahassee 26**. Attracting 15,000+ attendees, with 10,000 of them coming from outside of Leon County.



- January 22nd: Celebrated **Sports Day at the Capitol** along with the Florida Sports Foundation.

- February 3rd - 5th: Hosted the **Sunshine Sports Council Think Tank**. A 3 day conference for Florida Sports DMO's to discuss the current state of the industry and share ideas.



- February 4th: Celebrated **National Girls & Women in Sports Day**

- February 23rd : Supported the **21st Annual Open at Tallahassee Disc Golf Tournament**. Welcoming 130 Professionals to Tom Brown Park for a Professional Disc Golf Association tournament.

- February 25th- March 17th : Supported the **Capital City Senior Games**. Featuring over 800 athletes competing in multiple sports across the city.

- March 15th : Supported the **Go Nuts Mountain Bike Race** at Red Bug Trail, reinforcing our ongoing commitment to growing and supporting mountain biking in Leon County.

- March 27th- 28th : Hosted the **Kayak Adventure Series Bass Fishing Tournament**, a two-day event that welcomed 100 anglers from 15 states. Competitors fished across multiple lakes and rivers throughout Leon County, marking the launch of an initiative to attract more fishing tournaments to the area.

- The sports team along with the Tallahassee Sports Council have begun planning an inaugural **Sports Impact Awards** event.



LEON COUNTY DIVISION OF TOURISM – VISIT TALLAHASSEE

January-March 2026
(FY2026 Q2)
Visitor Tracking Study



Visit
Tallahassee
Pretty. Unexpected.

 downs & st. germain
RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY



Data Collection:

From January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026, **715** visitors¹ were interviewed in person at various locations including the airport, Cascades Park, the Tallahassee Museum, and the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships among other events.

Economic Impact:

Economic impact figures are based on all visitor types, including those staying in paid accommodations, unpaid accommodations, and day trippers.

Note: The sampling error for a sample size of 715 is $\pm 3.39\%$ points given a 95% confidence level. That is, we are very certain (95%) that the results in our Visitor Profile Study are within 3.39% points of the “true” value on a quarterly basis.

¹Tallahassee attracts distinct visitor profiles each quarter. This data reflects the typical Q2 visitor, whose travel patterns are influenced by legislative session. This quarter, findings also reflect visitors who came to the area for the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships.



WHAT HAPPENED IN TALLAHASSEE FY26 Q2



Legislative Session

Professional Bull Riders

Savannah Bananas 2026 World Tour

World Athletics Cross Country Championships

FSU Invitational/Pre-State Cross Country

Springtime Tallahassee

Toto Concert





ECONOMIC IMPACT SUMMARY

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FY26 Q2¹

While overall visitor number decreased in FY26 Q2 compared to **FY25** Q2, higher spend per visitor led to an increase in overall spending.

Compared to **FY24** Q2, FY26 Q2 saw increases in both spending and visitor number.



594,000

**Total
Visitors**

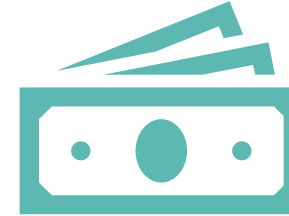
- 3.7% from **FY25**
+ 2.6% from **FY24**



390,600

**Room
Nights**

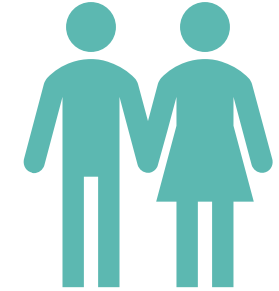
- 6.7% from **FY25**
+ 2.2% from **FY24**



\$222,454,900

**Direct
Spending**

+ 2.9% from **FY25**
+ 18.0% from **FY24**



65.6%

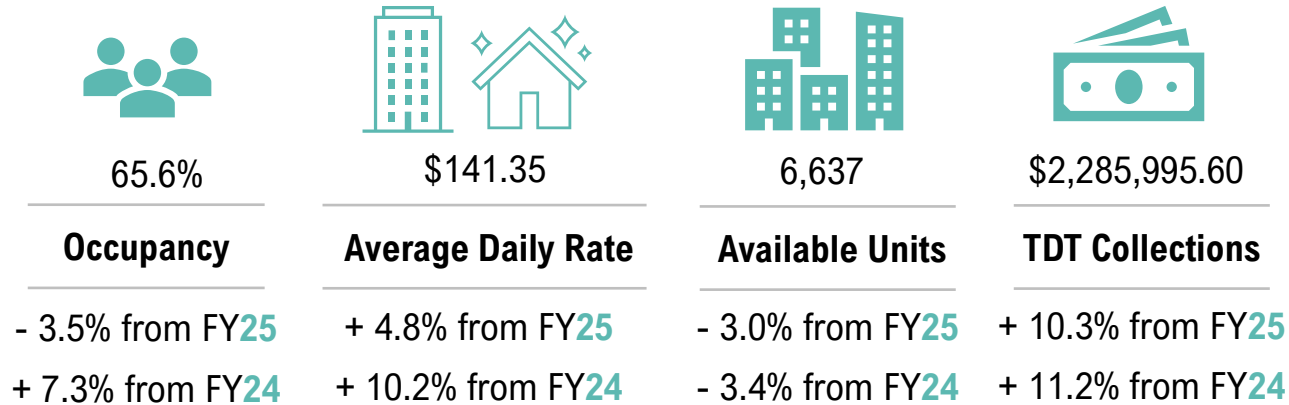
Occupancy Rate

- 3.5% from **FY25**
+ 7.3% from **FY24**

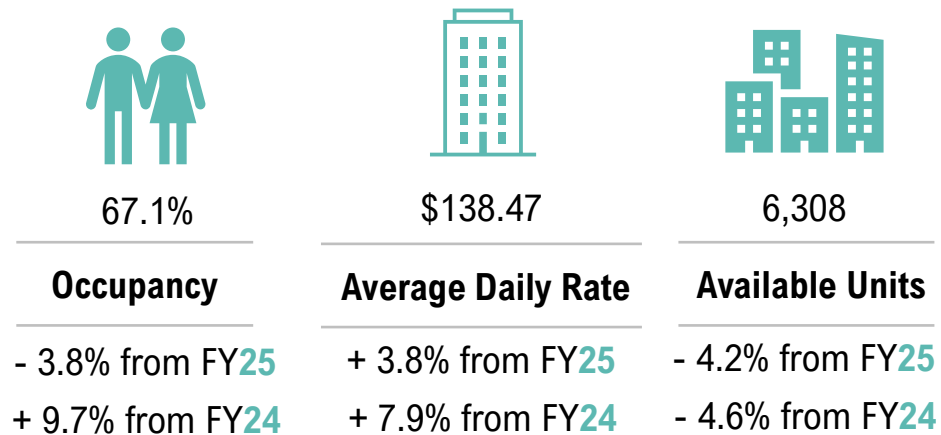


LODGING METRICS FY26 Q2

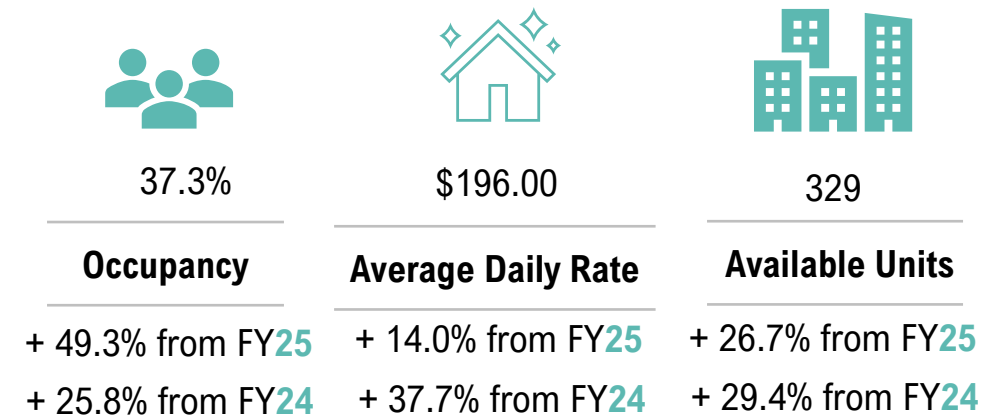
COMBINED



HOTELS¹



VACATION RENTALS^{2,3}



¹Hotel source: Smith Travel Research

²Vacation rental source: Key Data (via Zartico)

³Vacation rental metric changes have limited impact overall due to their much smaller unit share.





VISITOR PROFILE SUMMARY

MAIN REASONS FOR VISITING FY26 Q2

What was your main reason for taking this trip to the area?



Visitors' top 3 reasons for coming to Tallahassee in Q2 have remained consistent over the past 3 years



A smaller share of visitors came to the area to visit friends and relatives compared to FY25 (-6% points), an expected trend during legislative session



A larger share of visitors came to the area for a special event compared to FY25 – particularly sporting events (+7% points)

Reasons for Visiting ¹	FY24 Q2	FY25 Q2	FY26 Q2
Visit friends and relatives	23%	36%	30%
Watch a sporting event	18%	14%	21%
Business conference or meeting	21%	24%	18%
Special event/festival	7%	8%	13%
Relax and unwind	9%	13%	12%
Special occasion	6%	7%	8%
Government-related	12%	9%	11%
Family vacation	5%	7%	6%
Attractions	4%	6%	6%



¹Multiple responses permitted. Top 9 reasons for visiting shown.

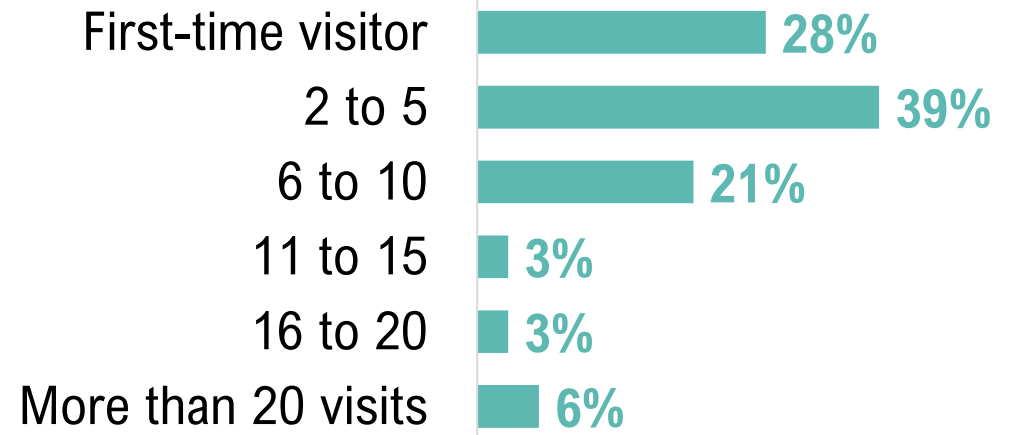
VISITS TO TALLAHASSEE FY26 Q2



Tallahassee's share of first-time visitors increased by 4% points compared to FY25



Despite repeat visitors in the area for legislative session, local events this quarter attracted visitors who may not otherwise have come to the area



VISITOR PROFILE FY26 Q2

43

Median Age

(-3 years from FY25 Q2)

28%

First-Time Visitor

(+4% points from FY25 Q2)

\$91,700

Median Household Income

(+\$4,200 from FY25 Q2)

81%

Drove (vs Flew)

(+1% point from FY25 Q2)

2.5

Travel Party Size

(-0.1 from FY25 Q2)

3.1

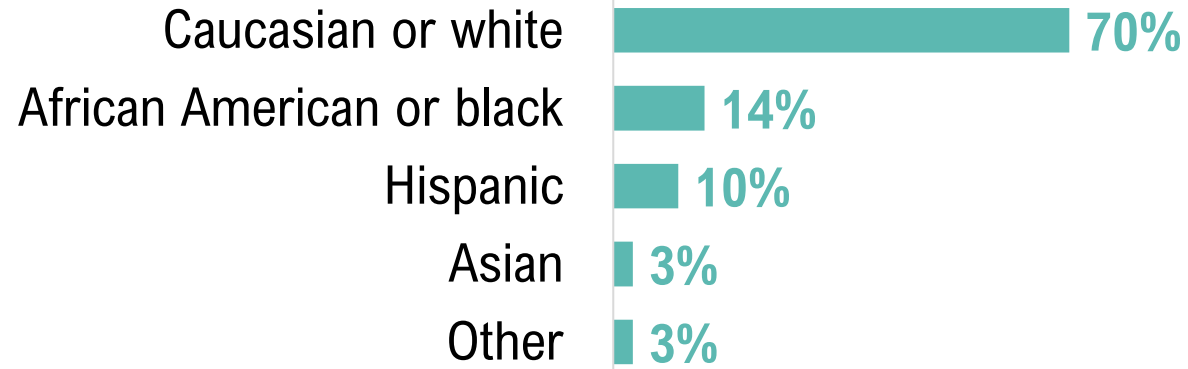
Length Of Stay

(-0.1 days from FY25 Q2)

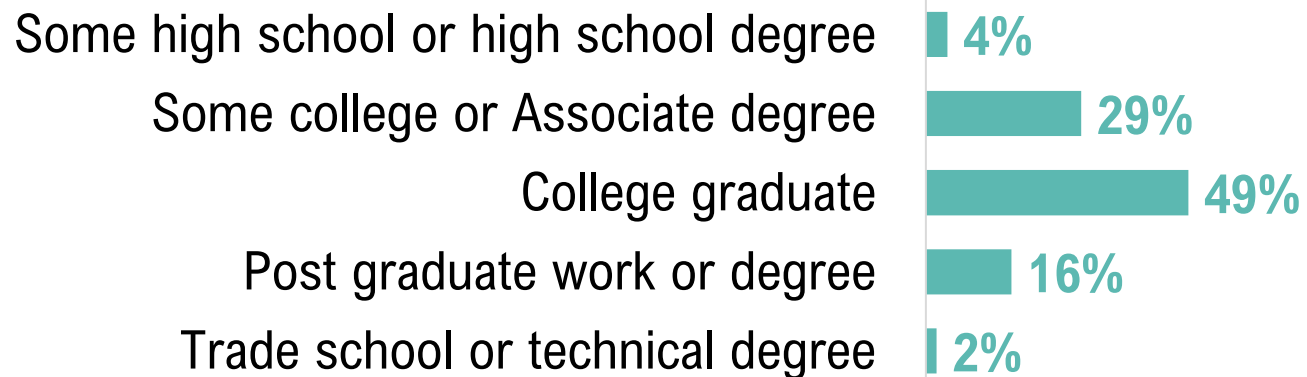


VISITOR PROFILE (CONT'D) FY26 Q2

Race/Ethnicity



Education



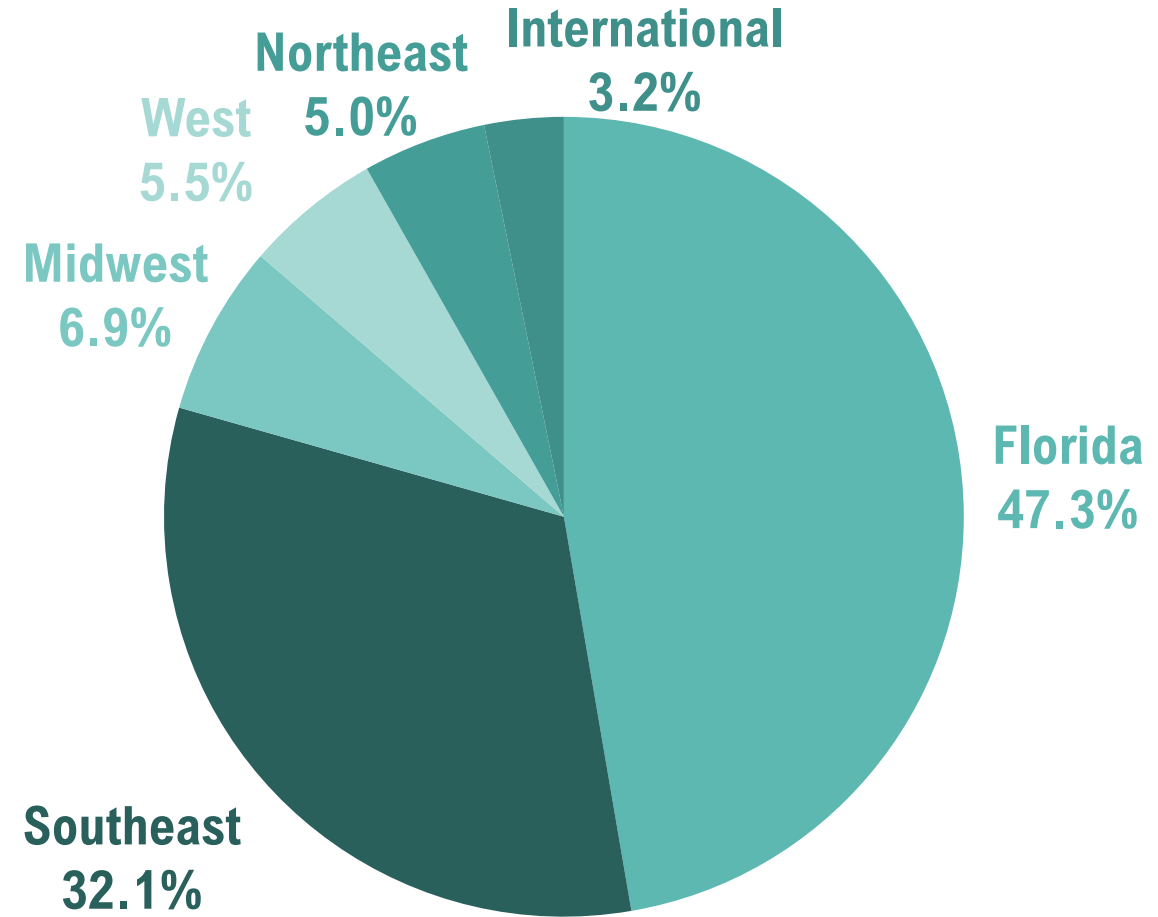
REGION OF ORIGIN FY26 Q2



This quarter continues a local trend of more visitors coming to Tallahassee from elsewhere in the Southeast (+3.8% points).



This quarter had a larger share of international visitation compared to FY25 (+0.9% points)



Southeast: TX, AR, LA, TN, MS, AL, NC, SC, GA

Northeast: VA, MD, DE, PA, NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME

Midwest: WV, KY, OH, IN, MI, WI, IL, MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK

West: WA, OR, CA, NV, ID, MT, WY, CO, UT, AZ, NM, AK, HI



VISITOR ORIGINS FY26 Q2¹



Despite the smaller share of Florida visitors overall, the top 2 Q2 markets continue to be the surrounding area and the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area

Market	FY25 Q2	FY26 Q2
Surrounding Areas ²	10.2%	12.1%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	10.9%	9.2%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	4.8%	7.0%
Atlanta	5.7%	6.8%
Jacksonville	5.2%	6.5%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota	7.4%	6.3%
Panama City	4.9%	5.6%
Mobile-Pensacola	4.2%	3.9%
Dallas-Fort Worth	3.5%	2.4%
Charlotte	1.9%	2.0%
Gainesville	2.2%	2.0%
West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce	2.0%	1.8%
New York City ³	1.7%	1.5%
Raleigh-Durham	1.3%	1.4%
Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem	0.2%	1.2%
Fort Myers-Naples	1.3%	1.1%

¹Updated to show data to one decimal place for precision.

²Includes counties surrounding Tallahassee and Thomasville.

³Includes parts of Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

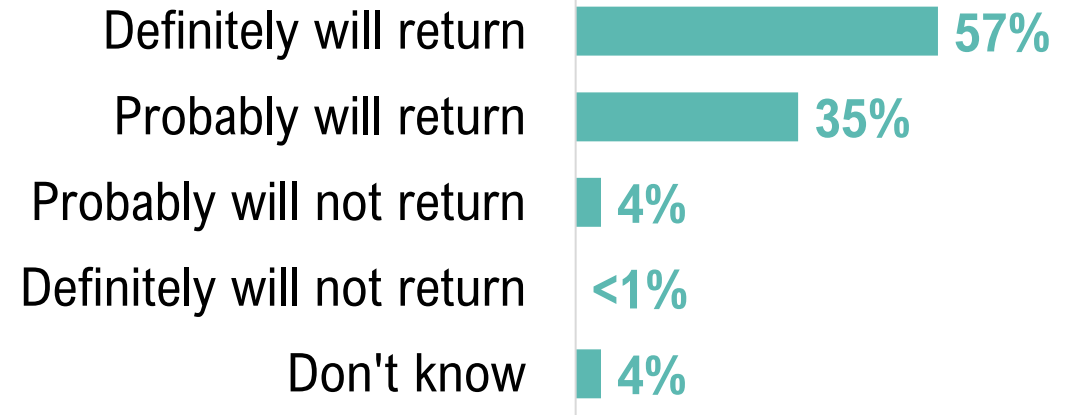


SATISFACTION STATISTICS FY26 Q2

Rating of Tallahassee as a Destination¹



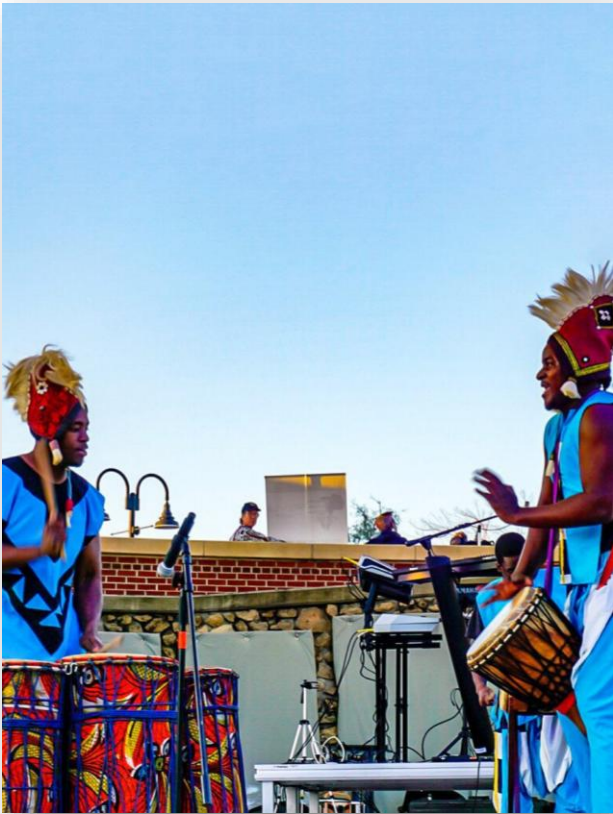
Likelihood of Returning to Tallahassee



¹Rated on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.



VISITOR DESCRIPTIONS OF TALLAHASSEE FY26 Q2¹



“Beautiful town with interesting things to see and some of the nicest people in Florida!”



“A relaxing place with great nature and not overcrowded.”



“A charming city with a great mix of history, culture, food, and outdoor activities.”



“Great nature and scenery - it’s a different side of Florida than you’d expect!”

LEON COUNTY DIVISION OF TOURISM – VISIT TALLAHASSEE

Economic Impact Estimate
2026 World Athletics Cross
Country Championships
January 10th, 2026



Visit
Tallahassee
Pretty. Unexpected.

 downs & st. germain
RESEARCH

Methodology

- The economic impact of this event was based on data from the following sources:
 - Interviews conducted in-person by Downs & St. Germain Research with 125 attendees at the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships
 - 100 spectator survey responses collected online by World Athletics
 - 149 athlete and team official survey responses collected online by World Athletics
 - Team room nights, travel party sizes and lengths of stay from World Athletics
 - Team host hotel room rate and media impact figures from Visit Tallahassee
 - Attendance figures from World Athletics, Visit Tallahassee, and an independent estimate by Downs & St. Germain Research
 - Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee Visitor Tracking Study
 - Tourism database at Downs & St. Germain Research



Out-of-County Visitors

10,900¹

Including overnight visitors and day trippers, there were 10,900 individuals from **outside** Leon County who attended the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships.

¹ An attendance figure of 15,262 attendees was used for this report (459 athletes, 143 team officials, and 14,660 spectators).



Room Nights

9,520¹

Participants and spectators who live outside of Leon County spent **9,520 nights** in hotels, vacation rentals, etc. while attending the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships.

¹ A total participant room nights figure of 2,241 room nights provided by World Athletics was used as part of this estimate.



Direct Spending

\$3,804,700¹

Participants and spectators who **live outside** of Leon County spent \$3,804,700 during the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships.

¹ For accommodations, restaurants, groceries, transportation, attractions, entertainment, tickets, shopping, and “other” expenses.



Total Economic Impact

\$6,087,500

When including indirect and induced effects¹ of direct spending, the total economic impact of participants and spectators attending the 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships who **live outside** of Leon County was \$6,087,500.²

¹ Indirect effects are increased business spending resulting from tourism dollars. Induced effects are increased household spending resulting from tourism dollars.

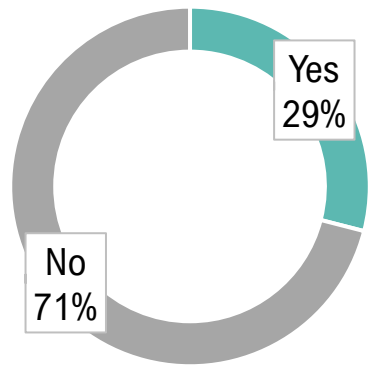
² For accommodations, restaurants, groceries, transportation, attractions, entertainment, tickets, shopping, and “other” expenses.



First-Time Visitation: Participants and Spectators

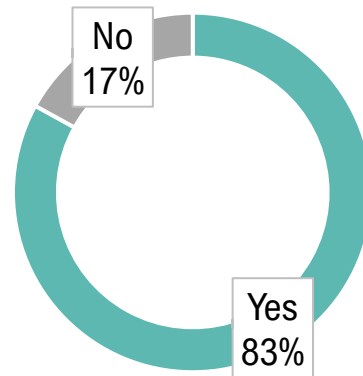
29% of **participants**¹ were visiting the United States for the first time.

First-Time U.S. Visitor



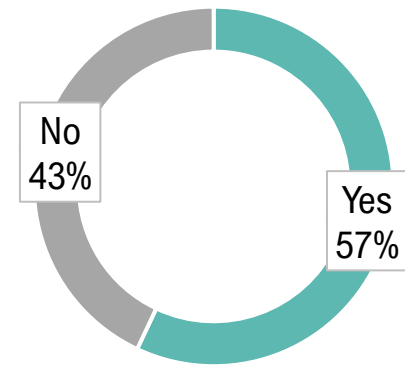
83% of **participants**¹ were visiting Tallahassee for the first time.

First-Time Tallahassee Visitor: Participants



57% of **out-of-county spectators**² were visiting Tallahassee for the first time.

First-Time Tallahassee Visitor: Spectators



Local Activities: Participants and Spectators¹

When not attending Worlds, out-of-county spectators and participants enjoyed many other activities in Tallahassee.

Activity	Spectators	Participants	Activity	Spectators	Participants
Restaurants	74%	75%	Participate in a sporting event ²	9%	16%
Biking, hiking, running, etc.	36%	19%	Watch a sporting event ²	7%	19%
Shopping	32%	56%	Special occasion	4%	<1%
Relax and unwind	28%	31%	Art galleries, museums, etc.	4%	9%
Bars, nightclubs	17%	16%	Education-related	3%	3%
Visit friends and relatives	16%	16%	Performance art show	2%	<1%
Special event	13%	6%	Government-related	1%	<1%
Nature, bird watching, etc.	13%	<1%	Fishing, golfing, hunting, etc.	1%	<1%
Attractions	13%	3%	Spas	1%	3%
Family vacation	12%	9%	Business conference or meeting	<1%	<1%
Historical sites	12%	19%			

¹ Out-of-county spectator and participant data. Multiple responses permitted.

² Other than Worlds.

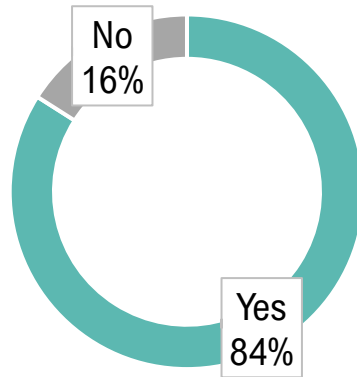


Likelihood of Returning: Participants and Spectators

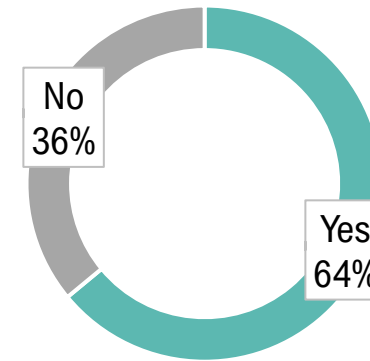
84% of **out-of-county spectators** are likely to return to Tallahassee¹.

64% of **participants** would consider returning to Tallahassee for holiday and/or training in the next 5 years².

Spectator Likelihood of Returning



Participant Likelihood of Returning

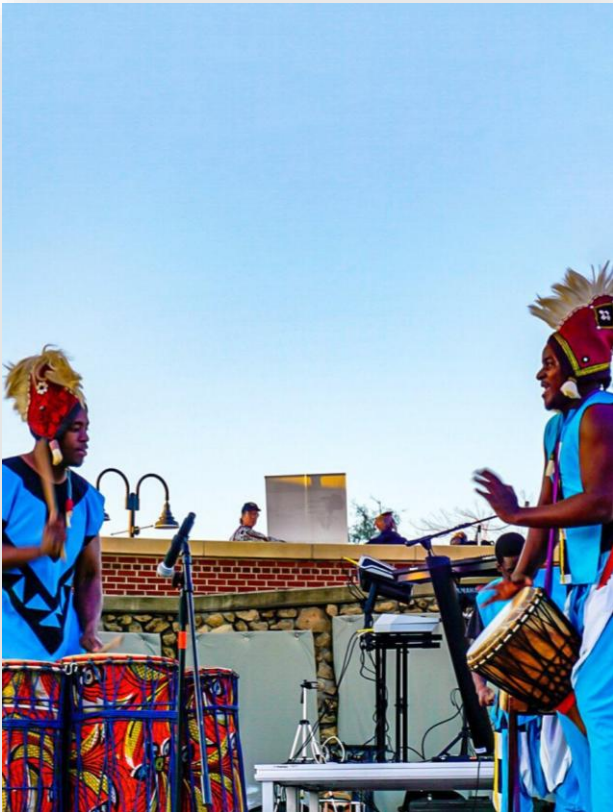


¹ Out-of-county spectator data.

² Participant data.



VISITOR EVENT REFLECTIONS¹



“Tallahassee did a great job hosting and the whole experience out on course was awesome.”



“The volunteers, bus drivers, and hotel/catering staff were all very, very good. Thank you for the hospitality.”



“Next time, I want to spend more time in Tallahassee! Very fun.”

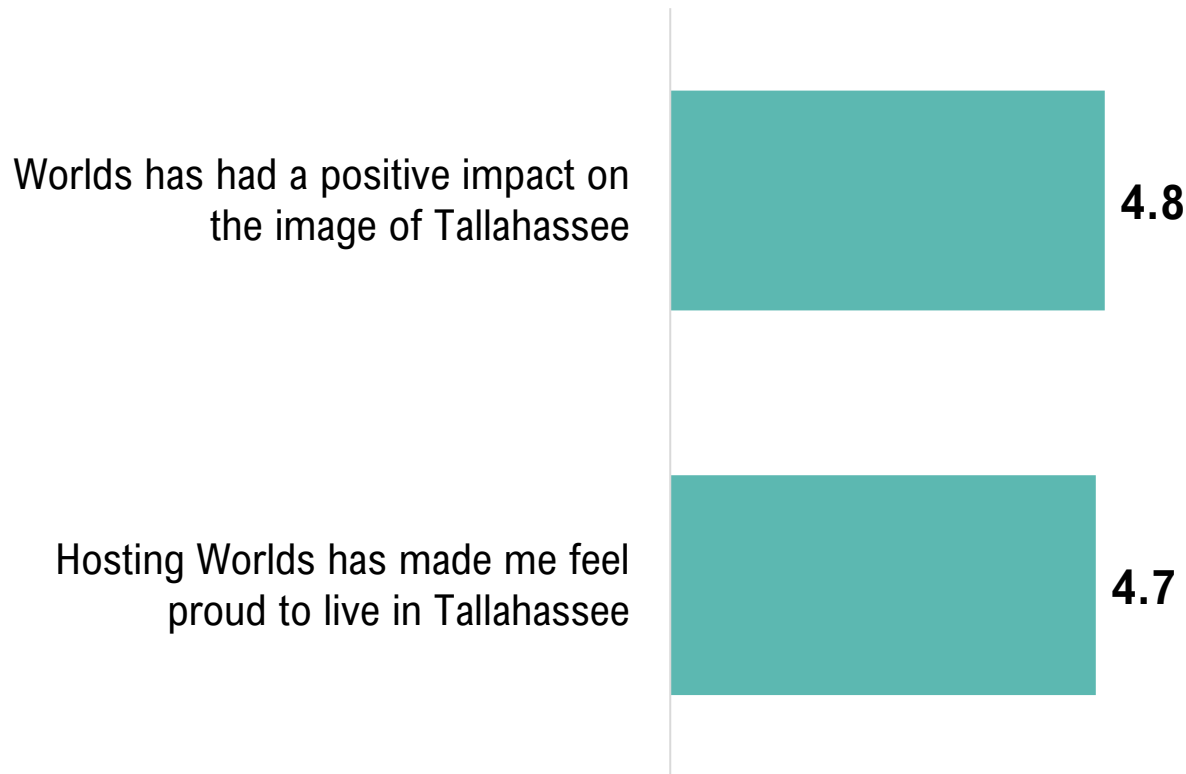


“We absolutely love the Tallahassee cross country course! I think that the rest of the World Cross Country Championships should duplicate what they did.”



Spectator Impact Ratings: Local Spectators

Local Resident Experience & Impact Ratings¹



"The diversity of the people here is amazing. There are people from all over the world!"

"Loved the opportunity to show off our local community to the rest of the nation."

"I feel like I got a glimpse into the rest of the world today."

"Great event, incredible course, and friendly people!"

- Local Spectators¹

¹ Rated on a 1-5 scale, where 1 = Disagree completely and 5 = Agree completely.



LEON COUNTY DIVISION OF TOURISM – VISIT TALLAHASSEE

Economic Impact Estimate
2026 World Athletics Cross
Country Championships
January 10th, 2026

Kerri Post
Executive Director, Leon County Division of Tourism/
Visit Tallahassee
850-606-2313, Kerri.Post@VisitTallahassee.com

Downs & St. Germain Research
contact@dsg-research.com
850-906-3111 | www.dsg-research.com



Visit
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RESEARCH

LEON COUNTY DIVISION OF TOURISM – VISIT TALLAHASSEE

January-March 2026
(FY2026 Q2)
Visitor Tracking Study



Visit
Tallahassee
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 downs & st. germain
RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY



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WHAT HAPPENED IN TALLAHASSEE FY26 Q2



Legislative Session

Professional Bull Riders

Savannah Bananas 2026 World Tour

World Athletics Cross Country Championships

FSU Invitational/Pre-State Cross Country

Springtime Tallahassee

Toto Concert





ECONOMIC IMPACT SUMMARY

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FY26 Q2¹

While overall visitor number decreased in FY26 Q2 compared to **FY25** Q2, higher spend per visitor led to an increase in overall spending.

Compared to **FY24** Q2, FY26 Q2 saw increases in both spending and visitor number.



594,000

**Total
Visitors**

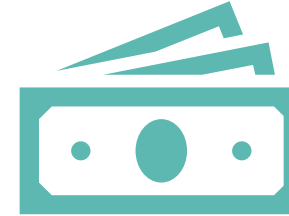
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+ 2.6% from **FY24**



390,600

**Room
Nights**

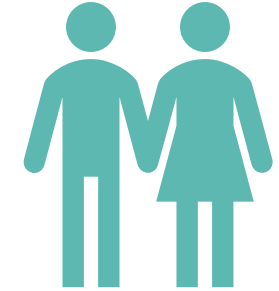
- 6.7% from **FY25**
+ 2.2% from **FY24**



\$222,454,900

**Direct
Spending**

+ 2.9% from **FY25**
+ 18.0% from **FY24**



65.6%

Occupancy Rate

- 3.5% from **FY25**
+ 7.3% from **FY24**



LODGING METRICS FY26 Q2

COMBINED



65.6%

Occupancy

- 3.5% from FY25
+ 7.3% from FY24



\$141.35

Average Daily Rate

+ 4.8% from FY25
+ 10.2% from FY24



6,637

Available Units

- 3.0% from FY25
- 3.4% from FY24



\$2,285,995.60

TDT Collections

+ 10.3% from FY25
+ 11.2% from FY24

HOTELS¹



67.1%

Occupancy

- 3.8% from FY25
+ 9.7% from FY24



\$138.47

Average Daily Rate

+ 3.8% from FY25
+ 7.9% from FY24



6,308

Available Units

- 4.2% from FY25
- 4.6% from FY24

VACATION RENTALS^{2,3}



37.3%

Occupancy

+ 49.3% from FY25
+ 25.8% from FY24



\$196.00

Average Daily Rate

+ 14.0% from FY25
+ 37.7% from FY24



329

Available Units

+ 26.7% from FY25
+ 29.4% from FY24

¹Hotel source: Smith Travel Research

²Vacation rental source: Key Data (via Zartico)

³Vacation rental metric changes have limited impact overall due to their much smaller unit share.



A long, narrow swimming pool with clear blue water, reflecting the sky and surrounding tropical trees. The pool is flanked by lush green grass and dense foliage, including palm trees and cypresses. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The right side of the image is darkened, and the text 'VISITOR PROFILE SUMMARY' is overlaid in white.

VISITOR PROFILE SUMMARY

MAIN REASONS FOR VISITING FY26 Q2

What was your main reason for taking this trip to the area?



Visitors' top 3 reasons for coming to Tallahassee in Q2 have remained consistent over the past 3 years



A smaller share of visitors came to the area to visit friends and relatives compared to FY25 (-6% points), an expected trend during legislative session



A larger share of visitors came to the area for a special event compared to FY25 – particularly sporting events (+7% points)

Reasons for Visiting ¹	FY24 Q2	FY25 Q2	FY26 Q2
Visit friends and relatives	23%	36%	30%
Watch a sporting event	18%	14%	21%
Business conference or meeting	21%	24%	18%
Special event/festival	7%	8%	13%
Relax and unwind	9%	13%	12%
Special occasion	6%	7%	8%
Government-related	12%	9%	11%
Family vacation	5%	7%	6%
Attractions	4%	6%	6%



¹Multiple responses permitted. Top 9 reasons for visiting shown.

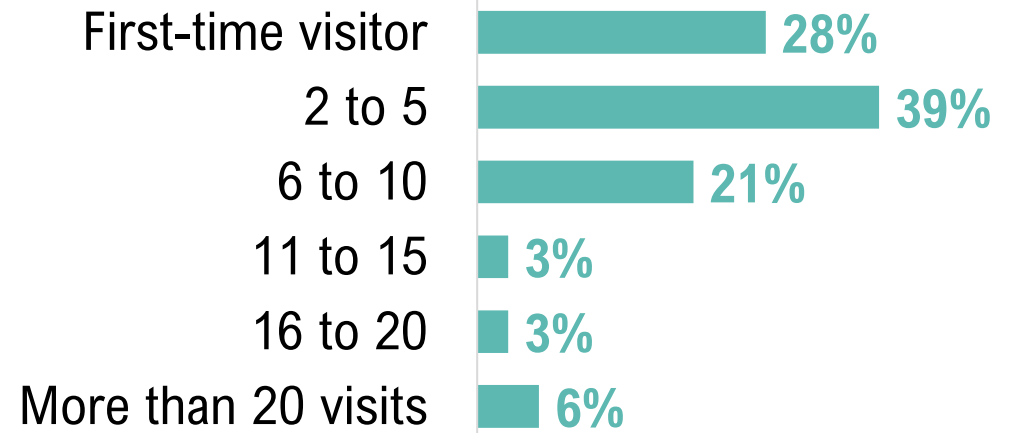
VISITS TO TALLAHASSEE FY26 Q2



Tallahassee's share of first-time visitors increased by 4% points compared to FY25



Despite repeat visitors in the area for legislative session, local events this quarter attracted visitors who may not otherwise have come to the area



VISITOR PROFILE FY26 Q2

43

Median Age

(-3 years from FY25 Q2)

28%

First-Time Visitor

(+4% points from FY25 Q2)

\$91,700

Median Household Income

(+\$4,200 from FY25 Q2)

81%

Drove (vs Flew)

(+1% point from FY25 Q2)

2.5

Travel Party Size

(-0.1 from FY25 Q2)

3.1

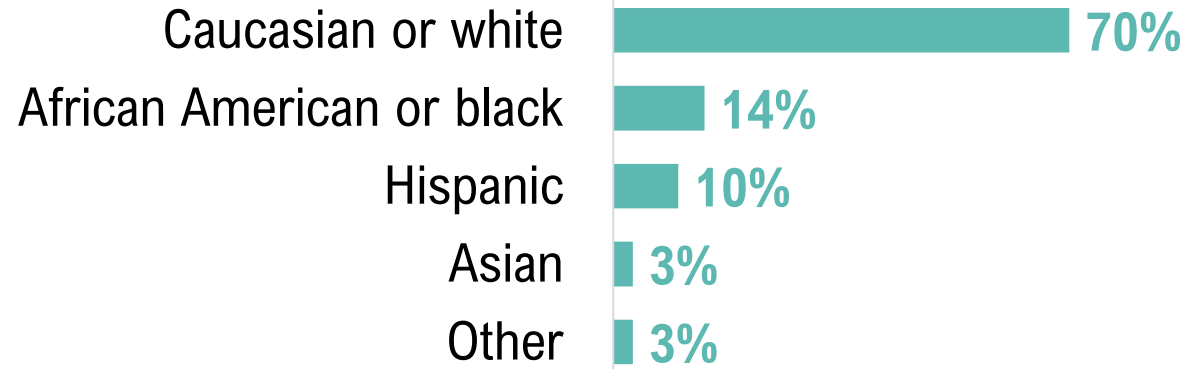
Length Of Stay

(-0.1 days from FY25 Q2)

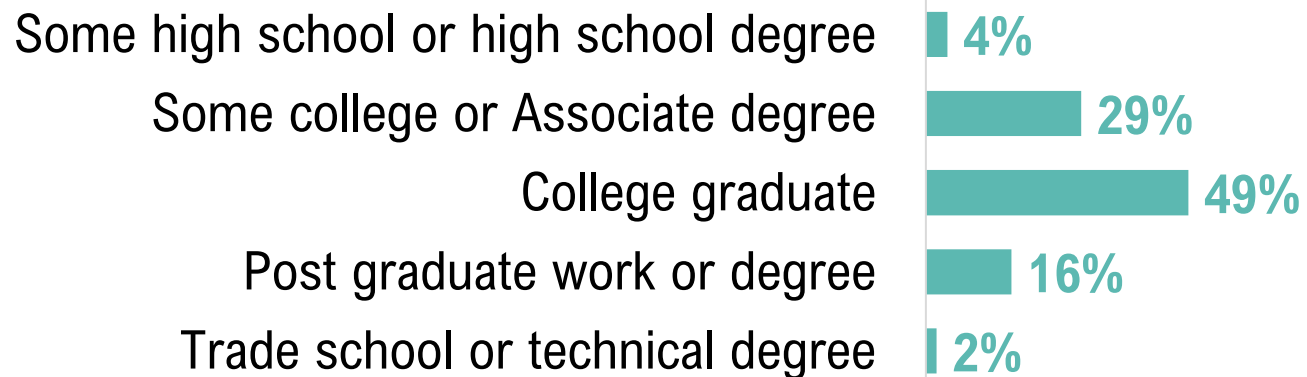


VISITOR PROFILE (CONT'D) FY26 Q2

Race/Ethnicity



Education



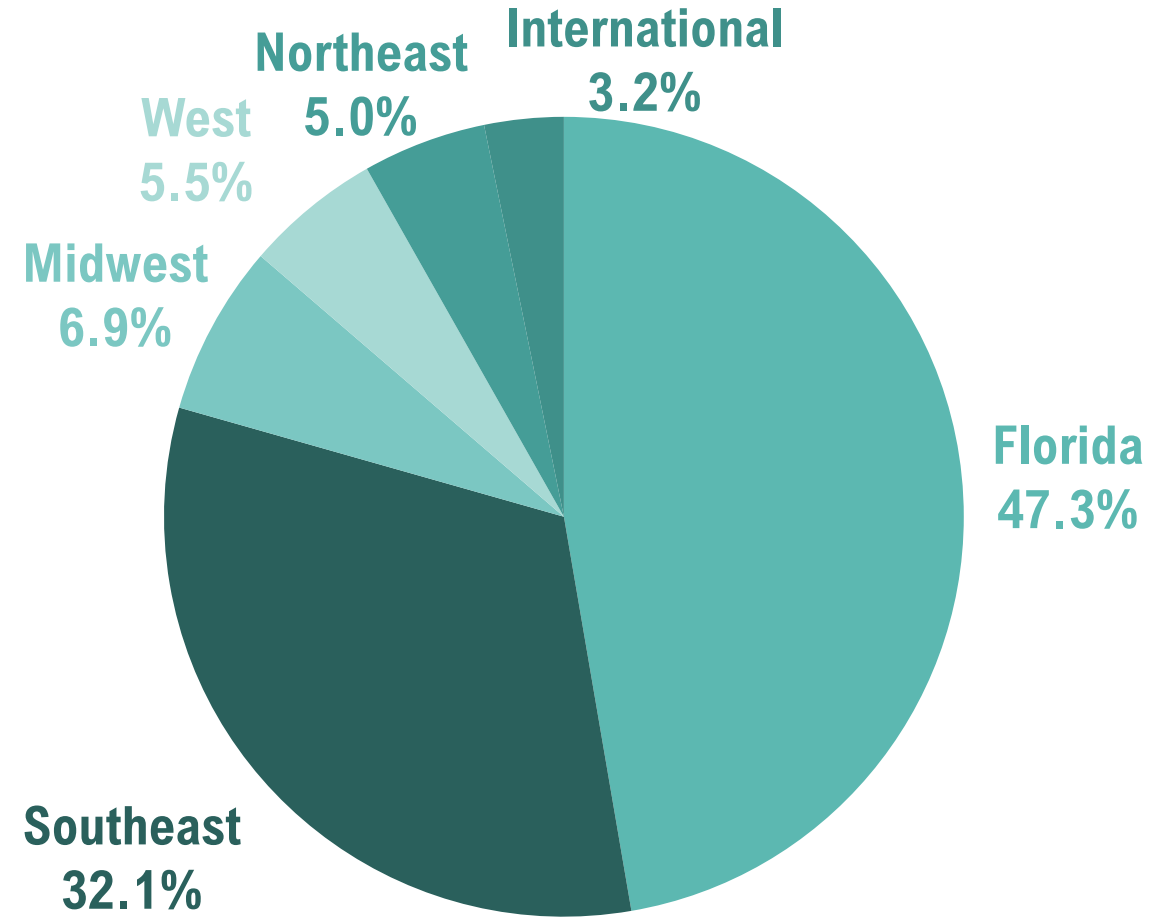
REGION OF ORIGIN FY26 Q2



This quarter continues a local trend of more visitors coming to Tallahassee from elsewhere in the Southeast (+3.8% points).



This quarter had a larger share of international visitation compared to FY25 (+0.9% points)



Southeast: TX, AR, LA, TN, MS, AL, NC, SC, GA

Northeast: VA, MD, DE, PA, NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME

Midwest: WV, KY, OH, IN, MI, WI, IL, MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK

West: WA, OR, CA, NV, ID, MT, WY, CO, UT, AZ, NM, AK, HI



VISITOR ORIGINS FY26 Q2¹



Despite the smaller share of Florida visitors overall, the top 2 Q2 markets continue to be the surrounding area and the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area

Market	FY25 Q2	FY26 Q2
Surrounding Areas ²	10.2%	12.1%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	10.9%	9.2%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	4.8%	7.0%
Atlanta	5.7%	6.8%
Jacksonville	5.2%	6.5%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota	7.4%	6.3%
Panama City	4.9%	5.6%
Mobile-Pensacola	4.2%	3.9%
Dallas-Fort Worth	3.5%	2.4%
Charlotte	1.9%	2.0%
Gainesville	2.2%	2.0%
West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce	2.0%	1.8%
New York City ³	1.7%	1.5%
Raleigh-Durham	1.3%	1.4%
Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem	0.2%	1.2%
Fort Myers-Naples	1.3%	1.1%

¹Updated to show data to one decimal place for precision.

²Includes counties surrounding Tallahassee and Thomasville.

³Includes parts of Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

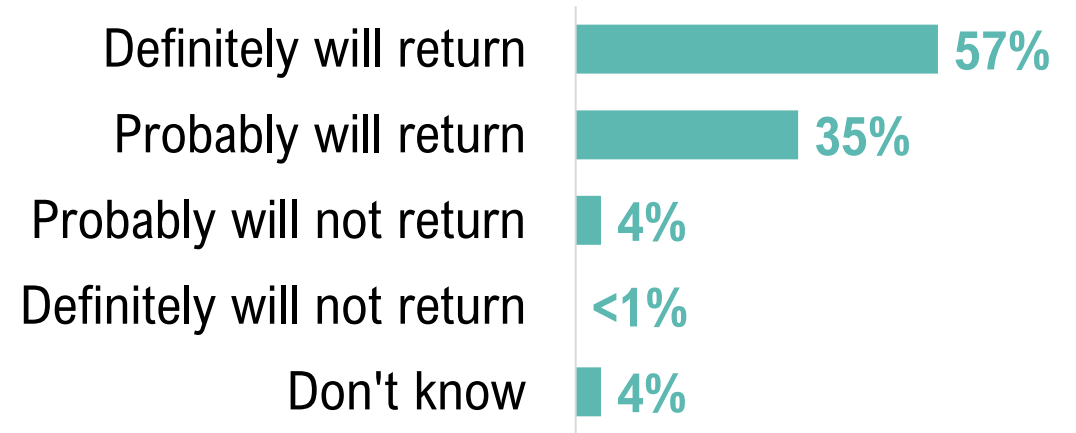


SATISFACTION STATISTICS FY26 Q2

Rating of Tallahassee
as a Destination¹



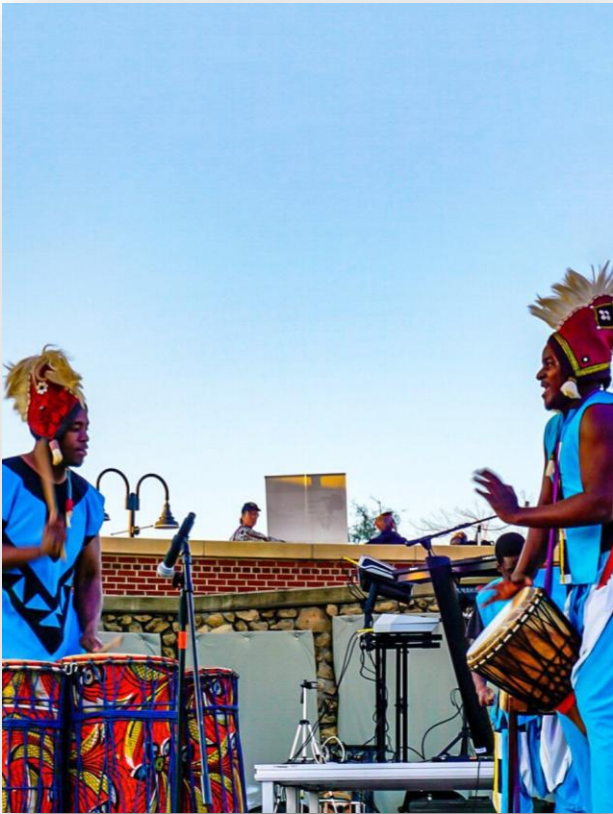
Likelihood of Returning
to Tallahassee



¹Rated on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.



VISITOR DESCRIPTIONS OF TALLAHASSEE FY26 Q2¹



“Beautiful town with interesting things to see and some of the nicest people in Florida!”



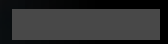
“A relaxing place with great nature and not overcrowded.”



“A charming city with a great mix of history, culture, food, and outdoor activities.”



“Great nature and scenery - it’s a different side of Florida than you’d expect!”



DETAILED FINDINGS

STUDY OBJECTIVES: VISITOR JOURNEY



TOURISM SNAPSHOT: KEY METRICS FY26 VS FY25

	Jan-Mar 2025	Jan-Mar 2026	Percent Change
Visitors	616,600	594,000	- 3.7%
Direct Expenditures ¹	\$216,098,800	\$222,454,900	+ 2.9%
Total Economic Impact ²	\$354,402,000	\$355,927,800	+ 0.4%

	Jan-Mar 2025	Jan-Mar 2026	Percent Change
Occupancy ³	68.0%	65.6%	- 3.5%
Room Rates ³	\$134.90	\$141.35	+ 4.8%
Room Nights ³	418,800	390,600	- 6.7%
TDT Collections ⁴	\$2,072,952.52	\$2,285,995.60	+ 10.3%

¹Includes spending for: accommodations, restaurants, entertainment, shopping, transportation, groceries, and “other” expenses.

²Subject to change with model and underlying data source updates.

³From STR, DBPR, and Key Data (via Zartico).

⁴From Tallahassee Tax Collector.



LEGISLATIVE SESSION COMPARISON: FY26 VS FY24

	Jan-Mar 2024	Jan-Mar 2026	Percent Change
Visitors	579,200	594,000	+ 2.6%
Direct Expenditures ¹	\$188,443,100	\$222,454,900	+ 18.0%
Total Economic Impact ²	\$309,046,700	\$355,927,800	+ 15.2%

	Jan-Mar 2024	Jan-Mar 2026	Percent Change
Occupancy ³	61.2%	65.6%	+ 7.3%
Room Rates ³	\$128.31	\$141.35	+ 10.2%
Room Nights ³	382,300	390,600	+ 2.2%
TDT Collections ⁴	\$2,055,228.17	\$2,285,995.60	+ 11.2%

¹Includes spending for: accommodations, restaurants, entertainment, shopping, transportation, groceries, and “other” expenses.

²Subject to change with model and underlying data source updates.

³From STR, DBPR, and Key Data (via Zartico).

⁴From Tallahassee Tax Collector.



TOURISM SNAPSHOT: KEY METRICS YEAR TO DATE

	FY24 YTD ¹	FY25 YTD ¹	FY26 YTD ¹	% Change FY24-FY26	% Change FY25-FY26
Visitors	1,240,800	1,327,300	1,295,100	+ 4.4%	- 2.4%
Direct Expenditures ²	\$409,395,600	\$459,732,000	\$462,599,300	+ 13.0%	+ 0.6%
Total Economic Impact ³	\$671,408,800	\$753,960,800	\$740,158,800	+ 10.2%	- 1.8%
Room Nights ⁴	727,900	835,800	749,100	+ 2.9%	- 10.4%
TDT Collections ⁵	\$4,751,925.21	\$4,850,366.23	\$4,770,657.12	+ 0.4%	- 1.6%

¹Year to Date data includes October-March of the given fiscal year.

²Includes spending for accommodations, restaurants, entertainment, shopping, transportation, groceries, and “other” expenses.

³Subject to change with model and underlying data source updates.

⁴From STR, DBPR, and Key Data (via Zartico).

⁵From Tallahassee Tax Collector.



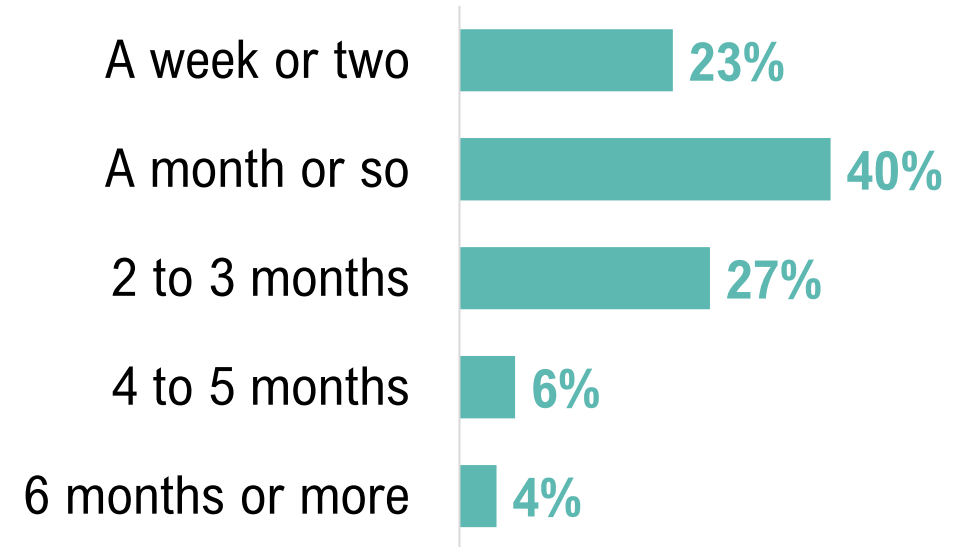
TRIP PLANNING CYCLE (FY26 2nd Quarter)






Visitors to Tallahassee have a short planning window, as **nearly 2 in 3** plan their trip **a month or less in advance**

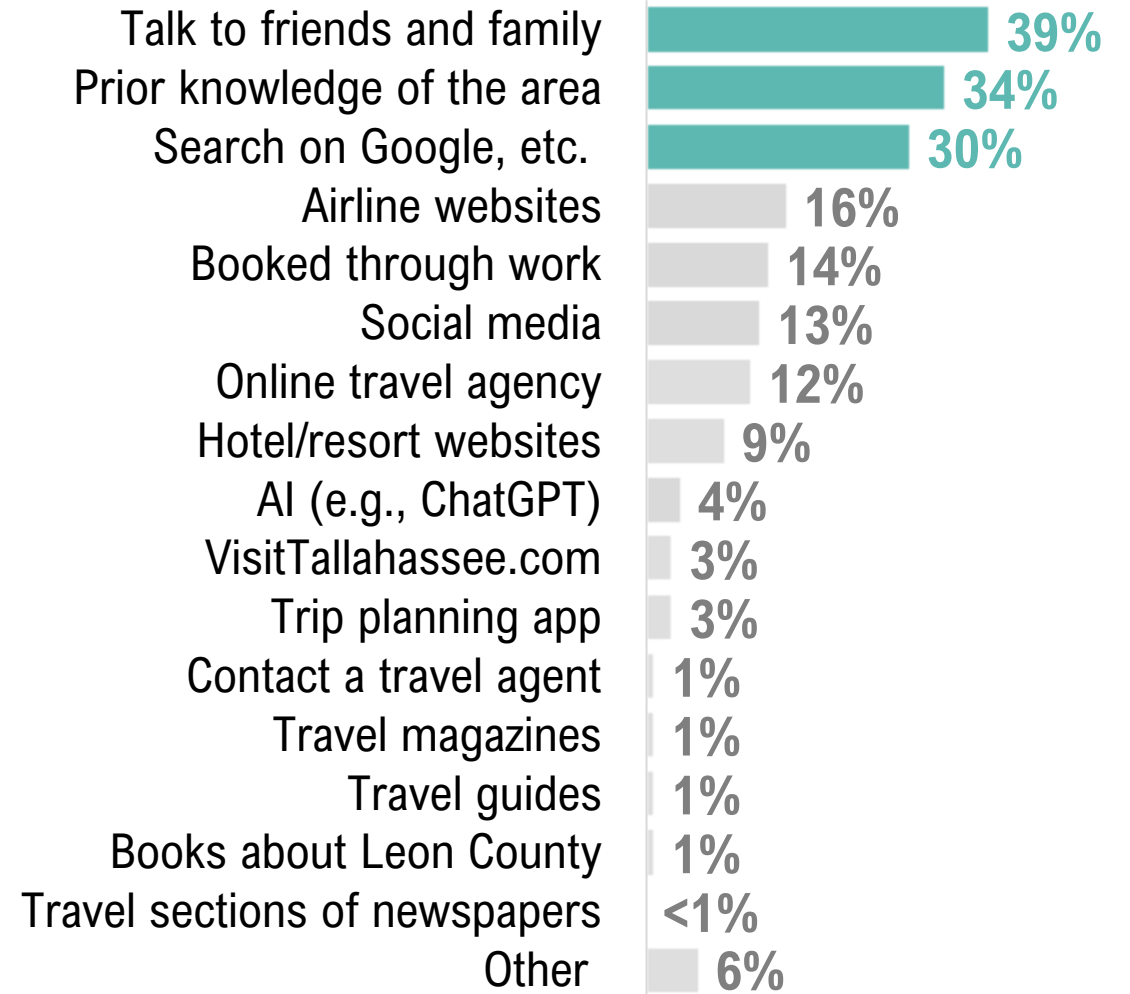


The **average trip planning window** was **42 days, 5 days longer** than 2025



TRIP PLANNING SOURCES¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)

- 
Nearly 2 in 5 visitors talked to friends and family to plan their trip
- 
Another over 1 in 3 used prior knowledge of the area in their trip planning
- 
3 in 10 searched for information on Google



¹Multiple responses permitted.



ADVERTISING RECALL (FY26 2nd Quarter)



10% of visitors to Tallahassee recalled seeing advertising for the area prior to their trip



This information influenced **4%** of **all** visitors to come to the Tallahassee area

Recalled advertising

10%

Did not recall advertising


83%


Not sure

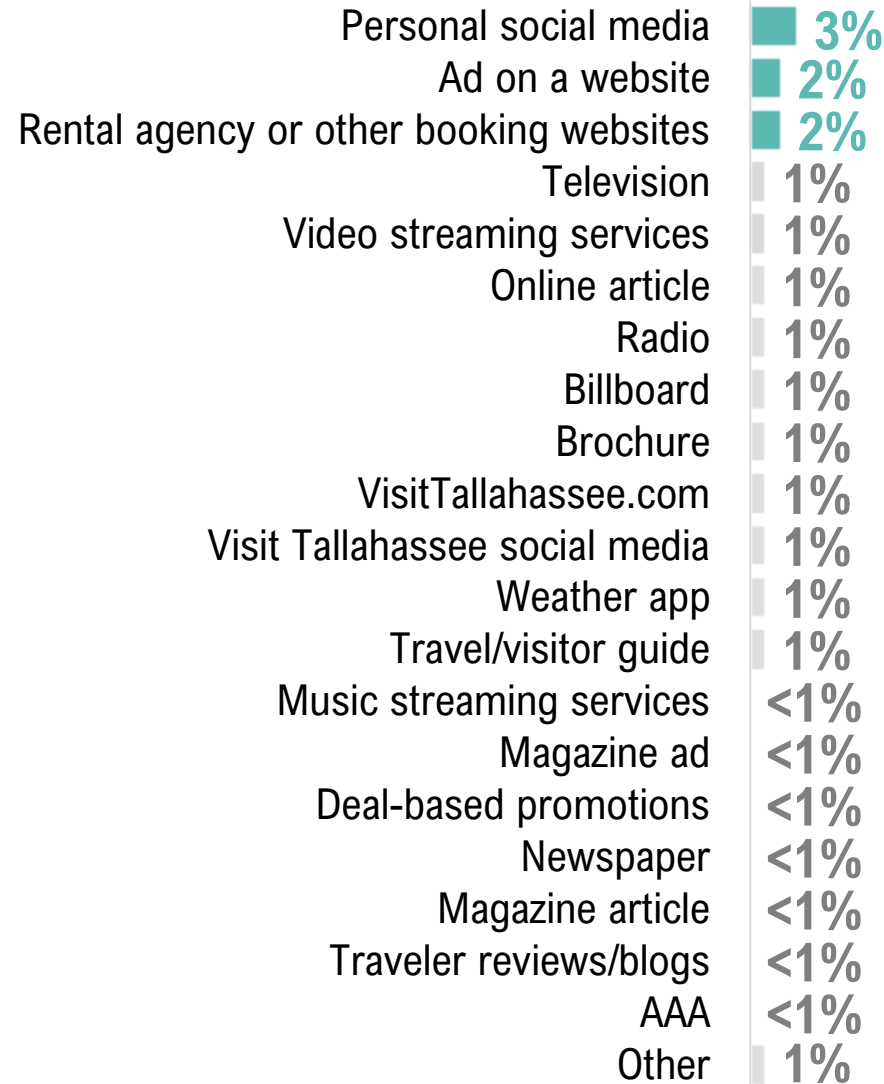
7%



ADVERTISING RECALL SOURCES¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)


 The top source of recalled advertising was **personal social media**, noted by **3%** of all visitors


 Another **2%** of all visitors recalled seeing ads on a **website** or, more specifically, a **booking website**



¹Multiple responses permitted.

Based on all visitors, including those who did not recall seeing advertising for Tallahassee.



REASONS FOR VISITING¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



3 in 10 visitors came to Tallahassee to visit friends and family



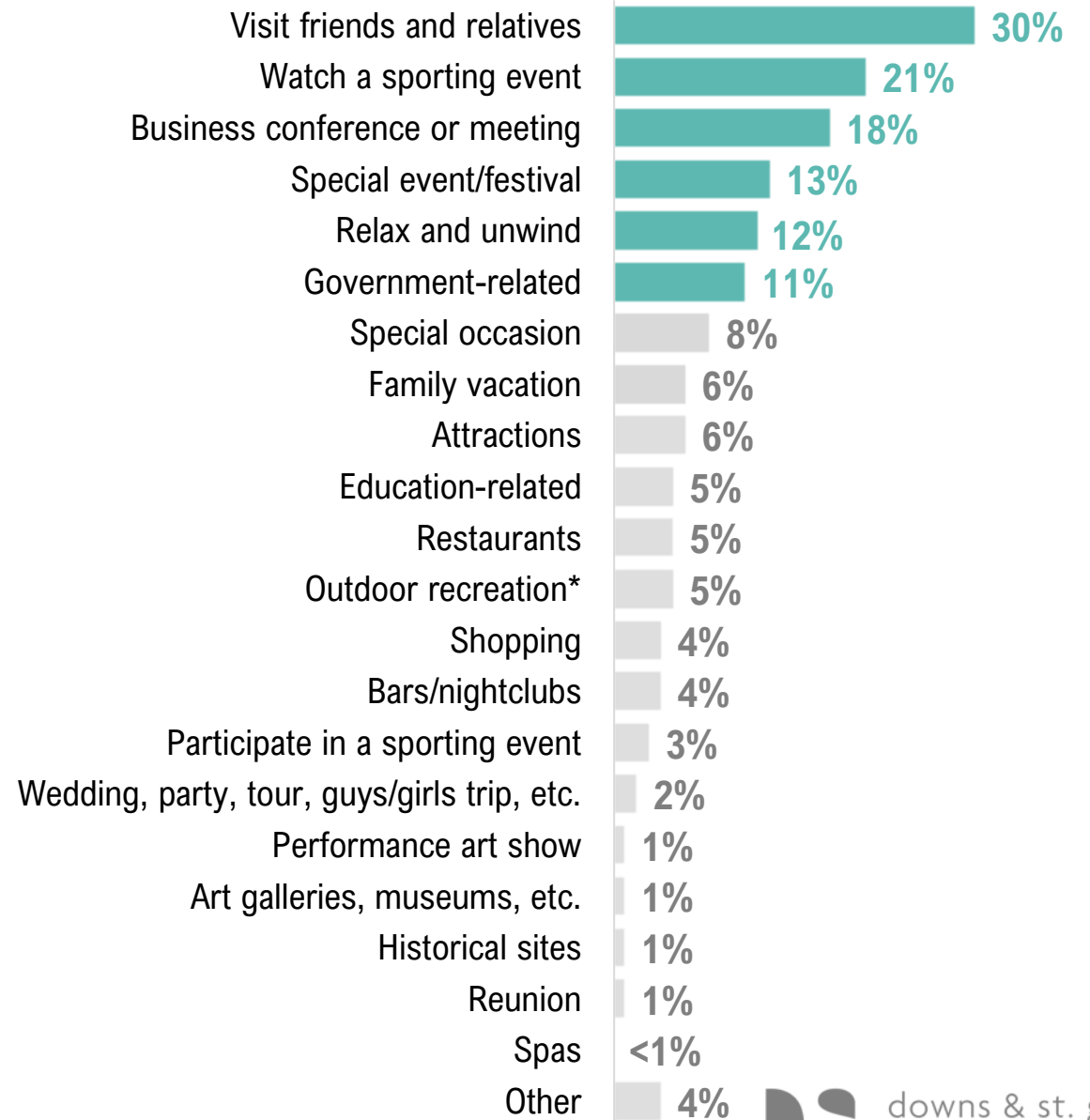
Over 1 in 5 came to watch a sporting event (+7% points from 2025)



Nearly 1 in 5 came for business

¹Multiple responses permitted.

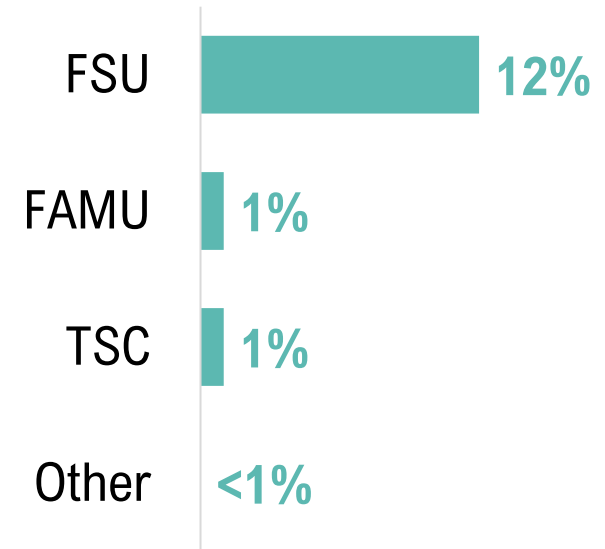
*New response option added this quarter in place of 3 previous options: Nature, fishing/golfing/hunting, and biking/hiking/running.



EDUCATION-RELATED VISITS¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)

➤➤➤ 12% of **all** visitors to Tallahassee came to the area for activities related to FSU

➤➤➤ 1% of **all** visitors came to the area for activities related to FAMU or TSC



¹Multiple responses permitted. Percents based on all visitors.

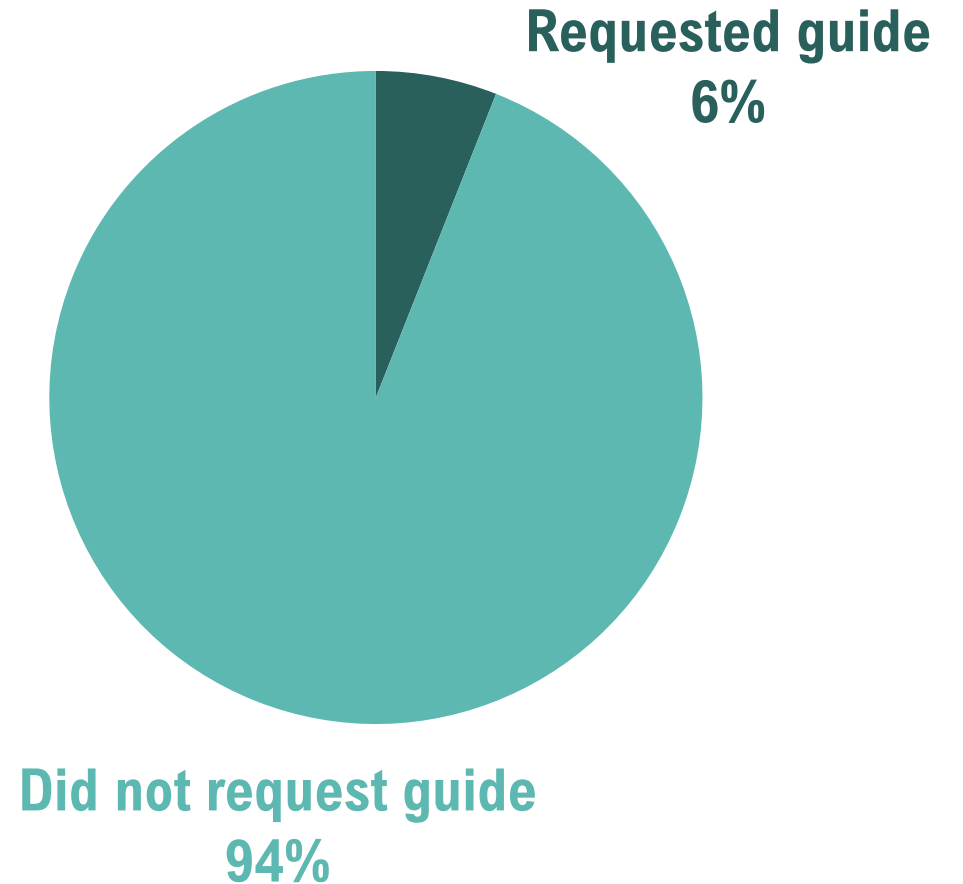
VISITORS GUIDE (FY26 2nd Quarter)



6% of visitors requested a Visitors Guide prior to their trip to Tallahassee



Those who requested a Visitors Guide gave it a rating of 7.6¹



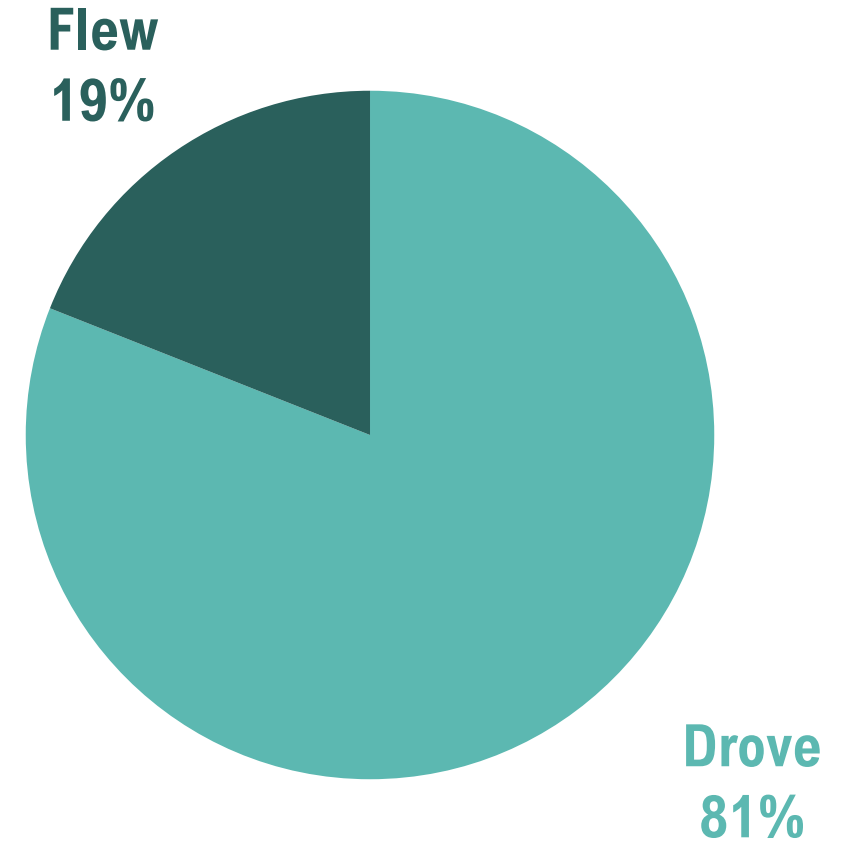
¹Rated on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.



TRANSPORTATION (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Over 4 in 5 visitors drove to Tallahassee

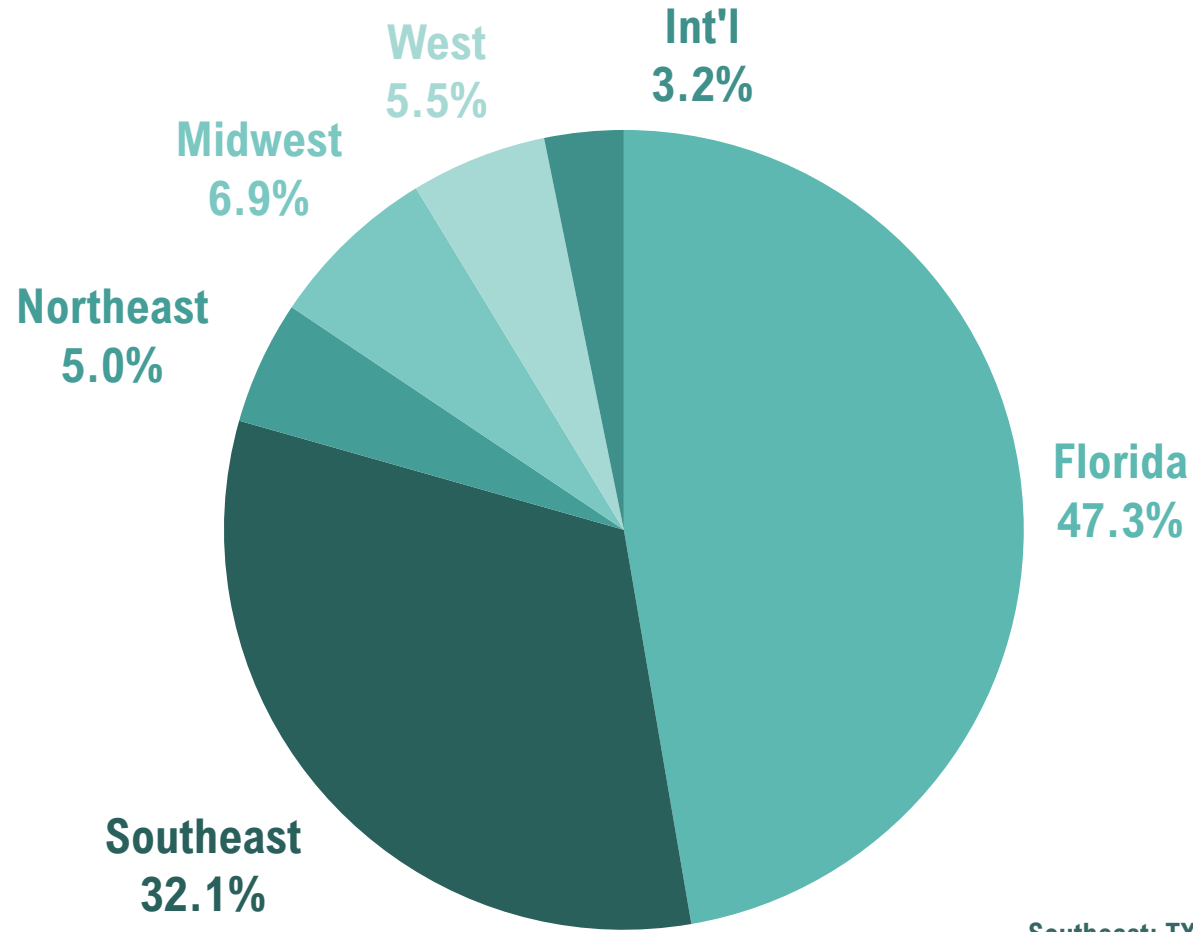
90% of visitors indicated that Tallahassee was the primary destination for their trip



STUDY OBJECTIVES: VISITOR JOURNEY



REGION OF ORIGIN¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



Southeast: TX, AR, LA, TN, MS, AL, NC, SC, GA

Northeast: VA, MD, DE, PA, NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME

Midwest: WV, KY, OH, IN, MI, WI, IL, MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK

West: WA, OR, CA, NV, ID, MT, WY, CO, UT, AZ, NM, AK, HI

¹Updated to show data to one decimal place for precision.



TOP MARKETS OF ORIGIN¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



70.8% of Tallahassee visitors came from **16** markets

Market	January - March 2025	January - March 2026
Surrounding Areas ²	10.2%	12.1%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	10.9%	9.2%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	4.8%	7.0%
Atlanta	5.7%	6.8%
Jacksonville	5.2%	6.5%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota	7.4%	6.3%
Panama City	4.9%	5.6%
Mobile-Pensacola	4.2%	3.9%
Dallas-Fort Worth	3.5%	2.4%
Charlotte	1.9%	2.0%
Gainesville	2.2%	2.0%
West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce	2.0%	1.8%
New York City ³	1.7%	1.5%
Raleigh-Durham	1.3%	1.4%
Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem	0.2%	1.2%
Fort Myers-Naples	1.3%	1.1%

¹Updated to show data to one decimal place for precision.

²Includes counties surrounding Tallahassee and Thomasville.

³Includes parts of Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.



TRAVEL PARTIES (FY26 2nd Quarter)

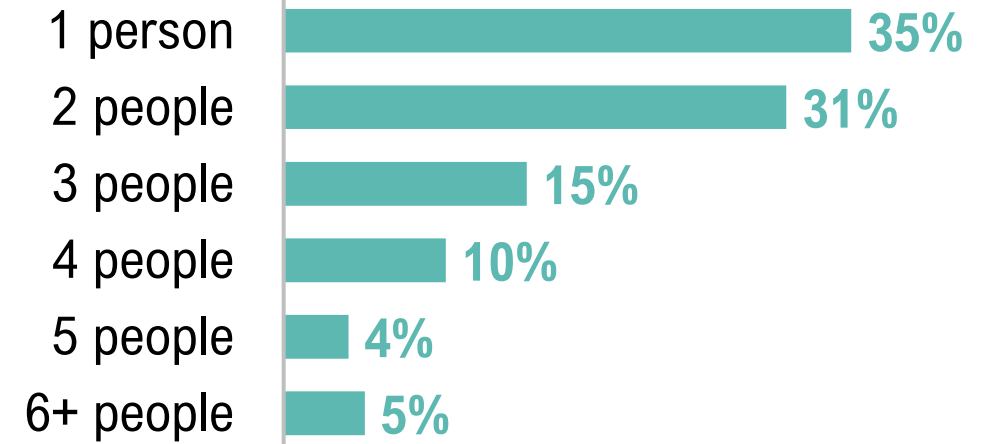


Typical visitors traveled in a party of **2.5** people



24% of visitors traveled with children aged 20 or younger, while **14%** traveled with children aged 12 or younger

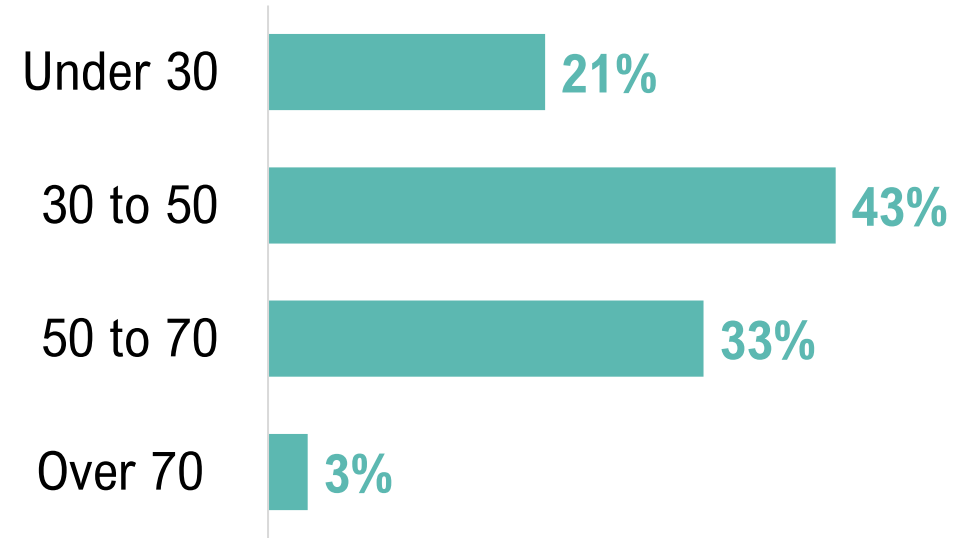
Travel Party Size



AGE OF VISITORS¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



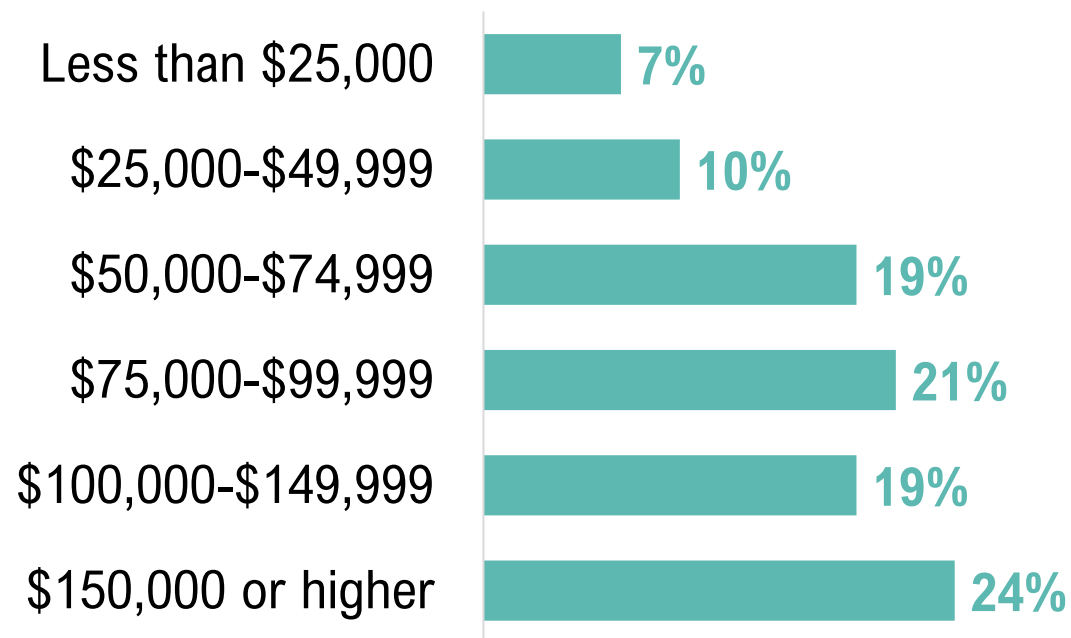
Typical visitors to Tallahassee were **43** years old



HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF VISITORS (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Typical visitors to Tallahassee had a median household income of **\$91,700** per year

Nearly 1 in 4 visitors earned over **\$150,000** per year



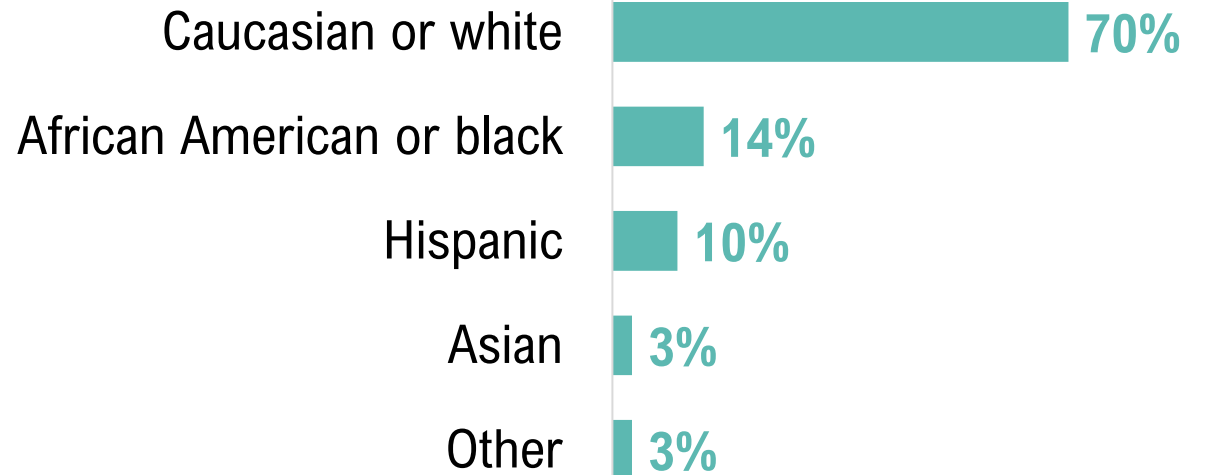
RACE/ETHNICITY OF VISITORS¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



7 in 10 visitors to Tallahassee were Caucasian



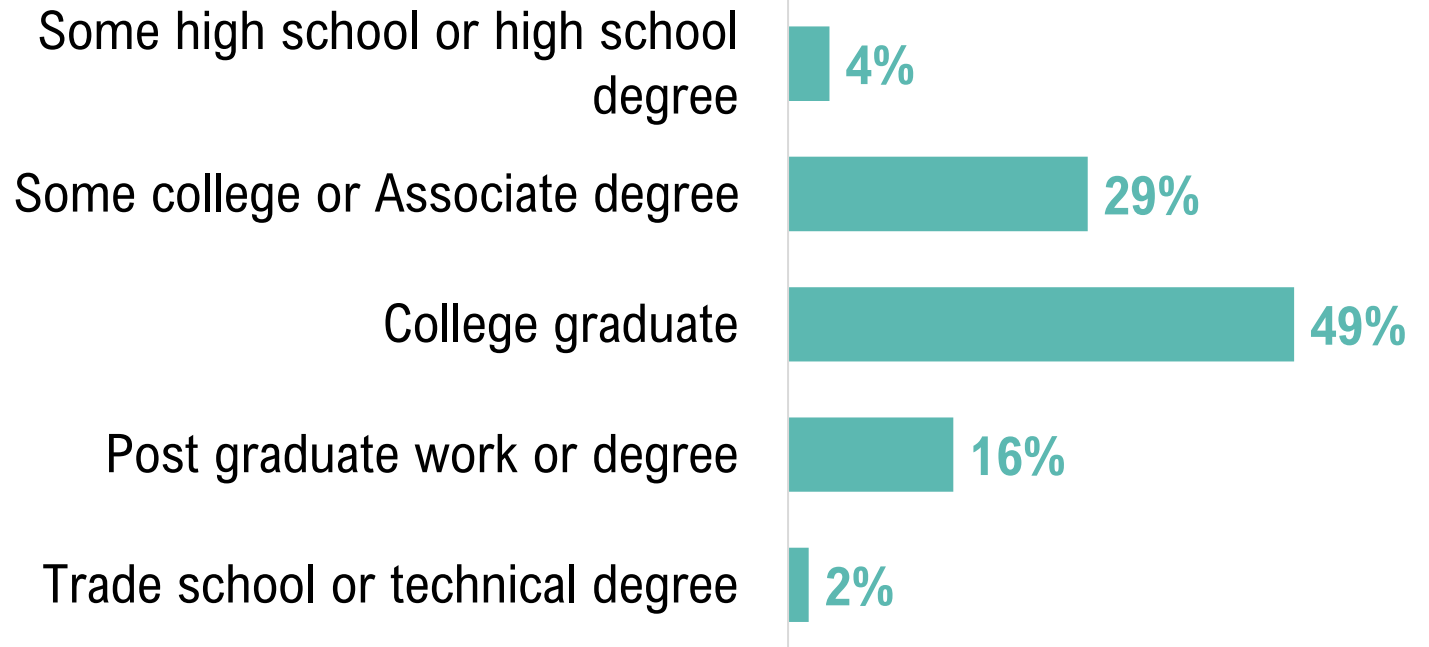
Nearly 1 in 7 visitors to Tallahassee were African American



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF VISITORS¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



Over 2 in 3 visitors to Tallahassee had a bachelor's degree or higher

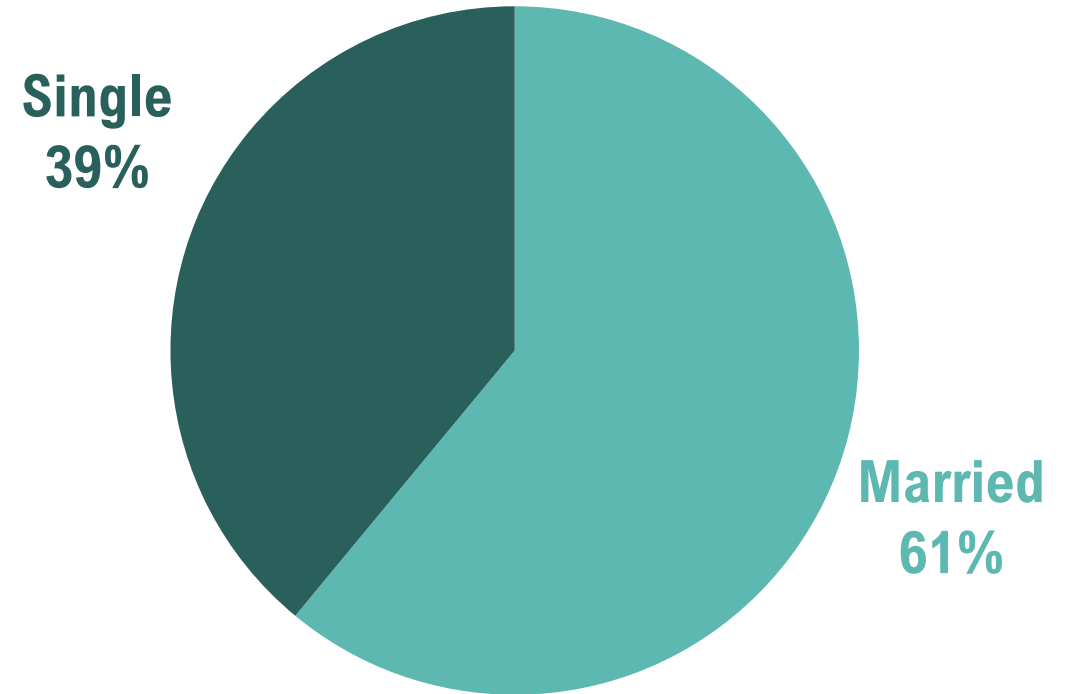


¹Demographic data reflects the surveyed individual, who may not fully represent the entire travel party or all visitors to the area.

MARITAL STATUS OF VISITORS¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



Over 3 in 5 visitors to Tallahassee were married

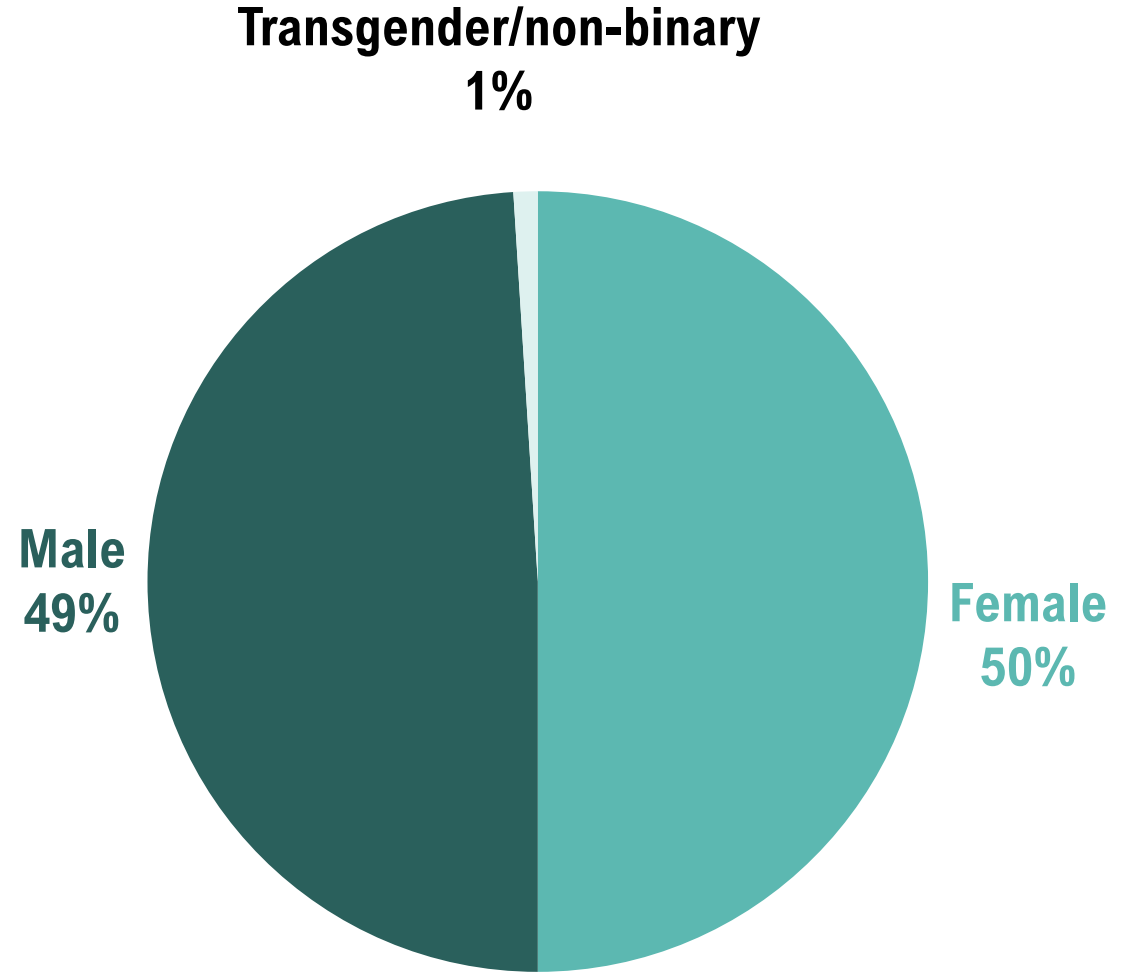


¹Demographic data reflects the surveyed individual, who may not fully represent the entire travel party or all visitors to the area.

GENDER OF VISITORS¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



50% of visitors to Tallahassee were female



¹Demographic data reflects the surveyed individual, who may not fully represent the entire travel party or all visitors to the area.

STUDY OBJECTIVES: VISITOR JOURNEY



ACCOMMODATIONS (FY26 2nd Quarter)



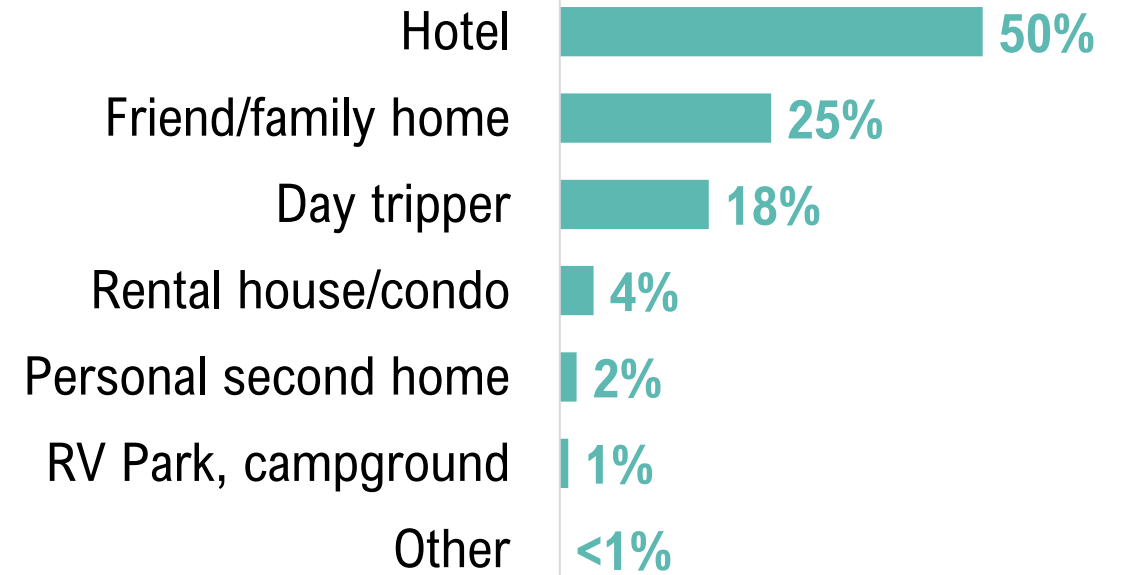
Half of visitors stayed in a hotel



1 in 4 stayed with friends or relatives



Nearly 1 in 5 came to the area just for the day



TRAVEL PARTY SPENDING¹ (FY26 1st Quarter)

	Spending per Day	Spending per Trip
Accommodations	\$78	\$239
Restaurants	\$74	\$225
Entertainment	\$44	\$134
Transportation	\$43	\$130
Shopping	\$33	\$101
Groceries	\$20	\$60
Other	\$5	\$14
Total	\$296	\$903

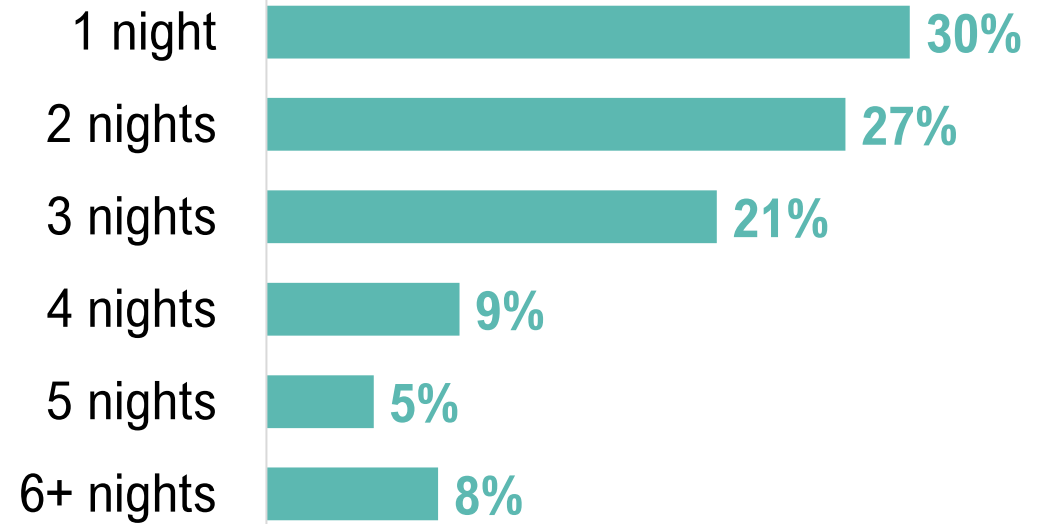
¹Spending per travel party. Includes overnight visitors and day trippers.



OVERNIGHT VISITORS (FY26 2nd Quarter)


Typical visitors stayed **3.1** nights in Tallahassee

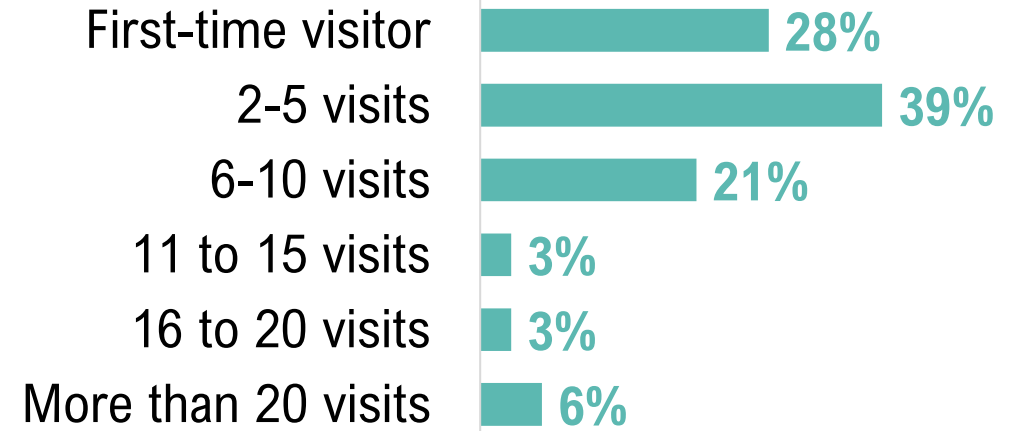
3 in 10 visitors stayed only one night in Tallahassee



VISITS TO TALLAHASSEE (FY26 2nd Quarter)

 **Nearly 3 in 10** visitors were visiting Tallahassee for the first time

 **12%** had previously visited Tallahassee more than 10 times



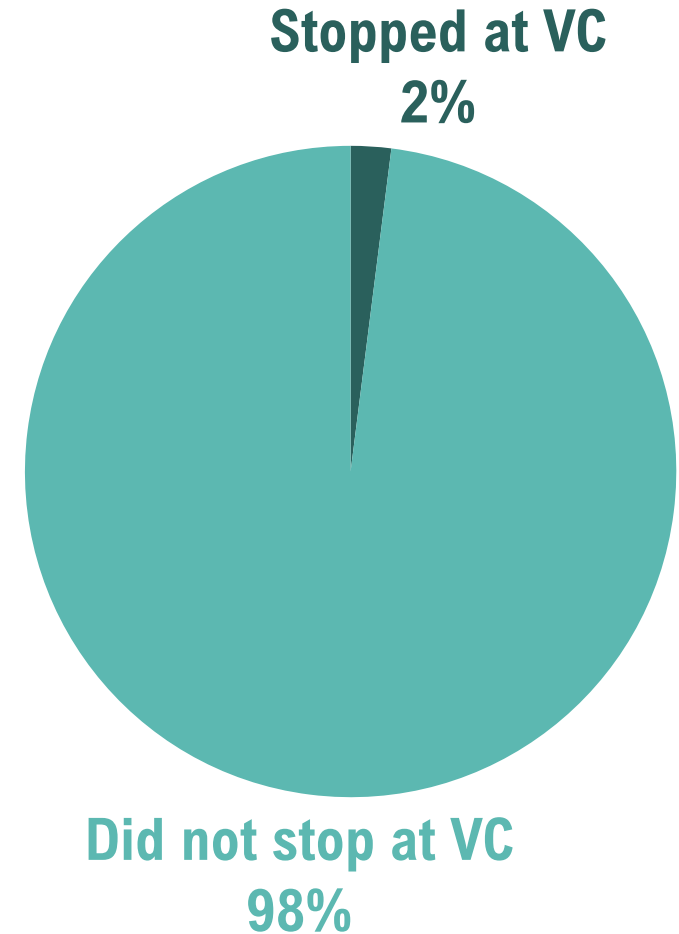
VISITOR CENTER (FY26 2nd Quarter)



2% of visitors stopped at the Visitor Center¹



Those who went to the Visitor Center gave it a rating of 8.5²



¹Refers to the Visit Tallahassee Visitor Center in Cascades Park, as the Railroad Square Visitor Center was closed this quarter from storm damage.
²Rated on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.



ACTIVITIES DURING VISIT¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



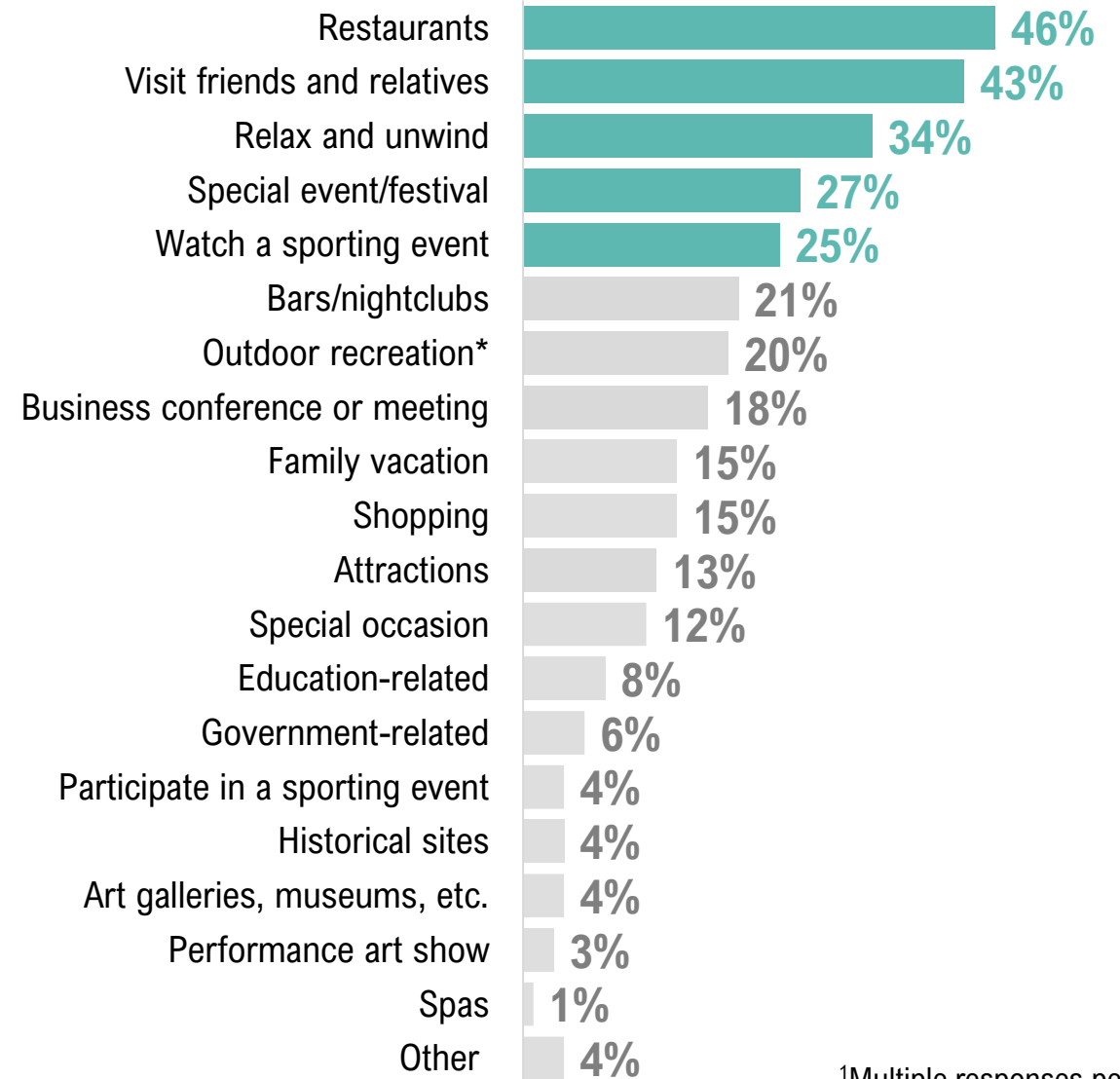
Nearly half of visitors dined at restaurants or spent time with friends and family while in Tallahassee



Over 1 in 3 spent time relaxing and unwinding



Around 1 in 4 went to a special event or festival, sporting events in particular



¹Multiple responses permitted.

*New response option added this quarter in place of 3 previous options: Nature, Fishing/golfing/hunting, and biking/hiking/running.

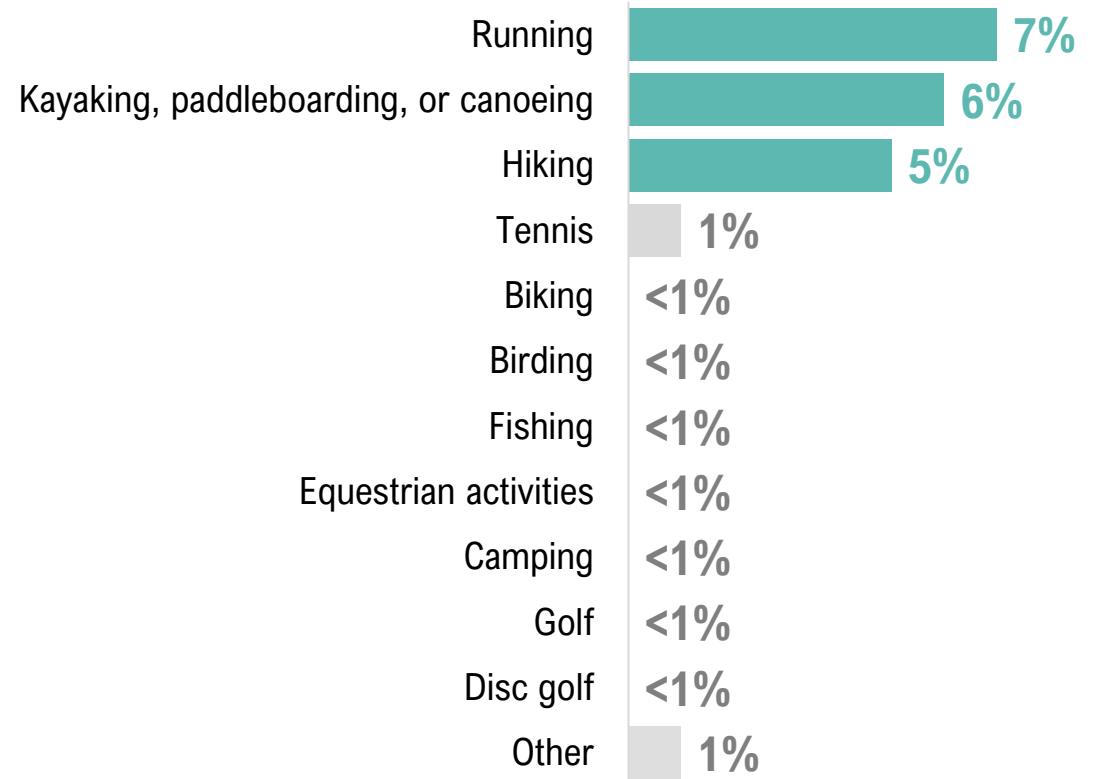


TYPE OF OUTDOOR REC¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)

7% of all visitors spent time running while in Tallahassee

6% went kayaking, paddleboarding, or canoeing

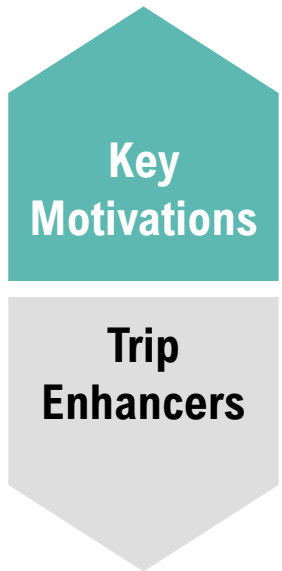
5% went hiking during their time in Tallahassee



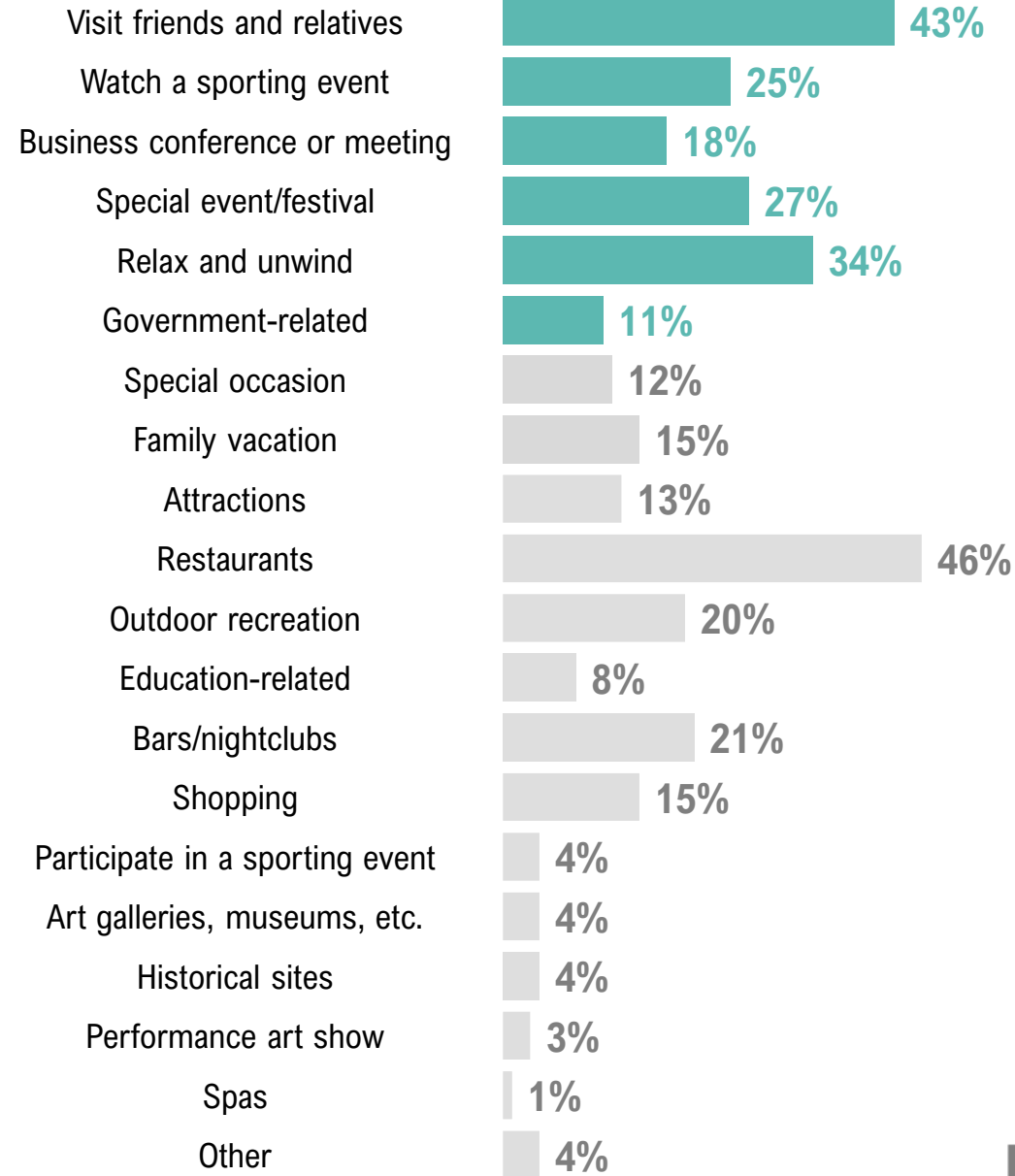
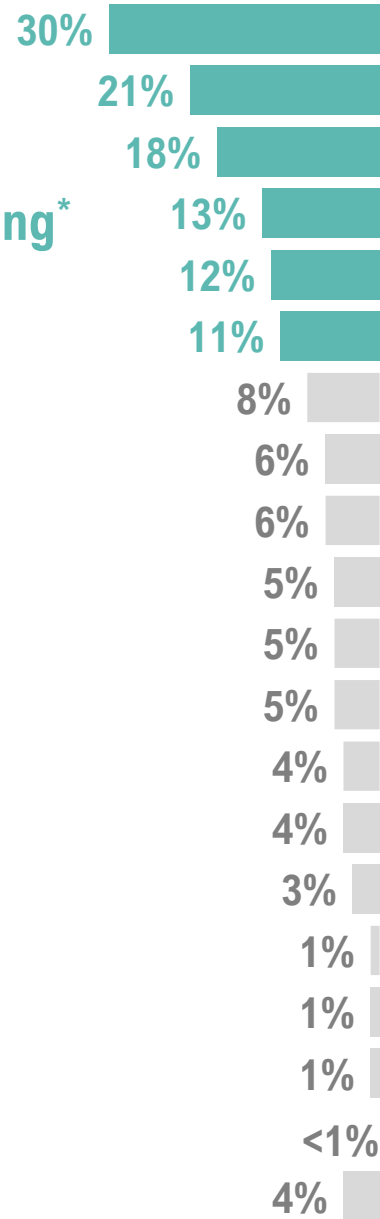
¹New survey question added this quarter as a follow-up for those who selected “Outdoor Recreation” as a trip activity. Multiple responses permitted. Percents out of all visitors. Results are preliminary and should be interpreted with caution.



REASONS FOR VISITING VS. VISITOR ACTIVITIES (FY26 2nd Quarter)



Reasons for Visiting*



Visitor Activities*

*Multiple responses permitted.



STUDY OBJECTIVES: VISITOR JOURNEY



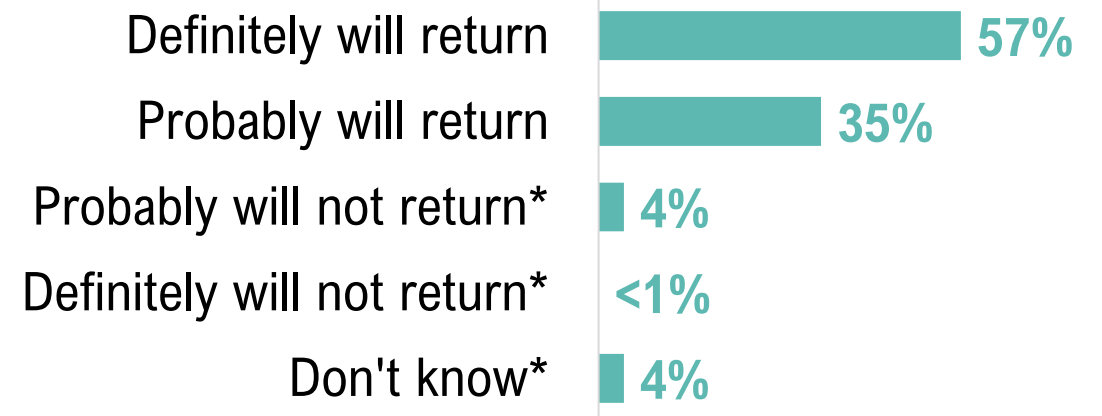
VISITOR SATISFACTION (FY26 2nd Quarter)



Visitors gave Tallahassee an average rating of **8.3¹** as a place to visit



92% of visitors will return (**57%** will definitely return) to Tallahassee for a future visit or vacation



¹Rated on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent.

*8% of visitors may not return for the following reasons: Event/occasion for visit is over, prefer other areas, or not enough to do during the day.



RATING EXPERIENCES IN TALLAHASSEE¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)



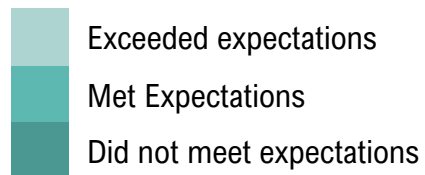
Tallahassee's **hospitality** exceeded the expectations of over **half** of visitors



Tallahassee's **attractions** exceeded the expectations of nearly **half** of visitors



Nightlife, customer service, and shopping in Tallahassee were least likely to exceed visitors' expectations



¹Based on small samples; results should be interpreted with caution.



PERCEPTIONS: “LOTS TO DO” (FY26 2nd Quarter)



“Beautiful town with interesting things to see, and some of the nicest people in Florida.”



“A charming city with a great mix of history, culture, food, and outdoor activities.”



“There’s always something to do. We like to come to the museums - the kids love it!”



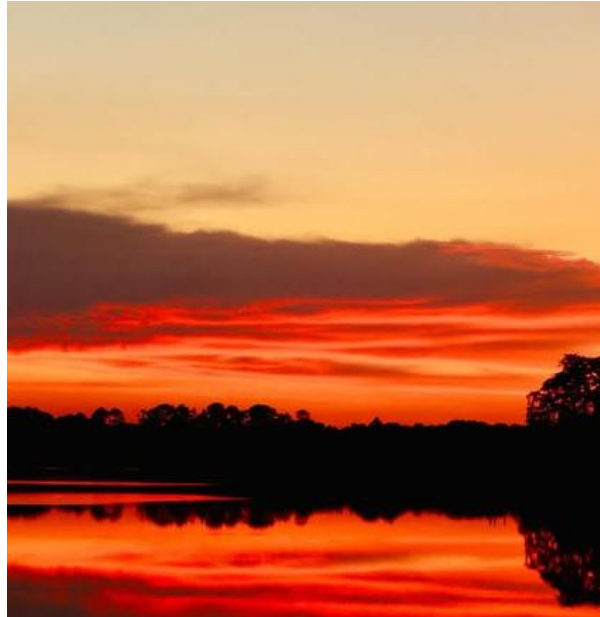
“Between sports and other events around the city, there’s always something happening.”



PERCEPTIONS: "PEACEFUL" (FY26 1st Quarter)



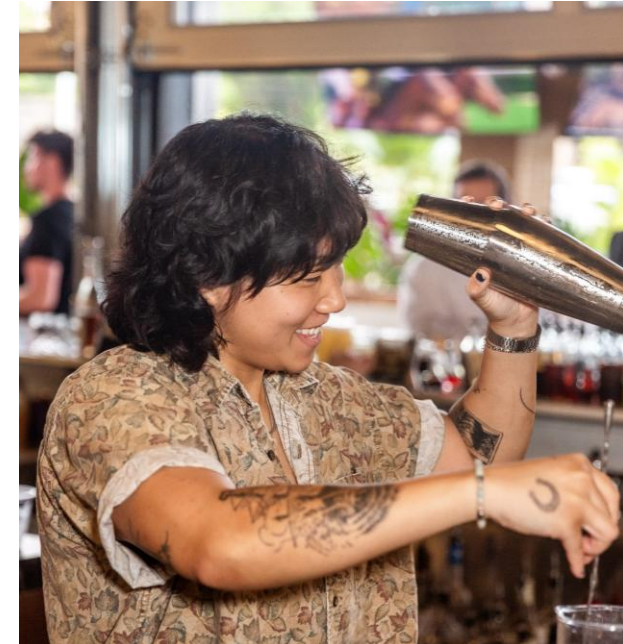
"Very diverse and quiet town - it's a relaxing home away from home with a pleasant vibe."



"Kind people and Southern charm - it's a peaceful, relaxing place to visit."



"A small town where the greenery is beautiful and it's easy to relax."



"A relaxing place with great nature that isn't overcrowded."



PERCEPTIONS: "SCENIC" (FY26 2nd Quarter)



"We love the nature and forests here - beautiful scenery!"



"It's a great place for sightseeing, with parks, nature, and a refreshing feel."



"The nature is beautiful, with parks and scenic views."



"Great nature and scenery - it's a different side of Florida than you'd expect!"



A tropical landscape featuring a long, narrow pool of water that reflects the sky and surrounding palm trees. The pool is flanked by lush green grass and dense tropical vegetation, including several tall palm trees. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is serene and well-maintained.

YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS

YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Trip Planning Cycle	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Tallahassee was primary destination	86%	88%	90%
A week or two in advance	30%	30%	23%
A month or so in advance	40%	41%	40%
2 to 3 months in advance	18%	23%	27%
4 to 5 months in advance	6%	3%	6%
6 months or more in advance	6%	3%	4%

Top Trip Planning Sources ¹	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Talk to friends and family	29%	31%	39%
Prior knowledge of the area	14%	33%	34%
Search on Google, etc.	30%	20%	30%



¹Multiple responses permitted.

YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Advertising Recall	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Recalled ads for Tallahassee	14%	8%	10%
Influenced to visit by ads ¹	5%	4%	4%

Top Reasons for Visiting ²	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Visit friends and relatives	23%	36%	30%
Watch a sporting event	18%	14%	21%
Business conference or meeting	21%	24%	18%

Pre-Visit	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Requested a Visitor Guide	11%	7%	6%
Drove to Tallahassee	73%	80%	81%
Flew to Tallahassee	27%	20%	19%

¹Based on all visitors, including those who did not recall seeing advertising for Tallahassee.

²Multiple responses permitted.



YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS¹ (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Market of Origin	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Surrounding Areas ²	10.7%	10.2%	12.1%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	7.6%	10.9%	9.2%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	7.6%	4.8%	7.0%
Atlanta	5.1%	5.7%	6.8%
Jacksonville	5.7%	5.2%	6.5%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota	5.2%	7.4%	6.3%
Panama City	2.1%	4.9%	5.6%

Region of Origin	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Florida	51.1%	52.3%	47.3%
Southeast (other than Florida)	26.3%	28.3%	32.1%
Northeast	7.6%	5.6%	5.0%
Midwest	7.8%	7.2%	6.9%
West	4.3%	4.3%	5.5%
International	2.9%	2.3%	3.2%

¹Updated to show data to one decimal place for precision.
²Includes counties surrounding Tallahassee and Thomasville.



YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Travel Parties	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Travel Party Size	2.7	2.6	2.5
Traveled with Other Visitors	65%	64%	65%
Traveled with Children under 20	20%	21%	24%
Traveled with Children under 12	8%	12%	14%

Visitor Profile ¹	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Median Age	46	46	43
Gender (Female)	48%	53%	50%
Median Household Income	\$92,000	\$87,500	\$91,700
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	68%	73%	65%
Caucasian	69%	72%	70%
African American	13%	14%	14%
Married	60%	65%	61%

¹Demographic data reflects the surveyed individual, who may not fully represent the entire travel party or all visitors to the area.



YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Accommodations	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Hotel	50%	48%	50%
Friend/family home	21%	25%	25%
Day tripper	19%	18%	18%
Vacation rental	6%	6%	4%
Personal second home	2%	1%	2%
RV park/campground	2%	2%	1%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%

Trips Experience	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Average Nights Stayed ¹	3.2	3.2	3.1
First-Time Visitor	25%	24%	28%
10+ Prior Visits to Tallahassee	23%	16%	12%
Stopped at Visitor Center	5%	3% ²	2% ²

¹Includes overnight visitors and day trippers.

²Refers to the Visit Tallahassee Visitor Center in Cascades Park.



YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Average Daily Spending ¹	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Accommodations ²	\$74	\$76	\$78
Restaurants	\$73	\$79	\$74
Groceries	\$27	\$25	\$44
Shopping	\$40	\$37	\$43
Entertainment	\$35	\$36	\$33
Transportation	\$18	\$21	\$20
Other	\$11	\$6	\$5
Total	\$292	\$280	\$296

Average Total Trip Spending ¹	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Accommodations ²	\$237	\$243	\$239
Restaurants	\$234	\$255	\$225
Groceries	\$58	\$67	\$134
Shopping	\$112	\$116	\$130
Entertainment	\$86	\$80	\$101
Transportation	\$128	\$121	\$60
Other	\$35	\$18	\$14
Total	\$890	\$901	\$903

¹Spending per travel party. Includes overnight visitors and day trippers.

²Includes room rate, taxes, parking, and other services for which accommodations charge.



YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Top Activities ¹	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Restaurants	51%	54%	46%
Visit friends and relatives	37%	49%	43%
Relax and unwind	35%	40%	34%
Special event/festival	12%	10%	27%
Watch a sporting event	26%	21%	25%
Bars/nightclubs	20%	16%	21%
Outdoor recreation ²	46%	24%	20%
Business conference or meeting	30%	24%	18%
Family vacation	24%	18%	15%
Shopping	19%	25%	15%
Attractions	16%	16%	13%
Special occasion	NA ³	16%	12%

¹Multiple responses permitted.

²New response option added this quarter in place of 3 previous options: Nature, Fishing/golfing/hunting, and biking/hiking/running.

³Response option added in FY25.



YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISONS (FY26 2nd Quarter)

Post-Trip Evaluation	January – March 2024	January – March 2025	January – March 2026
Overall Rating	7.9	7.7	8.3
Will return to Tallahassee	93%	96%	92%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Hospitality	95%	98%	97%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Atmosphere	95%	97%	97%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Quality of hotel	95%	96%	97%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Service at hotel	95%	95%	97%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Entertainment	91%	94%	96%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Nightlife	91%	94%	96%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Events/attractions	85%	94%	95%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Food quality	95%	97%	94%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Customer service	95%	98%	94%
Exceed + Met Expectations: Shopping	86%	93%	93%



LEON COUNTY DIVISION OF TOURISM – VISIT TALLAHASSEE

January-March 2026
(FY2026 Q2)
Visitor Tracking Study

Kerri Post
Executive Director, Leon County Division of Tourism
Visit Tallahassee
850-606-2313, Kerri.Post@VisitTallahassee.com

Downs & St. Germain Research
850-906-3111 | contact@dsg-research.com
www.dsg-research.com



*Visit
Tallahassee*
Pretty. Unexpected.

 downs & st. germain
RESEARCH



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 7, 2026

TO: Leon County Tourist Development Council Members (TDC)

THRU: Kerri L. Post, Executive Director, Leon County Division of Tourism

FROM: Jonathan LaBarre, Tourism Operations Director; Julie Trezek, Tourism Grants and Contracts Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Change to Tourism Emerging Signature Event Grant and Signature Event Grant Programs

Each year the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee utilizes Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues to offer grant opportunities to organizations that produce events that attract visitors to the destination and provide local programming and activities which enhance the market for both visitors and residents. The County's Tourism grant programs leverage private funding for these events to the benefit of the community by attracting visitors from state, regional, and national, and international markets. The brand exposure associated with some of the larger events and festivals that take place each year promotes and positions Tallahassee/Leon County as a vibrant destination.

Investment in the growth, stature, and participation in these events continues to generate a return on investment (ROI) as demonstrated by hotel occupancy rates and visitor spending in the community. As a result, the overnight stays and visitor spending enhances TDT collections and provides additional revenues to support the Tourism grant programs and the overall growth of the market as a visitor destination.

Tourism has identified three current Special Event and Sports Event grantees that year over year have been awarded grant funding for their events. These events generate the largest amount of room nights and economic impact in the community for these grant programs and now qualify and are interested to grow their events.

At this meeting, we are seeking consideration to revise the Emerging Signature Event Grant and Signature Event Grant Program to more closely align with the Legacy Event Grant Program, promoting and encouraging strategic growth for these established events.

Overview of Proposed Changes to the Emerging Signature Grant Program.

- To qualify for an Emerging Signature Event Grant applicants must show a minimum of three consecutive years meeting the room night threshold and have the capacity and express a desire to expand and/or enhance their programming to specifically target increasing overnight stays and attendance by out-of-market visitors.
- The Emerging Signature Event Grant Program would execute a two-year contract for each approved event.
- The application window for Emerging Signature Event Grant Program would coincide with the annual Special Event and Sports Event Grant program application window. Applicants must be invited by County Staff to apply, and it is not anticipated that each fiscal year would engage new applicants.
- Room Night/Funding Levels for Emerging Signature will increase from Special Event and Sports Event funding, with maximum level of funding at \$34,999. Room night maximum will remain at 1,499.
- The event organizer must be identified as a qualified applicant by County staff to be eligible for Emerging Signature Event Grant funding.
- The application must include a two-year funding plan for the event, including requested amount for each year, details of new event elements, and event goals for room nights, tourists, and total attendance. Proposed increases in annual funding requests must document and demonstrate increased event duration and/or significant new or additional program elements that would reasonably be expected to attract additional out-of-market attendees to the event.
- Grantee will receive an economic impact report.
- Grantee agrees that grant funding will not be used to compensate board-affiliated vendors.
- Grantee agrees that political events are not eligible for Tourism grant funding.
- Grantee agrees that they must comply with Florida Senate Bill 1134 and section 287.139 of Florida Statutes, and attest that the grant award will be used to fund or promote diversity, equity, or inclusion (“DEI”) programming, materials, or training.

- DEI includes any effort to influence or manipulate the composition of employees, promote or provide preferential treatment or special benefits, or promote or adopt any activity, training, or programming designed or implemented with a reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- Grantee agrees that if the event must be canceled for any reason other than Force Majeure, they must make that determination at least 60 days prior to the event. Tourism will only reimburse for allowable expenses incurred before 60 days prior to the original event date.
- Each Emerging Signature Event Grant applicant must submit the following documents during the initial application window:
 - Updated Emerging Signature Event Grant Application Form
 - 2-year Marketing Plan
 - 2-year Event Budget
- Each Emerging Signature Event Grantee must submit the following documents annually:
 - Due within 60 days of the event, but no later than September 30 of the fiscal year:
 - Post-Event report
 - Due each September 1st
 - Updated Marketing Plan for the coming year
 - Updated Event Budget for the coming year

Each year Staff will determine if additional Events are eligible to be included in the Emerging Signature Event Grant Program and recommend budget allocations to the TDC and BOCC accordingly.

Overview of Proposed Changes to the Signature Event Grant Program.

- All proposed changes for the Signature Event Grant Program are as stated for the Emerging Signature Event Grant Program, with the exception of:
 - Room Night/Funding Levels: the maximum level of funding will remain \$59,999. The levels of funding would adjust to:

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Signature Event Funding Levels
1,500 – 1,999	\$35,000-\$39,999
2,000 – 2,999	\$40,000 - \$45,999
3,000 – 3,999	\$46,000 - \$52,000
4,000 – 5,000	\$53,000 - \$59,999

DRAFT



EMERGING SIGNATURE and SIGNATURE EVENTS

FY27 GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



REVISED May 7, 2026

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DRAFT

**Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee
Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grant Programs**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Leon County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Leon County Ordinance #88-01. The TDC administers funds collected from a local option tourist development tax (TDT) on transient lodging sales. i.e. hotels/motels, and condominiums. The funds are designated to promote Tallahassee/Leon County as a preferred tourist destination for meetings and conventions, group leisure travel, special events, cultural activities and amateur sporting events.

Grant funding is based upon the potential to generate room nights. Per section 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes, to be an authorized use of Tourist Development Tax revenue an event “shall have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue or event to tourists.” By Statute, a tourist is a “person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside of the county of his or her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations” including “any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, roominghouse, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort for a term of 6 months or less.” By Statute, “Promotion” is defined as “marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities”.

The Leon County Division of Tourism annually administers and budgets funds for grant programs for groups and organizations that coordinate local events with a demonstrated history of or significant potential to draw tourists to the area.

The Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grants are for events that have taken place in the community for a minimum of three years that have a broad appeal and have demonstrated an increase in visitation over that period.

Collectively, the Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grants have an award ceiling of \$59,999 in annual support for each event. Proposed increases in annual funding requests must document and demonstrate increased event duration and/or significant new or additional program elements that would reasonably be expected to attract an additional audience to the event.

Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grants will only be issued and administered through two-year funding agreements. Each Emerging Signature or Signature Event funding agreement will be based upon a two-year funding plan, submitted as part of the

application process, and implemented with mutually agreed upon goals and deliverables for each year, and it will be reviewed annually. The funding agreement will have financial consequences for not obtaining event goals and deliverables and will allow for variances as a result of acts of God (i.e. weather). Once all documentation has been reviewed by staff and approved by the Tourist Development Council, a two-year funding agreement will be executed.

The Leon County Division of Tourism grants programs are funded by the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) to support hosting events that have tourist appeal. Some grant programs administered by the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) are also funded by TDT revenue and are designed to support year-round arts and culture programming.

Applicants found to have submitted applications to both the 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. Applicants receiving grant funds from the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) may not receive grant funding for the same event through the TDC. Further, no applicant may apply to TDC and COCA for funding related to the same event or activity. Applicants may make requests for grant funds to the TDC and COCA, but these must be for a different event or activity.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Emerging Signature Event:** An event that meets the criteria for a Signature Event and is historically and currently on the cusp of generating between 1,250 and 1,499 hotel room nights, but is not yet able to generate the same economic impact as a Signature Event. The event must have been taking place in the community for a minimum of three years with a demonstrated increase in visitation over that period.
- B. **Signature Event:** An annual event that takes place over one or more days and can demonstrate the ability to generate a minimum of 1,500 hotel room nights within Leon County. The event is a well-established, larger event that has broad visitor appeal encouraging overnight stays from outside the local market.
- C. **Board-affiliated vendor:** A board-affiliated vendor is defined as a vendor owned by, employing, or controlled by a member of the applicant's governing board or board of trustees.

- D. **Out-of-market:** Outside of a 30-mile radius from Leon County. This term is used to help describe the parameters of some of the marketing and promotion required by grantees pursuant to these guidelines.

III. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The documents listed below are required as part of the Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grant application process:

1. Emerging Signature/Signature grant application form (link to online portal will be sent potential grantees)
2. A two-year funding plan (Attachment A)
3. Affidavit in Compliance with Anti-Human Trafficking Laws (Attachment B)
4. Marketing Plan
5. Event Budget

The following documents are due annually by October 1 of the upcoming fiscal for all Emerging Signature and Signature Grantees. These documents are to reflect the information for the event scheduled for the upcoming fiscal year:

1. Emerging Signature / Signature Grant Application Form
2. Marketing Plan
3. Event Budget

The following documentation is required annually within 60 days of the event date but no later than September 30 of the fiscal year:

1. Post-Event Report that includes all information outlined in Section IX. Post Event Report in these guidelines.

IV. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The intent of the Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract overnight tourists to Tallahassee/Leon County and create business for the commercial lodging industry that collect TDT, (hotels/motels, condominiums, short- term vacation rentals), as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other tourism related business activities. In addition to being compliant with F.S. 125.0104 the following criteria have been established to be considered for funding:

- A. Organizers must be identified as a qualified applicant by County staff prior to the opening of the grant application window.

- B. Event must take place between October 1 and September 30 of the upcoming fiscal year.
- C. Hotels secured for the event must be located in Leon County, Florida.
- D. Political events are not eligible for Tourism grant funding.
- E. Grant applications must conform with Florida Senate Bill 1134 and section 287.139 of the Florida Statutes, and attest that grant award would not be used to fund diversity, equity, or inclusion (“DEI”) programming, promotion, materials or training.
 - a. DEI includes any effort to influence or manipulate the composition of employees, promote or provide preferential treatment or special benefits, or promote or adopt any activity, training, or programming designed or implemented with reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
 - b. Applicant will certify, prior to award, that applicant does not and will not use TDT fund to require any covered person to ascribe to, study, or be instructed using DEI materials.
 - c. Applicant shall impose equivalent restrictions on vendors paid with grant funds.
 - d. Applicant shall retain training agendas, curricula, invoices, and attendance logs for activities funded under this agreement for inspection.

V. STATEMENT OF POLICIES

- A. Organizers must be identified as a qualified applicant by County staff prior to the opening of the grant application window.
- B. Applicant must provide a two-year funding plan for the event, including requested amount for each year, detail new event elements (if any), and event goals for room nights, out-of-county tourists, and total attendance. Proposed increases in annual funding requests must document and demonstrate increased event duration and/or significant new or additional program elements that would reasonably be expected to attract an additional audience to the event.
- C. Non-government organizations must be registered with the Department of State, Division of Corporations, through their Sunbiz.org platform, or be able to provide proof of an exemption under law from such registration prior to submitting their application. Additionally, each applicant shall use their organization’s legal name, exactly as registered in Sunbiz.org, in their application.

- a. The name, title, email, and phone number of one of the organization's officers, listed in the Officer/Director Detail section of the organization's current annual report, is responsible for signing the grant agreement for an awarded grant.
- D. Grant applications will only be received during the advertised cycle. No applicant may be considered for or receive more than one Emerging Signature or Signature Event Grant per fiscal year, with the exception of a once-a-year event that may coincidentally occur within the same fiscal year due to scheduling. An example would be an early October event that is scheduled for late September the following fall, both occurring the same fiscal year. If Tourism staff deems the application does not meet the minimum criteria for Emerging Signature or Signature Event Grant consideration, the application will be transferred to either the Special Event or Sports Event Grant Program for consideration.
- E. Applicant must provide a detailed event budget. Grant funds are intended to supplement, not fully fund, the organization's budget for the event referenced in the application. Applicants' budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar cash match (donated in-kind services will not be allowed) to the requested grant amount. Applicants will be required to identify the amount of matching funds in the event budget submitted and the amount must be verified and sourced in the Post-Event Report.
- F. Emerging Signature and Signature Events must meet community standards and align with the County's Tourism marketing objectives and positioning.
- G. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. Proof of payment must be provided. Proof of payment may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and a front and back copy of cleared check, bank statement, or credit card receipt or statement. Cash receipts can be accepted for reimbursements; using a check or credit card is preferred. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided.
- H. If an event needs to be rescheduled, the new dates must be between October 1 and September 30 of the current fiscal year and follow the grant guidelines to be eligible for reimbursement. The new date must be provided to Visit Tallahassee to verify continued eligibility for the grant award.
- I. Leon County Tourism staff will direct the County's marketing research firm of record to conduct an economic impact study of an event receiving Emerging Signature or Signature Event Grant funding. Event organizers must allow for face-to-face interviews with spectators and participants in order to be eligible for Emerging Signature or Signature Event Grant Funding.

- J. Each year’s performance will be evaluated against the established criteria and historic precedent.
- K. Grant Funding shall not be utilized to support administrative costs. Grantee shall be responsible for all expenses associated with the performance and delivery of Services by this Agreement.
- L. Private events are not eligible for grant funding. Allowable Funding uses (described in further detail on page 13) include marketing and promotional efforts, venue/site rentals and costs associated with visiting artists and/or exhibits.
- M. Applicants are required to submit a marketing plan that includes a well-defined plan for marketing the event for public attendance. In addition, events that target the general public for participation and attendance must include a plan to use 20% of awarded grant funding on paid out-of-market advertising
- N. Grant funding will not be considered for events that occurs during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session.
- O. Sports, Special, and Emerging Signature/Signature Events grants may be permitted during some FSU home football game weekends except for those games anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory. Each year the Director of Tourism will provide the recommended “peak period” dates to the TDC for consideration/ approval prior to the start of each grant cycle application period.

Events will not be considered for funding if the event occurs during the following peak visitor periods defined for County Fiscal Year 2026-2027:

October 2-3, 2026	FSU Football vs. Virginia
October 23-24, 2026	FAMU Football (FAMU Homecoming)
October 30-31, 2026	FSU Football vs. Clemson
November 20-21, 2026	FSU Football vs. NC State (FSU Homecoming)
December 11, 2026	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
March 7 – May 6, 2027	Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)
April 30 – May 1, 2027	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
September, 2027	FSU Football Weekends, Dates TBD in February, 2027

- P. Applicant’s budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar match (in-kind services will not be allowed). Applicants should identify the amount of matching funds in the event budget submitted and the amount must be verified and sourced in the Post-Event Report. The grant award may be reduced for the next cycle proportionately to the shortfall of funds raised if the 25% matching funds were not received. Failure to

meet the 25% match requirement will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.

- Q. To be eligible for payment, a completed Post-Event Report must be submitted for the reimbursement of the approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. Proof of expenditures must be scans, copies, or pictures of the original receipts and invoices provided by a service provider/vendor. Proof of payment must be provided and may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and front and back copy of cleared check, credit card receipt, bank or credit card statement, ACH transfer or digital wallet receipts. Cash receipts are allowed for reimbursement however, a check or credit card is preferred. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided.

The report must include a recap of the event and how the event promoters measured the success/failure of the event. Payment of grant funds is contingent upon a completed Post-Event Report. Requests for reimbursement and completed post-event reports must be received by September 30 of the current fiscal year.

Board-Affiliated Vendor Restrictions

Grant funds derived from Tourist Development Tax revenues shall not be used to compensate any vendor in which a member of the recipient's governing board holds a material interest, except when:

- i. The goods or services were obtained through a competitive solicitation as defined in F.S. 287.012(6), and the board member disclosed the conflict consistent with F.S. 112.313(3) and abstained from related decisions; or
 - ii. The vendor is a documented sole source per F.S. 287.057(3)(c) – available only from a single source due to the inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, or unique capability.
 - iii. All exceptions require written documentation submitted with grant reporting. This section applies to all TDT-funded grant programs administered by or on behalf of Leon County.
- R. If an event must be cancelled for any reason other than Force Majeure as described in Section V. Statement of Policies, Paragraph Y of this agreement, event organizers are required to make that determination at least 60 days prior to the event's originally scheduled date. Leon County Tourism will only reimburse for allowable expenses incurred before 60 days prior to the original event date. Any expenses incurred after that date will not be reimbursed.

- S. It is the intent of the TDC to discourage the support of two competing Emerging Signature or Signature Events. This includes events that take place during the same week/weekend or similarly-themed concerts or festivals.
- T. Government entities, including public schools, colleges, and universities, must provide the name, title, email, and phone number of the person who is authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the organization in the application.

Additionally, documentation from the organization showing the person has designated signing authority is required. This documentation could come in various forms, including through adopted policies or a specific written delegation.

- U. Non-Governmental entities must agree that they do not use coercion for labor or services as defined in 787.06 (14), Florida Statutes 2025, and under penalty of perjury, will attest to such statement through the execution and submittal of a notarized affidavit prior to signing the grant agreement. Failure to provide the notarized affidavit will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.
- V. Any funds granted will be subject to audit by Leon County, Florida or their designee.
- W. Indemnification: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant the applicant/grantee shall indemnify Leon County, Florida, a charter county and political subdivision of the State of Florida (the "County") to the extent provided in their grant agreement which will contain language substantially similar to the following:

- i. Except as otherwise provided herein below, the Grantee shall indemnify, save and hold the County, its officials, officers and employees harmless from any and all actions, obligations, claims, damages, expenses, costs of any kind, including a reasonable attorney's fees, debts, negligence, and liabilities arising from, or in any way related to, acts or omissions of the Grantee, its employees, volunteers, subcontractors, employees of subcontractors, or clientele, in the performance of, or failure to perform under, this event which the Grant was approved. Should the County, as a result of the performance or lack thereof by or on behalf of the Grantee, be required to reimburse any sums to any organization, or reimburse funds to any Federal, State or local governmental entity, contribute funds to the performance of this event for which the Grant was approved, or expend County funds to complete or correct such performance, the Grantee, upon demand by the County, shall refund and reimburse the County for all sums so reimbursed or expended by the County. The County may, at its sole option, defend itself or require the Grantee to provide the defense. The Grantee acknowledges that ten dollars (\$10.00) of the amount which will be paid to the Grantee is sufficient consideration of the Grantee's indemnification of the County.

- ii. If the applicant is a governmental entity or other such organization to which the protection of sovereign immunity is applicable, the indemnification requirements set forth in subparagraph (a) above shall apply to such applicant only to the extent as allowed in Section 768.28. Florida Statutes and nothing herein shall be deemed to be a waiver of such applicant's sovereign immunity beyond those statutory limits provided therein.
- X. If the event for which the Grant was approved is to take place on property owned by the County and/or is sponsored by the County, the applicant shall, in addition to these indemnification requirements, be required to provide to the County a certificate of insurance showing that the applicant has procured insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property which may arise from, or in connection with, the performance by the application, its employees, volunteers, subcontractors, employees of subcontractors, or clientele, of this event for which the Grant was approved, in the minimum coverage and amounts as follows, and that the County has been named as an additional insured:
- i. Commercial General Liability: \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage with a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate; and
 - ii. If applicable, workers' compensation insurance covering all employees meeting statutory limits in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.
- To qualify for reimbursement, proof of liability/medical insurance must be provided by the host organization in the amount of \$1 million. The host organization must have proof of liability insurance in effect and the County listed as additional insured.
- Y. Force Majeure: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant that a Party shall be excused from performance of an obligation under the Grant Agreement to the extent, and only to the extent, that such performance is affected by a "Force Majeure Event" which term shall mean any cause beyond the reasonable control of the Party affected, except where such Party could have reasonably foreseen and reasonably avoided the occurrence, which materially and adversely affects the performance by such Party of its obligation under the Grant Agreement. Such events shall include, but not be limited to, an act of God, disturbance, hostility, war, or revolution; strike or lockout; epidemic; pandemic; fire; hurricane; flood; or other unusually severe weather or natural disaster; or any requirements of law.
- Z. The combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Logo must be included on all printed and online advertisements and promotional materials for the event.

Promotional materials include: banners, signs, t-shirts, programs, brochures, event website, social media posts, etc. Online material developed for the event must include a link to the VisitTallahassee.com website. Before these materials are produced, a draft or design proof **MUST BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED** by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee to assure that the combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Logo appears properly.

AA. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee is dedicated to supporting worthwhile local events through our grant programs and other promotional opportunities but reserves the right to reduce or eliminate grant funding for organizations that do not receive prior approval for the correct logo use. The correct logos are shown below and can be located and accessed at <https://visittallahassee.com/visit-tallahassee-logos/>:



BB. Allowable expenses include:

- 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, and parking attendants.
- Rights fees, sanction fees, non-monetary awards, and travel expenses for guest speakers, performers, judges, event officials, or referees including lodging.

Note: The applicants are required to describe how the grant funds will be used. Any substantial changes to the items submitted in the application MUST be submitted in writing and approved by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee office PRIOR to the purchase and the event. Purchases made without PRIOR written approval from staff will not be allowed.

CC. Unallowable expenses include:

- General and administrative expenses.
- Building, renovating and/or remodeling expenses.
- Permanent equipment purchases.
- Debts incurred prior to the fiscal year of the grant period/in which the approved event takes place.
- DEI programming, promotion, materials and training.
- Hospitality or social functions, food, or beverage.
- Paid advertising that primarily reaches and targets Tallahassee/Leon County and its residents.
- Lodging or travel expenses for attendees.
- In-kind services.
- Monetary awards.
- Raffle prizes.

- Expenses paid to board-affiliated vendors that do not follow the conditions as stated in Section V. Statement of Policies, Paragraph Q.
- Political events and activities.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR GRANT REQUEST FUNDING LEVELS

The following table reflects guidelines for the funding level possible based on the event’s estimated number of hotel room nights. **The estimated number of hotel rooms does not guarantee the level of funding at which an event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on Tourism staff’s discretion and the funding available.**

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Emerging Signature Event Funding Levels
1,250 – 1,499	\$20,000 - \$34,999

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Signature Event Funding Levels
1,500 – 1,999	\$35,000 - \$39,999
2,000 – 2,999	\$40,000 - \$45,999
3,000 – 3,999	\$46,000 - \$52,999
4,000 – 5,000	\$53,000 - \$59,999

Organizations are eligible for funding above \$60,000, however once recommended by the TDC it would require approval by the Leon County Board of County Commissioners.

VII. EMERGING SIGNATURE AND SIGNATURE EVENT ANNUAL GRANT TIMELINE

June 25, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Opens
July/August, 2026	Mandatory Grant Application Workshops
August 6, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Closes
September 10, 2026	TDC consideration of Grant Funding Recommendations
September 11, 2026	Grantees notified of Grant Awards

Applicants are required to attend the Grant Application Orientation Workshop either in person or online or they will not be eligible for a grant award.

VIII. VISITOR/TOURIST TRACKING

- A. To assess the impact of each event on the Tallahassee/Leon County transient lodging industry, the TDC emphasizes the importance of tracking the number of overnight tourists attending the event.
 - a. Room block reports from hotels are the preferred method of reporting room data. The information will be used to help track the number of tourists attending the event. Furthermore, this information helps determine the growth of a particular event. Subsequently, an event's growth can impact the future funding level of the grant awarded to the organization.
 - b. If your event uses an advanced registration procedure, utilize the **Visitor/Tourist Tracking Form** located on the Visit Tallahassee Grants website to gather the requested information. Each participant/group should sign his or her name, list the hotel in which they are residing, the number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room.
 - c. Include questions in the event registration form asking if participant will stay overnight in a Leon County lodging, along with number of rooms and nights booked.
 - d. Conduct a brief survey at check-in, or on-site to confirm if participant is staying in Leon County lodging, including the number of rooms and nights booked.
- B. The County reserves the right to conduct a post-audit of information presented on the **Post-Event Report**. All lodging accommodations listed will be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the event. **ANY MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION PRESENTED CAN AND WILL ADVERSLEY AFFECT FUTURE GRANT AWARDS.**

IX. POST-EVENT REPORT

Funding shall only be provided as reimbursement for approved expenditures upon completion of the event. Reimbursement will not be issued until all necessary post-event information is provided. Such Information is the responsibility of the grantee to provide and includes:

- A. An invoice from the awarded organization to the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee for payment of the awarded grant amount. This invoice must be dated and include an invoice number.
- B. Valid invoices for allowable expenses.

- a. Events marketed to public attendance and participants must include invoices for paid out-of-market advertising (equaling at least 20% of the grant funding).
- b. If an expense is from a board-affiliated vendor, it must be indicated on the invoice. Proof that a competitive procurement process was used following the conditions stated in Section V. Statement of Policies, Paragraph Q must be included with the invoice.
 - i. If the board-affiliated vendor is a “sole source” vendor, proof that the expense is from a practical source of supply because of an inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, copyright, or a supplier’s unique capability must be included with the invoice.
- C. Copy of proof of payments such as cleared checks, or detailed credit card receipts. For all out-of-market media buys equaling 20% of the grant funding, provide tear sheets, copies of advertisements, schedules, and signed station affidavits. Proof of payment must match invoices submitted.
- D. The names of contracted hotels used for participants and spectators.
- E. Room pick-ups (number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room) from each contracted hotel.
- F. A written report on how the event measured its success or failure; what were the event goals and what was accomplished.
- G. Leon County reserves the right to conduct a post-audit of information presented on the accommodations listed. All properties listed will be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the event. **Any misleading or false information presented can and will adversely affect future grant awards.**
- H. A post event budget showing revenues and expenses.
- I. Copies of marketing or advertising materials, and social media showing Leon County Tourism/Visit Tallahassee logo usage.
- J. Upon receipt and approval of the post event report, Leon County Division of Tourism / Visit Tallahassee will process the reimbursement request for the verified expenses.

X. CONCLUSION

The event director, fiscal administrator or other contact person may be called upon by any one of these groups or their staff at any time during the review process.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

Grant Agreements: Julie Trezek | 850-815-0989 | Julie.Trezek@VisitTallahassee.com
Visitor Services: Vivian (Wei-An) Chen | 850-606-2305 | Wei-An.Chen@VisitTallahassee.com
Marketing: Genesis Leggett | 850-606-2324 | Genesis.Leggett@VisitTallahassee.com
Hotels/Event Spaces: Janet Roach | 850-606-2320 | Janet.Roach@VisitTallahassee.com

DRAFT

Leon County Division of Tourism



Visit
Tallahassee
Pretty. Unexpected.

Style Definition: TOC 1: Tab stops: 0.38", Left + 6.49", Right, Leader: ...

EMERGING SIGNATURE and SIGNATURE EVENTS

FY24

FY27 GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



REVISED ~~MAY 4, 2023~~ May 7, 2026

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**Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee
Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grant Programs**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Leon ~~Country~~County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Leon County Ordinance #88-01. The TDC administers funds collected from a local option ~~Tourist Development Tax~~tourist development tax (TDT) on transient lodging sales. i.e. hotels/motels, and condominiums. The funds are designated to promote Tallahassee/Leon County as a preferred ~~visitor~~tourist destination for meetings and conventions, group leisure travel, special events, cultural activities and amateur sporting events.

Grant funding is based upon the potential to generate room nights. Per section 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes, to be an authorized use of Tourist Development Tax revenue an event “shall have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue or event to tourists.” By Statute, a tourist is a “person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside of the county of his or her permanent residence, or who rents or leases transient accommodations” including “any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, ~~motel~~, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment ~~hotel, rooming house~~motel, roominghouse, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort for a term of 6 months or less.” By Statute, “Promotion” ~~means-is defined as~~ “marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities—”.

The Leon County Division of Tourism annually ~~allocates~~administers and budgets funds ~~to four separate~~for grant programs for ~~local~~ groups and organizations that coordinate local events with a demonstrated history of or significant potential to draw ~~visitors~~tourists to the area.

The ~~Special Events Grants and Signature~~Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grants are ~~reviewed by the TDC Grant for events that have taken place in the community for a minimum of three years that have a broad appeal and have demonstrated an increase in visitation over that period.~~

Collectively, the Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grants have an award ceiling of \$59,999 in annual support for each event. Proposed increases in annual funding requests must document and demonstrate increased event duration and/or significant new or additional program elements that would reasonably be expected to attract an additional audience to the event.

Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grants will only be issued and administered through two-year funding agreements. Each Emerging Signature or Signature Event funding agreement will be based upon a two-year funding plan, submitted as part of the application process, and implemented with mutually agreed upon goals and deliverables for each year,

and it will be reviewed annually. The funding agreement will have financial consequences for not obtaining event goals and deliverables and will allow for variances as a result of acts of God (i.e. weather). Once all documentation has been reviewed by staff and approved by the Tourist Development Council, a two-year funding agreement will be executed.

The Leon County Division of Tourism grants programs are funded by the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) ~~Grant~~ to support hosting events that have tourist appeal. Some grant programs administered by the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) are also funded by TDT revenue and are designed to support year-round arts and culture programming.

Applicants found to have submitted applications to both the 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. Applicants receiving grant funds from the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) may not receive grant funding for the same event through the TDC. Further, no applicant may apply to TDC and COCA for funding related to the same event or activity. Applicants may make requests for grant funds to the TDC and COCA, but these must be for a different event or activity.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. **Emerging Signature Event:** An event that ~~offers programming for the public~~ meets the criteria for a Signature Event and is historically and currently on the cusp of generating between 1,250 and 1,499 hotel room nights, but is not yet able to generate the same economic impact as a Signature Event. The event must have been taking place in the community for a minimum of three years with a demonstrated increase in visitation over that period.

B. **Signature Event:** An annual event that takes place over one or more days ~~while demonstrating and can demonstrate the potential~~ ability to generate a minimum of 1,500 hotel room nights; Multiple day events, because of their broader economic impact to all aspects of within Leon County. The event is a well-established, larger event that has broad visitor appeal encouraging overnight stays from outside the local market.

C. **Board-affiliated vendor:** A board-affiliated vendor is defined as a vendor owned by, employing, or controlled by a member of the applicant's governing board or board of trustees.

D. **Out-of-market:** Outside of a 30-mile radius from Leon County. This term is used to help describe the parameters of some of the marketing and promotion required by grantees pursuant to these guidelines.

III. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The documents listed below are required as part of the Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grant application process:

1. Emerging Signature/Signature grant application form (link to online portal will be sent potential grantees)
2. A two-year funding plan (Attachment A)
3. Affidavit in Compliance with Anti-Human Trafficking Laws (Attachment B)
4. Marketing Plan
5. Event Budget

The following documents are due annually by October 1 of the upcoming fiscal for all Emerging Signature and Signature Grantees. These documents are to reflect the information for the event scheduled for the upcoming fiscal year:

1. Emerging Signature / Signature Grant Application Form
2. Marketing Plan
3. Event Budget

The following documentation is required annually within 60 days of the event date but no later than September 30 of the fiscal year:

1. Post-Event Report that includes all information outlined in Section VIII. Post Event Report in these guidelines.

IV. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The intent of the Emerging Signature and Signature Event Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract overnight tourists to Tallahassee/Leon County and create business for the commercial lodging industry that collect TDT, (hotels/motels, condominiums, short-term vacation rentals), as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other tourism related business activities. In addition to being compliant with F.S. 125.0104 the following criteria have been established to be considered for funding:

- A. Organizers must be identified as a qualified applicant by County staff prior to the opening of the grant application window.
- B. Event must take place between October 1 and September 30 of the upcoming fiscal year.
- C. Hotels secured for the event must be located in Leon County, Florida.
- D. Political events are not eligible for Tourism grant funding.

- E. Grant applications must conform with Florida Senate Bill 1134 and section 287.139 of the Florida Statutes, and attest that grant award would not be used to funding diversity, equity, or inclusion (“DEI”) programming, promotion, materials or training.
 - a. DEI includes any effort to influence or manipulate the composition of employees, promote or provide preferential treatment or special benefits, or promote or adopt any activity, training, or programming designed or implemented with reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
 - b. Applicant will certify, prior to award, that applicant does not and will not use TDT fund to require any covered person to ascribe to, study, or be instructed using DEI materials.
 - c. Applicant shall impose equivalent restrictions on vendors paid with grant funds.
- A. Applicant shall retain training agendas, curricula, invoices, and attendance logs for activities funded under this agreement for inspection.

V. STATEMENT OF POLICIES

- A. Organizers must be identified as a qualified applicant by County staff prior to the opening of the grant application window.
- B. Applicant must provide a two-year funding plan for the event, including requested amount for each year, detail new event elements (if any), and event goals for room nights, out-of-county tourists, and total attendance. Proposed increases in annual funding requests must document and demonstrate increased event duration and/or significant new or additional program elements that would reasonably be expected to attract an additional audience to the event.
- C. Non-government organizations must be registered with the Department of State, Division of Corporations, through their Sunbiz.org platform, or be able to provide proof of an exemption under law from such registration prior to submitting their application. Additionally, each applicant shall use their organization’s legal name, exactly as registered in Sunbiz.org, in their application.
 - a. The name, title, email, and phone number of one of the organization’s officers, listed in the Officer/Director Detail section of the organization’s current annual report, is responsible for signing the grant agreement for an awarded grant.
- D. Grant applications will only be received during the advertised cycle. No applicant may be considered for or receive more than one Emerging Signature or Signature Event Grant per fiscal year, with the exception of a once-a-year event that may coincidentally occur

within the same fiscal year due to scheduling. An example would be an early October event that is scheduled for late September the following fall, both occurring the same fiscal year. If Tourism staff deems the application does not meet the minimum criteria for Emerging Signature or Signature Event Grant consideration, the application will be transferred to either the Special Event or Sports Event Grant Program for consideration.

E. Applicant must provide a detailed event budget. ~~economy~~. Grant funds are intended to supplement, not fully fund, the organization's budget for the event referenced in the application. Applicants' budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar cash match (donated in-kind services will not be allowed) to the requested grant amount. Applicants will be required to identify the amount of matching funds in the event budget submitted and the amount must be verified and sourced in the Post-Event Report.

Commented [JT1]: This is consistent with Legacy (question from second email pic)

F. Emerging Signature and Signature Events must meet community standards and align with the County's Tourism marketing objectives and positioning.

G. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. Proof of payment must be provided. Proof of payment may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and a front and back copy of cleared check, bank statement, or credit card receipt or statement. Cash receipts can be accepted for reimbursements; using a check or credit card is preferred. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided.

H. If an event needs to be rescheduled, the new dates must be between October 1 and September 30 of the current fiscal year and follow the grant guidelines to be eligible for reimbursement. The new date must be provided to Visit Tallahassee to verify continued eligibility for the grant award.

I. Leon County Tourism staff will direct the County's marketing research firm of record to conduct an economic impact study of an event receiving Emerging Signature or Signature Event Grant funding. Event organizers must allow for face-to-face interviews with spectators and participants in order to be eligible for Emerging Signature or Signature Event Grant Funding.

J. Each year's performance will be evaluated against the established criteria and historic precedent.

K. Grant Funding shall not be utilized to support administrative costs. Grantee shall be responsible for all expenses associated with the performance and delivery of Services by this Agreement.

L. Private events are not eligible for grant funding. Allowable Funding uses (described in further detail on page 7) include marketing and promotional efforts, venue/site rentals and costs associated with visiting artists and/or exhibits.

M. Applicants are required to submit a marketing plan that includes a well-defined plan for marketing the event for public attendance. In addition, events that target the general public for participation and attendance must include a plan to use 20% of awarded grant funding on paid out-of-market advertising

N. Grant funding will not be considered for events that occurs during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session.

~~A. Grant funding will not be considered for events that occurs during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session. Sports and Special Events grants may be permitted during some FSU home football game weekends except for those games anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory. Each year the Director of Tourism will provide the recommended "peak period" dates to the TDC for consideration/approval prior to the start of each grant cycle application period. (See page 6 for FY24 specific dates).~~

~~A. An event that significantly distinguishes and elevates the appeal of Tallahassee/Leon County and has the potential to generate state, national and international media exposure.~~

~~B. An event that has broad visitor and public appeal for motivating travel.~~

~~An event that has an established organizational structure to fully plan, market and produce the event.~~

~~F. An annual event—Sports, Special, and Emerging Signature/Signature~~

~~Emerging Signature Event:~~

~~A. When an existing event meets the definition of a Signature Event, yet only estimates generating between 1,250—1,499 hotel room nights, and historically generates near that amount, the event may apply to be considered for designation as an Emerging Signature Event that may be eligible for increased funding and marketing support from the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee.~~

~~B. An Emerging Signature Event is an existing event with a record of growing attendance and room nights whose organization is interested, willing and able to grow their event to generate at least 1,500 room nights.~~

~~C. Organizations must work with Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff to identify event enhancements and marketing opportunities to transition from Special or Sports Event status to Emerging Signature event grant status and funding levels.~~

~~D. Organizations must be able to identify and document in their grant application what new features or aspects will be added to help grow the event, i.e. add another day of activities.~~

~~E. Organizations must also agree and allow Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee's Research firm of record to conduct an economic impact study of the event to substantiate/verify the event generated at or around 1,250 hotel room nights. If the initial study indicates the room nights generated did not reach the 1,250 target for hotel room nights, the organization will move back into the Special Event grant program for one year before they may reapply for the Emerging Signature Event status again.~~

~~A.O. Grant funding will not be considered for events that occurs during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session. Sports and Special Events grants may be permitted during some FSU home football game weekends except for those games anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory. Each year the Director of Tourism will provide the recommended "peak period" dates to the TDC for consideration/ approval prior to the start of each grant cycle application period. (See page 6 for FY24 specific dates).~~

~~STATEMENT OF POLICIES~~

~~C. Grant applications will only be received during the advertised cycle. No applicant may be considered for or receive more than one Signature/Emerging Signature Event Grant per fiscal year, with the exception of a once a year event that may coincidentally occur within the same fiscal year due to scheduling. An example would be an early October event that is scheduled for late September the following fall, both occurring the same fiscal year.~~

~~D. Grant funds are intended to supplement the organization's budget for the event referenced in the application. Signature/Emerging Signature events must meet community standards and align with the County's Tourism marketing objectives and positioning.~~

~~E. Signature/Emerging Signature events should not receive support from County general revenue through the BOCC or the Council on Culture and Arts (COCA) with the exception of in-kind support. No other funds from the BOCC can be used for the match requirement.~~

~~Each application will be evaluated against established criteria, past performance and historic precedent.~~

~~1. Applicant must provide a statement of sustainability and growth for the event (i.e. How do you define success for the event and what is your long term plan to sustain and grow the event over the next five years?).~~

~~2. Applicant must provide an event public health and safety plan. The plan should include strategies to maintain healthy and safe environments and operations for all event staff and attendees.~~

~~Application must provide a statement of need for grant funding.~~

~~3. Hotels secured for the event must be located within Leon County.~~

~~4. In 2024, Tallahassee/Leon County will commemorate and celebrate its 200 year anniversary. Applicants are encouraged to include Bicentennial anniversary into their event, either through inclusion of the Bicentennial logo/URL or including Bicentennial programming.~~

~~E. For new events that demonstrate the potential to generate the minimum 1,500 hotel room nights, the TDC has the option to fund the event through a Signature Event grant in its initial three (3) years.~~

~~F. Funding does not support administrative costs or private events. Funding supports marketing and promotional efforts, venue/site rentals and costs associated with visiting artists and/or exhibits (see allowable/unallowable expenses on page 8).~~

~~Applicants receiving grant funds from the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) may not receive grant funding for the same event through the TDC.~~

~~G. Applicants may make requests to the TDC and COCA, but these must be for a completely different event or activity~~

Events will not be considered for funding if the event occurs during the following peak visitor periods: defined for County Fiscal Year 2026-2027:

October 6-7, 2023	FSU Football Game (Parents Weekend)
October 27-28, 2023	FAMU Football Game (Homecoming)
November 10-11, 2023	FSU and FAMU Football Game
December 15, 2023	FSU/FAMU/TCC Graduation
January 9 – March 11, 2024	Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)
May 3-4, 2024	FSU/FAMU/TCC Graduation

<u>October 2-3, 2026</u>	<u>FSU Football vs. Virginia</u>
<u>October 23-24, 2026</u>	<u>FAMU Football (FAMU Homecoming)</u>
<u>October 30-31, 2026</u>	<u>FSU Football vs. Clemson</u>
<u>November 20-21, 2026</u>	<u>FSU Football vs. NC State (FSU Homecoming)</u>
<u>December 11, 2026</u>	<u>FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation</u>
<u>March 7 – May 6, 2027</u>	<u>Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)</u>
<u>April 30 – May 1, 2027</u>	<u>FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation</u>
<u>September, 2027</u>	<u>FSU Football Weekends, Dates TBD in February, 2027</u>

~~B.P.~~ Applicant's budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar match (in-kind services will not be allowed). Applicants should identify the amount of matching funds in the event budget submitted and the amount must be verified and sourced in the Post-Event Report. The grant award ~~amount~~ may be reduced for the next cycle proportionately to the shortfall of funds raised if the 25% matching funds were not received. Failure to meet the 25% match requirement will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.

Funding shall

~~C.Q.~~ To be provided as eligible for payment, a completed Post-Event Report must be submitted for the reimbursement for of the approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. Proof of expenditures must be scans, copies, or pictures of the original receipts and invoices provided by a service provider/vendor. Proof of payment must be provided. Proof of payment and may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and front and back copy of cleared check, credit card receipt, bank or credit card statement, ACH transfer or digital wallet receipts. Cash receipts are allowed for reimbursement however, a check or credit card is preferred. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided.

The report must include a recap of the event and how the event promoters measured the success/failure of the event. Payment of grant funds is contingent upon a completed Post-Event Report. Requests for reimbursement and completed post-event reports must be received by September 30 of the current fiscal year.

Board-Affiliated Vendor Restrictions

b. Grant funds derived from Tourist Development Tax revenues shall not be used to compensate any vendor in which a member of the recipient's governing board holds a material interest, except when:

- i. The goods or services were obtained through a competitive solicitation as defined in F.S. 287.012(6), and the board member disclosed the conflict consistent with F.S. 112.313(3) and abstained from related decisions; or
- ii. The vendor is a documented sole source per F.S. 287.057(3)(c) – available only from a single source due to the inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, or unique capability.
- iii. All exceptions require written documentation submitted with grant reporting. This section applies to all TDT-funded grant programs administered by or on behalf of Leon County.

~~D.R.~~ If an event must be cancelled for any reason other than Force Majeure as described in Section IV. Statement of Policies, Paragraph 27 of this agreement, event organizers are required to make that determination at least 60 days prior to the event's originally scheduled date. Leon County Tourism will only reimburse for allowable expenses incurred before 60 days prior to the original event date. Any expenses incurred after that date will not be reimbursed.

~~H. If an event needs to be rescheduled, the new dates must be between October 1 and September 30 of the current fiscal year to be eligible for reimbursement.~~

~~I. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff will direct the County's marketing research firm of record to conduct an economic impact study of an event receiving Signature/Emerging Signature Event grant funding. Event organizers must allow for face-to-face interviews with spectators and participants in order to be eligible.~~

~~E.S.~~ It is the intent of the TDC to discourage the support of two competing Signature/Emerging Signature events or Signature Events. This includes events that take place during the same week/weekend or similarly-themed concerts or festivals.

~~J. To be eligible for payment, a completed Post-Event Report must be submitted. The Report should be submitted within 60 days after the event has taken place. The Report must include tracking statistics regarding out of town visitors and their use of transient lodging facilities and occupancy. Failure to submit a complete PostEvent Report in a timely manner may result in disqualification for support. All PostEvent Reports, including requests for reimbursement must be received no later than September 30.~~

T. Government entities, including public schools, colleges, and universities, must provide the name, title, email, and phone number of the person who is authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the organization in the application.

Additionally, documentation from the organization showing the person has designated signing authority is required. This documentation could come in various forms, including through adopted policies or a specific written delegation.

U. Non-Governmental entities must agree that they do not use coercion for labor or services as defined in 787.06 (14), Florida Statutes 2025, and under penalty of perjury, will attest to such statement through the execution and submittal of a notarized affidavit prior to signing the grant agreement. Failure to provide the notarized affidavit will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.

F.V. Any funds granted will be subject to audit by the Leon County Auditor, Florida or their designee.

G.W. Indemnification: By submitting this Grant application the Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of the Grant the applicant/grantee shall indemnify Leon County, Florida, a charter county and political subdivision of the State of Florida (the "County") to the extent provided as follows: in their grant agreement which will contain language substantially similar to the following:

The applicant agrees to

- Except as otherwise provided herein below, the Grantee shall indemnify, defend, save and hold harmless the County, its officials, officers, and employees and agents, harmless from and against any and all actions, obligations, claims, damages, expenses, costs of any kind, including a reasonable attorney's fees, debts, negligence, and liabilities, losses, costs, or suits, of any nature whatsoever arising out of, because of, from, or due to in any way related to, acts or omissions of the Grantee, its delegates, employees, volunteers, subcontractors, volunteers and agents, arising out of or under this Agreement, including a reasonable attorney's fees, employees of subcontractors, or clientele, in the performance of, or failure to perform under, this event which the Grant was approved. Should the County, as a result of the performance or lack thereof by or on behalf of the Grantee, be required to reimburse any sums to any organization, or reimburse funds to any Federal, State or local governmental entity, contribute funds to the performance of this event for which the Grant was approved, or expend County funds to complete or correct such performance, the Grantee, upon demand by the County, shall refund and reimburse the County for all sums so reimbursed or expended by the County. The County may, at its sole option, defend itself or require the Grantee to provide the defense. The Grantee acknowledges that ten dollars (\$10.00) of the amount which will be paid to the Grantee is sufficient consideration of the Grantee's indemnification of the County.

- b. If the applicant is a governmental entity or other such organization to which the protection of sovereign immunity is applicable, the indemnification requirements set forth in subparagraph (4a) above shall apply to such applicant only to the extent as allowed in Section 768.28, Florida Statutes and nothing herein shall be deemed to be a waiver of such applicant's sovereign immunity beyond those statutory limits provided therein.

~~H.X.~~ If the event for which the Grant was approved is to take place on property owned by the County and/or is sponsored by the County, the applicant shall, in addition to these indemnification requirements, be required to provide to the County a certificate of insurance showing that ~~that~~ the applicant has procured insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property which may arise from, or in connection with, the performance by the ~~applicant~~ application, its employees, volunteers, subcontractors, employees of subcontractors, or clientele, of this event for which the Grant was approved, in the minimum coverage and amounts as follows, and that the County has been named as an additional insured:

- i. Commercial ~~general liability insurance coverage with~~ General Liability: \$1,000,000 combined single ~~limits~~ limit per occurrence for the bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage ~~a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate; and of no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and with a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate; and~~
- ii. If applicable, workers' compensation insurance covering all employees meeting statutory limits in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

To qualify for reimbursement, proof of liability/medical insurance must be provided by the host organization in the amount of \$1 million. The host organization must have proof of liability insurance in effect and the County listed as additional insured.

~~Y.~~ Force Majeure: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant that a Party shall be excused from performance of an obligation under the Grant Agreement to the extent, and only to the extent, that such performance is affected by a "Force Majeure Event" which term shall mean any cause beyond the reasonable control of the Party affected, except where such Party could have reasonably foreseen and reasonably avoided the occurrence, which materially and adversely affects the performance by such Party of its obligation under the Grant Agreement. Such events shall include, but not be limited to, an act of God, disturbance, hostility, war, or revolution; strike or lockout; epidemic; pandemic; fire; hurricane; flood; or other unusually severe weather or natural disaster; or any requirements of law.

~~1.Z.~~ The combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Logo must be included on all printed and online advertisements and promotional materials for the event.

~~Events held in 2024 are strongly encouraged to include the Bicentennial logo on all printed and online advertisements and promotional materials to help increase awareness of the Bicentennial anniversary.~~

Promotional materials include: banners, signs, t-shirts, programs, brochures, event website, social media posts, etc. Online material developed for the event must include a link to the VisitTallahassee.com website. Before these materials are produced, a draft or design proof **MUST BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED** by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee to assure that the combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Logo appears properly.

J.AA. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee is dedicated to supporting worthwhile local events through our grant programs and other promotional opportunities but reserves the right to reduce or eliminate grant funding for organizations that do not receive prior approval for the correct logo use. The correct logos are shown below and can be located and access at <https://visittallahassee.com/visit-tallahassee-logos/> :



K.BB. Allowable expenses include:

- 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.

- Site fees/costs (~~contract help, venue rentals, insurance) rights~~.
- Contract help such as performers, judges, and parking attendants.
- Rights fees, sanction fees, non-monetary awards, and travel expenses for guest speakers, performers, judges, event officials, or referees including lodging.

Note: The applicants are required to describe how the grant funds will be used. Any substantial changes to the items submitted in the application MUST be submitted in writing ~~and approved by~~ the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee office ~~and will not be allowed~~ PRIOR to the purchase and the event. Purchases made without PRIOR written approval from staff PRIOR to event will not be allowed.

CC. Unallowable expenses include:

- ~~General and administrative expenses.~~
- ~~Building, renovating and/or remodeling expenses.~~
- ~~Permanent equipment purchases.~~
- ~~Debts incurred prior to the fiscal year of the grant requests, period/in which the approved event takes place.~~
- DEI programming, promotion, materials and training.
- Hospitality or social functions, food, or beverage.
- AdvertisingPaid advertising that primarily reaches ~~only~~ and targets Tallahassee/Leon County and its residents.
- ~~Sleeping room-Lodging or travel~~ expenses for attendees.
- In-kind services.
- Monetary awards.
- Raffle prizes
- Expenses paid to board-affiliated vendors that do not follow the conditions as stated in Section IV. Statement of Policies, Paragraph 18.
- Political events and activities.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR GRANT REQUEST FUNDING LEVELS

III. RATING CRITERIA AND SCORING PROCESS

Each grant application will be reviewed by Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff to ensure that the project is eligible to receive grant funding by comporting with 125.0104 Statutory requirements and that all required materials have been supplied. Failure to supply all the required materials may result in disqualification. Following staff review, the applications will be provided to the TDC's Grant Review Committee for scoring. The committee will score each application on a 100 point scale based on the following:

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The following table reflects guidelines for the funding level possible based on the event’s estimated number of hotel room nights. The estimated number of hotel rooms does not guarantee the level of funding at which an event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on Tourism staff’s discretion and the funding available.

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Emerging Signature Event Funding Levels
1,250 – 1,499	\$20,000 - \$34,999

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Signature/ Emerging Signature Event Funding Levels
1,250 – 1,499	\$10,000 – 14,999
1,500 – 1,999	\$1535,000 – 25- \$39,999
2,000 – 2,999	\$2640,000 – 37- \$45,999
3,000 – 3,999	\$3846,000 – 49- \$52,999
4,000 – 5,000	\$5053,000 – - \$59,999

Organizations are eligible for funding above \$60,000, however once recommended by the TDC it would require approval by the Leon County Board of County Commissioners.

VII. EMERGING SIGNATURE AND SIGNATURE EVENT ANNUAL GRANT TIMELINE

~~The intent of the Signature/Emerging Signature Event Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract overnight visitors to Tallahassee/Leon County and create business for the commercial lodging industry, (hotels/motels, condominiums, short term vacation rentals), as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other tourism related business activities. In addition to being compliant with F.S. 125.0104 the following criteria have been established to be considered for funding:~~

- ~~A. Each application must include a signed Certification and Compliance page.~~
- ~~B. Event must take place between October 1 and September 30 of the upcoming fiscal year.~~
- ~~C. The event must have the potential to bring out-of-town visitors that use commercial lodging establishments in Tallahassee/Leon County.~~

~~Applicant must provide a marketing/promotional plan that demonstrates out-of-market advertising/promotion to reach potential visitors.~~

~~Applicant must provide a detailed event budget.~~

GUIDELINES FOR GRANT REQUEST FUNDING LEVELS

~~The following table reflects the funding level possible based on the event's estimated number of hotel room nights. The estimated number of hotel room does not guarantee the level of funding at which the event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on the Review Committee's discretion and the funding available. As an example, if the Grant Review Committee believes the event has overstated the potential room nights, the Committee has the authority to place the application in a lower funding category.~~

Room Nights <u>June 25, 2026</u>	Recommended Tourism Signature/Emerging Signature Event Funding Levels <u>Grant Application Cycle Opens</u>
1,250—1,499 <u>July/August, 2026</u>	\$10,000—14,999 <u>Mandatory Grant Application Workshops</u>
1,500—1,999 <u>August 6, 2026</u>	\$15,000—25,999 <u>Grant Application Cycle Closes</u>
2,000—2,999 <u>September 10, 2026</u>	\$26,000—37,999 <u>TDC consideration of Grant Funding Recommendations</u>
3,000—3,999 <u>September 11, 2026</u>	\$38,000—49,999 <u>Grantees notified of Grant Awards</u>
4,000—5,000	\$50,000—59,999

~~The following formula will be used to determine the final grant amounts:~~

- ~~A. The average score of the panel will be determined for each application based on the maximum of 100 points as outlined in the grant review scoresheet on page 10.~~
- ~~B. Applications scoring above the minimum threshold of 70% will be considered for funding based on the formula outlined below.~~
- ~~C. The average score for each application will first be converted into a percentage of the 100 maximum points possible. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90, the percentage for Application #1 would be 90%.~~
- ~~D. The grant requested amount will then be multiplied by the percentage to determine the initial award based on the grant review scoresheet. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90% and requested \$50,000, the initial award would be \$45,000.~~
- ~~E. The same process will be followed for each application and the total initial awards will be totaled.~~
- ~~F. If the total amount of grant allocations exceeds the total budgeted for all grants, staff will adjust all the allocations by the same percentage to keep the totals awarded equal to or less than the total available grant funds.~~
- ~~G. Adjustments may be made if necessary, to reach the total amount in the budget.~~
- ~~H. The TDC Grant Review Committee reserves the right to adjust the minimum threshold, if necessary, to ensure funding for the highest scoring applications.~~

V. SIGNATURE/EMERGING SIGNATURE EVENT ANNUAL GRANT TIMELINE

~~June 28 – Grant Application Cycle Opens (30-day cycle)~~

~~July – Mandatory Grant Application Workshops~~

~~July 28 – Grant Application Cycle Closes~~

~~August 29 – Public Meeting of TDC Grant Review Committee~~

~~September 14 – TDC review/approval of grant funding recommendations~~

~~September / October Award letters and Grant Agreements sent to grantees~~

Applicants are required to attend at least one the Grant Application Orientation Workshop either in person or online, or they will not be eligible for a grant award.

~~It is strongly encouraged that applicants be in attendance or send a representative to the Grant Review Committee meeting in case there are questions or clarifications.~~

VIII. VISITOR/TOURIST TRACKING

A. To assess the impact of each event on the Tallahassee/Leon County transient lodging industry, the TDC emphasizes the importance of tracking the number of overnight tourists attending the event.

a. Room block reports from hotels are the preferred method of reporting room data. The information will be used to help track the number of tourists attending the event. Furthermore, this information helps determine the growth of a particular event. Subsequently, an event's growth can impact the future funding level of the grant awarded to the organization.

b. If your event uses an advanced registration procedure, utilize the **Visitor/Tourist Tracking Form** located on the Visit Tallahassee ~~will instruct its marketing research firm of record~~ Grants website to gather the requested information. Each participant/group should sign his or her name, list the hotel in which they are residing, the number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room.

c. Include questions in the event registration form asking if participant will stay overnight in a Leon County lodging, along with number of rooms and nights booked.

d. Conduct a brief survey at check-in, or on-site to confirm if participant is staying in Leon County lodging, including the number of rooms and nights booked.

~~A.B.~~ The County reserves the right to conduct a ~~statistically reliable number~~ post-audit of ~~spectator and participant surveys at information presented on the event~~ Post-Event Report. All lodging accommodations listed will be contacted to ~~develop an economic impact study that shows~~ confirm the number of ~~attendees, out-of-town guests,~~ room nights generated ~~and total economic impact from the event.~~ for the event. ANY MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION PRESENTED CAN AND WILL ADVERSLEY AFFECT FUTURE GRANT AWARDS.

IX. POST-EVENT REPORT

Funding shall only be provided as reimbursement for approved expenditures upon completion of the event. Reimbursement will not be issued until all necessary post-event information is provided. Such Information is the responsibility of the grant organizer/grantee to provide post-event information including: ~~A. and includes:~~

A. An invoice from the awarded organization to the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee for payment of the awarded grant amount. This invoice must be dated and include an invoice number.

B. Valid invoices for allowable expenses.

a. Events marketed to public attendance and participants must include invoices for paid out-of-market advertising (equaling at least 20% of the grant funding).

b. If an expense is from a board-affiliated vendor, it must be indicated on the invoice. Proof that a competitive procurement process was used following the conditions stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph M must be included with the invoice.

i. If the board-affiliated vendor is a "sole source" vendor, proof that the expense is from a practical source of supply because of an inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, copyright, or a supplier's unique capability must be included with the invoice.

C. Copy of proof of payments such as cleared checks, or detailed credit card receipts. For all out-of-market media buys equaling 20% of the grant funding, provide tear sheets, copies of advertisements, schedules, and signed station affidavits. Proof of payment must match invoices submitted.

A.D. The names of contracted hotels used for participants and spectators.

B.E. Room pick-ups (number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room) from each contracted hotel.

C.F. A written report on how the event measured its success or failure; what were the event goals and what was accomplished.

~~D-G.~~ Leon County reserves the right to conduct a post-audit of information presented on the accommodations listed. All properties listed will be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the event. **Any misleading or false information presented can and will adversely affect future grant awards.**

~~E-H.~~ A post event budget showing revenues and expenses.

~~I.~~ Copies of marketing or advertising materials, and social media showing Leon County Tourism/Visit Tallahassee logo usage.

~~F-J.~~ Upon receipt and approval of the post event report, Leon County Division of Tourism/~~L~~ Visit Tallahassee will process the reimbursement request for the verified expenses.

~~IV-X.~~ **CONCLUSION**

~~Applicants are asked not to contact members of the TDC Grant Review Committee.~~ The event director, fiscal administrator or other contact person may be called upon by any one of these groups or their staff at any time during the review process.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

~~Wendy Halleck~~

~~Grant Agreements: Julie Trezek | 850-815-0989 | Julie.Trezek@VisitTallahassee.com~~

~~Visitor Services: Vivian (Wei-An) Chen | 850-606-2305 | [Wendy.Halleck](mailto:Wendy.Halleck@VisitTallahassee.com) | Wei-An.Chen@VisitTallahassee.com~~

~~@VisitTallahassee.com~~

~~@VisitTallahassee.com~~

~~Marketing: Genesis Leggett | 850-606-2324 | Genesis.Leggett@VisitTallahassee.com~~

~~Hotels/Event Spaces: Janet Roach | 850-606-2320 | Janet.Roach@VisitTallahassee.com~~



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 7, 2026

TO: Leon County Tourist Development Council Members (TDC)

THRU: Kerri L. Post, Executive Director, Leon County Division of Tourism

FROM: Jonathan LaBarre, Tourism Operations Director; Julie Trezek, Tourism Grants and Contracts Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed FY 2026-2027 Tourism Event Grant Program Overview

Each year the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee utilizes Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues to offer grant opportunities to organizations that produce local events that attract visitors to the destination and provide programming and activities which enhance the market for both visitors and residents. The County's Tourism grant programs leverage private funding for these events to the benefit of the community by attracting visitors from state, regional, national, and international markets. The brand exposure associated with some of the larger events and festivals that take place each year promotes and positions Tallahassee/Leon County as a vibrant destination.

Investment in the growth, stature, and participation in these events continues to generate a return on investment (ROI) as demonstrated by hotel occupancy rates and visitor spending in the community. As a result, the overnight stays and visitor spending enhances TDT collections and provides additional revenues to support the Tourism grant programs and the overall growth of the market as a visitor destination.

At this meeting, we are seeking consideration of the following:

- Proposed budget allocations for each grant program
- The proposed timeline for the FY26-27 Tourism Event Grant Programs
- Recommendations for the Peak Visitor Periods/Black-out Dates for grant funding
- The proposed revised Grant Guidelines

Each item is presented in more detail below. The Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee continues to engage organizations of all types in the destination, including sports, non-profits, higher education, and more, to sustain and grow the local tourism economy.

Proposed Budget Allocation for Grant Program

For FY 2026-2027, we are proposing a total Grant Funding budget of \$980,000, which is a \$180,000 increase from FY 2026 (\$800,000).

The proposed FY 2027 funding levels recommended for the respective grant programs are as follows:

- Legacy Event Grants for FY 2027 were approved at the July 11, 2024, TDC meeting with incremental funding planned to annually, raising the allocation from \$455,000 to \$480,000, an increase of \$25,000 or 5.5%.
- Signature Events/Emerging Signature Event grants are for large events consistently producing significant ROI. For FY2027, the review of overnight stays for FY2025 and FY2026 Special and Sports events show that three events met the minimum qualifications for Signature/Emerging Signature, and therefore the amount proposed is \$90,000. There were no Emerging Signature or Signature if FY2026, however, the three organizations are qualified and interested to move into this grant program.
- Special Events Grants for FY 2027, the amount proposed is \$220,000. This is an increase of \$15,000, or 7.3%, from FY 2026 (\$205,000). They are for smaller and/or newer events with a demonstrated history, or significant potential to generate overnight stays from visitors outside of Leon County/Tallahassee. In FY 2026 \$205,000 was allocated to 39 applicants in one cycle. There are events generating 450 – 600 room nights that could benefit from additional funding.
- Sports Events Grants for FY 2027, the amount proposed is \$190,000. This is an increase of \$50,000, or 38.5%, from FY 2026 (\$140,000). These are specifically for events categorized as amateur sporting events that either have a history of or show potential to generate overnight stays from visitors outside of Leon County/Tallahassee. In FY 2026 \$146,108 was allocated to 43 applicants in two cycles. The additional \$6,108 was reallocated from FY 2026 Special Event grant award forfeits and applied to the Second Cycle Sports grant awards. The increase in the Sports Events Grant Funding will allow for qualified returning events to be funded at a higher level, as well as seeing new events entering the program.

Program Type	FY2021/22	FY2022/23	FY2023/24	FY2024/25	FY2025/26	FY2026/27
Legacy	\$280,000	\$340,000	\$255,500	\$420,000	\$455,000	\$480,000
Signature/Emerging Signature	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$0	\$0	\$ 90,000
Special	\$60,000	\$120,000	\$184,500	\$220,000	\$205,000	\$220,000
Sports	\$90,000	\$110,000	\$130,000	\$160,000	\$140,000	\$190,000
Total	\$560,000	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$980,000

Proposed Tourism Event Grant Application and Review Process Timeline

The proposed timeline below provides for a 45-day grant application cycle.

June 25, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Opens (45-day cycle)
July/August	Mandatory Grant Application Workshops
August 6, 2026	Application Cycle Closes
August 10, 2026	Grant Reviewer Portal Opens
August 19, 2025	Application Scoring Completed
August 25, 2026	TDC Grant Review Committee (GRC) Public Meeting
Sept 10, 2026	TDC Meeting –Consideration of GRC Award Recommendations

Peak Visitor Periods for FY 2026-2027 Grants

The County Tourism Grant Policy states that “grant funding will not be considered for events that occurs during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session. Sports, Special, Emerging Signature, and Signature Events grants may be permitted during some FSU home football game weekends except for those games anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory.”

After careful review and consideration of the FY26 FSU and FAMU football schedules, staff is recommending the following dates as the black-out dates where events will not be considered for funding if the event occurs during the following peak visitor periods:

October 2-3, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Virginia
October 23-24, 2026	FAMU Football Game (FAMU Homecoming)
October 30-31, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Clemson
November 20-21, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. NC State (Homecoming)
December 11, 2026	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
Mar 7 – May 6, 2027	Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)
April 30 – May 1, 2027	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
September, 2027	FSU Football Weekends, dates TBD in Feb 2027

Overview of Revisions in Grant Guidelines

The Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee Grant Guidelines have been updated for FY 2027. Attached you will find the updated Grant Guidelines for Special Events, Sports Events, and Emerging Signature/Signature for your review.

Specific edits to the Sports Events and Special Events Guidelines include:

- Addition of language to state that political events are not eligible for Tourism grant funding.

- Addition of language requiring the restriction of compensating board-affiliated vendors with TDT funded grant awards.
- Addition of language to state that Grantee agrees that they must comply with Florida Senate Bill 1134 and section 287.139 of Florida Statutes, and attest that the grant award will be used to fund or promote diversity, equity, or inclusion (“DEI”) programming, materials, or training.
 - DEI includes any effort to influence or manipulate the composition of employees, promote or provide preferential treatment or special benefits, or promote or adopt any activity, training, or programming designed or implemented with a reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- Addition of language to state that if an event must be canceled for any reason other than Force Majeure, notice must be provided to the County at least 60 days prior to the event to be eligible for expenses incurred before 60 days prior to the original event date.
- Funding levels increased for 100+ room nights :

Estimated Room Nights	Funding Range
Less than 100	\$0 – 2,999
100 – 199	\$3,000 - \$7,999
200 – 499	\$8,000-\$12,999
500 – 1,000	\$13,000-\$19,999
1,001 – 1,499	\$20,000 - \$29,999



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Tallahassee
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SPECIAL EVENTS

FY27 GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



REVISED May 7, 2026

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**Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee
Special Events Grant Program**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Leon County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Leon County Ordinance #88-01. The TDC administers funds collected from a local option tourist development tax (TDT) on transient lodging sales. i.e. hotels/motels, and condominiums. The funds are designated to promote Tallahassee/Leon County as a preferred tourist destination for meetings and conventions, group leisure travel, special events, cultural activities and amateur sporting events.

Grant funding is based upon the potential to generate room nights. Per section 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes, to be an authorized use of Tourist Development Tax revenue an event “shall have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue or event to tourists.” By Statute, a tourist is a “person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside of the county of his or her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations” including “any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, roominghouse, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort for a term of 6 months or less.” By Statute, “Promotion” is defined as “marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities”.

A “Special Event” is defined as “a new or existing organized concert, exhibition, festival, fair, conference or celebration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and of interest to the general public”. For the purpose of this grant program, the public interest should extend to Tallahassee/Leon County residents and to those living outside Tallahassee/Leon County who would visit the destination and stay overnight to observe or participate.

The Leon County Division of Tourism annually allocates funds to grant programs for groups and organizations that coordinate local events with a demonstrated history of or significant potential to draw tourists to the area. The Special Events Grants, and Signature/Emerging Signature Grants are reviewed by the TDC Grant Review Committee. The TDC shall appoint a Sports Grant Review Committee annually comprised of 3-5 members of the Tallahassee Sports Council to review the Sports Grants applications. The TDC Grant Review Committee is comprised of TDC members. Legacy Event grants are reviewed by the TDC and recommendations for approval are made by the TDC to the Leon County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The Leon County Division of Tourism grants programs are funded by the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) to support hosting events that have tourist appeal. Some grant programs administered by the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) are also funded by TDT revenue and are designed to support year-round arts and culture programming.

Applicants found to have submitted applications to both the 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. Applicants receiving grant funds from the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) may not receive grant funding for the same event through the TDC. Further, no applicant may apply to TDC and COCA for funding related to the same event or activity. Applicants may make requests for grant funds to the TDC and COCA, but these must be for a different event or activity.

Each application will be evaluated against established criteria and historic precedent. The amount of grant funds awarded will depend upon the availability of designated funds and specific allocations. Ideally, the TDT funds allocated by the TDC will eventually be returned through increased transient lodging sales resulting from these special events and the tourist development tax generated from those sales. Events are significant motivators for travel that increase destination visibility regionally and tourist spending in the community.

II. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The intent of the Special Event Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract overnight tourists to Tallahassee/Leon County and create business for the commercial lodging industry that collect TDT, (hotels/motels, condominiums, short-term vacation rentals), as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other tourism related business activities. In addition to being compliant with F.S. 125.0104 the following criteria have been established to be considered for funding:

- A. Each application must include a signed Certification and Compliance page in the application submission.
- B. Event must take place between October 1 and September 30 of the upcoming fiscal year.
- C. The event must have the potential to bring-out-of-town tourists that use commercial lodging establishments in Tallahassee/Leon County.
- D. Applicant must provide a marketing/promotional plan that demonstrates out-of-market advertising/promotion to reach potential visitors. For purposes of these grant guidelines "out-of-market" means outside of a 30-mile radius of Leon County.

- E. Applicant must provide a detailed event budget that includes details about how 20%, or more, of any grant funding awarded, will be spent out-of-market.
- F. Political events are not eligible for Tourism grant funding.
- G. Grant applications must conform with Florida Senate Bill 1134 and section 287.139 of the Florida Statutes, and attest that grant award would not be used to fund diversity, equity, or inclusion (“DEI”) programming, promotion, materials or training.
 - a. DEI includes any effort to influence or manipulate the composition of employees, promote or provide preferential treatment or special benefits, or promote or adopt any activity, training, or programming designed or implemented with reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
 - b. Applicant will certify, prior to award, that applicant does not and will not use TDT fund to require any covered person to ascribe to, study, or be instructed using DEI materials.
 - c. Applicant shall impose equivalent restrictions on vendors paid with grant funds.

III. STATEMENT OF POLICIES

- A. Grant applications will only be received during the advertised cycle. One application will be accepted per event, per fiscal year with the exception of a once- a-year event that may coincidentally occur within the same fiscal year due to scheduling. An example would be an early October event that is scheduled for late September the following fall, both occurring the same fiscal year.
- B. Grant funds are intended to supplement, not fully fund, the organization’s budget for the event referenced in the application.
- C. Non-government organizations must be registered with the Department of State, Division of Corporations, through their Sunbiz.org platform, or be able to provide proof of an exemption under law from such registration prior to submitting their application. Additionally, each applicant shall use their organization’s legal name, exactly as registered in Sunbiz.org, in their application.
 - a. The name, title, email, and phone number of one of the organization’s officers, listed in the Officer/Director Detail section of the organization’s current annual report, is responsible for signing the grant agreement for an awarded grant.
- D. Each application will be evaluated against established criteria, past performance and historic precedent. The applicant’s performance on past events will also be included as part of the review to award grant funding.

- E. Application must provide a statement of sustainability and growth for the event (i.e. How do you define success for the event and what is your long-term plan to sustain and grow the event over the next five years?).
- F. Application must provide a statement of need for grant funding.
- G. Hotels secured for the event must be located within Leon County.
- H. Estimates for lodging, attendee and tourist counts must be based on the anticipation of the number of tourists drawn to the event specified in the grant application.
- I. Grant Funding shall not be utilized to support administrative costs. Grantee shall be responsible for all expenses associated with the performance and delivery of Services by this Agreement.
- J. Private events are not eligible for grant funding. Allowable Funding uses (described in further detail on page 11) include marketing and promotional efforts, venue/site rentals and costs associated with visiting artists and/or exhibits.
- K. Grantees are required to spend a minimum of 20% of awarded grant funding on paid out-of-market marketing/advertising for all events (i.e. festivals, concerts, celebrations) except for certain sporting tournaments or events marketed to organizational members as determined by County staff. 80% of awarded grant funding is available to use on allowable operational expenses as long as such use is consistent with these guidelines and 125.0104, Florida Statute. Failure to meet the 20% of the awarded grant funding on paid out-of-market marketing/advertising will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.
 - a. If an applicant wishes to state their event should be exempt from the 20% out-of-market advertising, they are to notify the Tourism Grants Manager with an explanation for this exemption prior to the submission of the grant application.
 - b. The Tourism staff will review the exemption request and determine if the exemption is granted.
 - c. The applicant will be provided a response to their exemption request within 10 business days of their request.
- L. Grant funding will not be considered for events that occur during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session. Sports and Special Events grants may be permitted during some FSU home football game weekends except for those games anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory. Each year the Director of Tourism will provide the

recommended “peak period” dates to the TDC for consideration/ approval prior to the start of each grant cycle application period.

Events will not be considered for funding if the event occurs during the following peak visitor periods defined for County Fiscal Year 2026-2027:

October 2-3, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Virginia
October 23-24, 2026	FAMU Football Game (FAMU Homecoming)
October 30-31, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Clemson
November 20-21, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. NC State (Homecoming)
December 11, 2026	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
March 7- May 6, 2027	Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)
April 30 – May 1, 2027	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
September, 2027	FSU Football Weekends, dates TBD in Feb 2027

- M. If the requested grant amount is \$10,000 or more, the applicant’s budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar match (in-kind services will not be allowed). Applicants shall identify the amount of matching funds in the event budget submitted. If the grant funding award is \$10,000 or more, the 25% dollar-for-dollar match must be verified and documented in the Post-Event Report. Failure to meet the 25% match requirement will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.
- N. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for the approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. Proof of expenditures must be scans, copies, or pictures of the original receipts and invoices provided by a service provider/vendor. Proof of payment must be provided and may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and front and back copy of cleared check, credit card receipt, bank or credit card statement, ACH transfer or digital wallet receipts. Cash receipts are allowed for reimbursement however, a check or credit card is preferred. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided.

Board-Affiliated Vendor Restrictions

Grant funds derived from Tourist Development Tax revenues shall not be used to compensate any vendor in which a member of the recipient’s governing board holds a material interest, except when:

- a. The goods or services were obtained through a competitive solicitation as defined in F.S. 287.012(6), and the board member disclosed the conflict consistent with F.S. 112.313(3) and abstained from related decisions; or
- b. The vendor is a documented sole source per F.S. 287.057(3)(c) – available only from a single source due to the inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, or unique capability.

All exceptions require written documentation submitted with grant reporting. This section applies to all TDT-funded grant programs administered by or on behalf of Leon County.

- O. If an event must be cancelled for any reason other than Force Majeure as described in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph X of the agreement, event organizers are required to make that determination at least 60 days prior to the event's originally scheduled date. Leon County Tourism will only reimburse for allowable expenses incurred before 60 days prior to the original event date. Any expenses incurred after that date will not be reimbursed.
- P. If an event needs to be rescheduled, the new dates must be between October 1 and September 30 of the current fiscal year and follow the grant guidelines to be eligible for reimbursement. The new date must be provided to Visit Tallahassee to verify continued eligibility for the grant award.
- Q. To be eligible for payment, a completed Post-Event Report must be submitted. The Report should be submitted within 60 days after the event has taken place but in no case shall it be submitted any later than September 30 unless the event has occurred on or after September 20th; in which case the report must be submitted by October 10th. The Report must include tracking statistics regarding out-of-town tourists and their use of transient lodging facilities and occupancy. Failure to submit a complete Post-Event Report in a timely manner may result in disqualification for support. All Post-Event Reports, including requests for reimbursement, must be received no later than September 30 and must include all receipts of expenditures and proof(s) of payment. Post event report submissions found to be intentionally misrepresented will disqualify grantees from grant reimbursement and future applications.
- R. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff will direct the County's marketing research firm of record to conduct an economic impact study at least every other year of events receiving \$10,000 or more in grant funding. Event organizers must allow for face-to-face interviews with spectators and participants in order for the marketing research firm to conduct their study and to be eligible for payment of grant funding.
- S. Grantees are not eligible to request funding above the projected room nights as outlined in the table on page 14. The Grant Review Committee has the authority to adjust anticipated room nights and funding levels based on the previous record of an applicant and/or event.
- T. Government entities, including public schools, colleges, and universities, must provide the name, title, email, and phone number of the person who is authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the organization in the application. Additionally, documentation from the organization showing the person has designated

signing authority is required. This documentation could come in various forms, including through adopted policies or a specific written delegation.

- U. Non-Governmental entities must agree that they do not use coercion for labor or services as defined in 787.06 (14), Florida Statutes 2025, and under penalty of perjury, will attest to such statement through the execution and submittal of a notarized affidavit prior to signing the grant agreement. Failure to provide the notarized affidavit will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.
- V. Any funds granted will be subject to audit by Leon County, Florida or their designee.
- W. Indemnity: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant the applicant/grantee shall indemnify Leon County, Florida, a charter county and political subdivision of the State of Florida (the "County") to the extent provided in their grant agreement which will contain language substantially similar to the following:
 - a. The applicant agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the County, its officials, officers, employees and agents, from and against any and all claims, damages, liabilities, losses, costs, or suits, of any nature whatsoever arising out of, because of, or due to any acts or omissions of the Grantee, its delegates, employees, subcontractors, volunteers and agents, arising out of or under this Agreement, including a reasonable attorney's fees. Should the County, as a result of the performance or lack thereof by or on behalf of the Grantee, be required to reimburse any sums to any organization, or reimburse funds to any Federal, State or local governmental entity, contribute funds to the performance of this event for which the Grant was approved, or expend County funds to complete or correct such performance, the Grantee, upon demand by the County, shall refund and reimburse the County for all sums so reimbursed or expended by the County. The County may, at its sole option, defend itself or require the Grantee to provide the defense. The Grantee acknowledges that ten dollars (\$10.00) of the amount paid to the Grantee is sufficient consideration of the Grantee's indemnification of the County.
 - b. If the applicant is a governmental entity or other such organization to which the protection of sovereign immunity is applicable, the indemnification requirements set forth in subparagraph (1) above shall apply to such applicant only to the extent as allowed in Section 768.28. Florida Statutes and nothing herein shall be deemed to be a waiver of such applicant's sovereign immunity beyond those statutory limits provided therein.
 - c. Grantee shall maintain Insurance with limits no less than the following: **General Liability:** \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage with a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate.

- X. Force Majeure: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant that a Party shall be excused from performance of an obligation under the Grant Agreement to the extent, and only to the extent, that such performance is affected by a “Force Majeure Event” which term shall mean any cause beyond the reasonable control of the Party affected, except where such Party could have reasonably foreseen and reasonably avoided the occurrence, which materially and adversely affects the performance by such Party of its obligation under the Grant Agreement. Such events shall include, but not be limited to, an act of God, disturbance, hostility, war, or revolution; strike or lockout; epidemic; pandemic; fire; hurricane; flood; or other unusually severe weather or natural disaster; or any requirements of law.
- Y. The combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Logo must be included on all printed and online advertisements and promotional materials for the event.

Promotional materials include: banners, signs, t-shirts, programs, brochures, event website, social media posts, etc. Online material developed for the event must include a link to the VisitTallahassee.com website. Before these materials are produced, a draft or design proof **MUST BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED** by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee to assure that the combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Logo appears properly.

- Z. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee is dedicated to supporting worthwhile local events through our grant programs and other promotional opportunities but reserves the right to reduce or eliminate grant funding for organizations that do not receive prior approval for the correct logo use. The correct logos are shown below and can be located and accessed at <https://visittallahassee.com/visit-tallahassee-logos/>:



AA. Allowable expenses include:

- 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, and parking attendants.
- Rights fees, sanction fees, non-monetary awards, and travel expenses for guest speakers, performers, judges, event officials, or referees including lodging.

Note: The applicants are required to describe how the grant funds will be used. Any substantial changes to the items submitted in the application MUST be submitted in writing and approved by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee office PRIOR to the purchase and the event. Purchases made without PRIOR written approval from staff will not be allowed.

BB. Unallowable expenses include:

- General and administrative expenses.
- Building, renovating and/or remodeling expenses.
- Permanent equipment purchases.
- Debts incurred prior to the fiscal year of the grant period/in which the approved event takes place.
- DEI programming, promotion, materials and training.
- Food or beverage.
- Paid advertising that primarily reaches and targets Tallahassee/Leon County and its residents.
- Lodging or travel expenses for attendees.
- In-kind services.
- Monetary awards.
- Raffle prizes.

- Expenses paid to board-affiliated vendors that do not follow the conditions as stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph N.
- Political events and activities.

IV. RATING CRITERIA AND SCORING PROCESS

Each grant application will be reviewed by Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff to ensure that the project is eligible to receive grant funding by comporting with 125.0104 Statutory requirements and that all required materials have been supplied. Failure to supply all the required materials will result in disqualification. Following staff review, the applications along with the history of applicant's and event's past performances will be provided to the TDC's Grant Review Committee for scoring. The committee will score each application on a 100-point scale based on the rating criteria outlined in the following Grant Rating Criteria.

Grant Rating Criteria

	Rating Criteria	Possible Points
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 will be reviewed. 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
Description, Event Sustainability	Event description includes event goals, a plan for measurement of success, and a statement of event sustainability and growth.	10
Event Funding Need and Budget	An appropriate statement of need for funding and a complete budget are included for the event.	10
Marketing Plan	For Events marketed to public attendance, the application contains a well-defined, thorough, and realistic marketing plan which includes strategies for attracting out-of-county tourists with that at least 20% of the budget appropriated for out-of-market advertising. OR For events marketed only to organizational members, the applicant provides a well-defined, thorough and realistic outreach plan to their event participants. ALL plans include the planned usage of the combined Visit Tallahassee/Leon County logo or audible mention (for radio advertising) of Visit Tallahassee/Leon County funding support for the event.	25
Total possible points:		100

V. GUIDELINES FOR GRANT REQUEST FUNDING LEVELS

The following table reflects guidelines for the funding level possible based on the event’s estimated number of hotel room nights. **The estimated number of hotel room does not guarantee the level of funding at which an event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on the Review Committee’s discretion and the funding available. As an example, if the Grant Review Committee believes the event has overstated the potential room nights, the Committee has the authority to place the application in a lower funding category and adjust the requested funding amount.**

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Special Event Funding Levels
Less than 100	\$0 - \$2,999
100 – 199	\$3,000 - \$7,999
200 – 499	\$8,000 - \$12,999
500 – 1,000	\$13,000 - \$19,999
1,001 – 1,499	\$20,000 - \$29,999

The following formula will be used to determine the final grant amounts:

- A. The average score of the panel will be determined for each application based on the maximum of 100 points as outlined in the grant rating criteria on page 13.
- B. Applications scoring at the minimum threshold of 70% or above will be considered for grant funding based on the formula outlined below.
- C. The average score for each application will first be converted into a percentage of the 100 maximum points possible. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90, the percentage for Application #1 would be 90%.
- D. The grant requested/adjusted amount will then be multiplied by the percentage to determine the initial award based on the TDC Grant Review Committee’s combined scores. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90% and requested/adjusted \$5,000, the initial award would be \$4,500.
- E. The same process will be followed for each application and the total of potential initial awards will be calculated.
- F. If the total amount of potential grant allocations exceeds the total budgeted for all grants, staff will adjust all of the proposed allocations by the same percentage to keep the totals awarded equal to or less than the total available grant funds.

- G. After the preceding steps are complete, to ensure funding for the highest scoring application, the TDC Grant Review Committee reserves the right to adjust recommended grant awards.

VI. SPECIAL EVENT ANNUAL GRANT TIMELINE

June 25, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Opens (45-day cycle)
July/August, 2026	Mandatory Grant Application Workshops
August 6, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Closes
August 25, 2026	Public Meeting of TDC Grant Review Committee
September 10, 2026	TDC consideration of Grant Funding Recommendations
September 11, 2026	Grantees notified of Grant Awards
October 1 – December 31, 2026	Grant Agreements sent to Grantees

Applicants are required to attend the Grant Application Orientation Workshop either in person or online or they will not be eligible for a grant award.

It is strongly encouraged that applicants be in attendance or send a representative to the TDC Grant Review Committee meeting in case there are questions or clarifications.

VII. VISITOR/TOURIST TRACKING

- A. To assess the impact of each event on the Tallahassee/Leon County transient lodging industry, the TDC emphasizes the importance of tracking the number of overnight tourists attending the event.
 - a. Room block reports from hotels are the preferred method of reporting room data. The information will be used to help track the number of tourists attending the event. Furthermore, this information helps determine the growth of a particular event. Subsequently, an event’s growth can impact the future funding level of the grant awarded to the organization.
 - b. If your event uses an advanced registration procedure, utilize the **Visitor/Tourist Tracking Form** located on the Visit Tallahassee Grants website to gather the requested information. Each participant/group should sign his or her name, list the hotel in which they are residing, the number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room.
 - c. Include question in the event registration form asking if participant will stay overnight in a Leon County lodging, along with number of rooms and nights booked.
 - d. Conduct a brief survey at check-in, or on-site to confirm if participant is staying in Leon County lodging, including the number of rooms and nights booked.

- B. The County reserves the right to conduct a post-audit of information presented on the **Post-Event Report**. All lodging accommodations listed will be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the event. **ANY MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION PRESENTED CAN AND WILL ADVERSLEY AFFECT FUTURE GRANT AWARDS.**

VIII. POST-EVENT REPORT

Funding shall only be provided as reimbursement for approved expenditures upon completion of the event. Reimbursement will not be issued until all necessary post-event information is provided. Such Information is the responsibility of the grantee to provide and includes:

- A. An invoice from the awarded organization to the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee for payment of the awarded grant amount. This invoice must be dated and include an invoice number.
- B. Valid invoices for allowable expenses.
 - a. Events marketed to public attendance must include invoices for paid out-of-market advertising (equaling at least 20% of the grant funding).
 - b. If an expense is from a board-affiliated vendor, it must be explained in the post event report and noted on the invoice on the invoice. Proof that a competitive procurement process was used following the conditions stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph N must be included with the invoice.
 - i. If the board-affiliated vendor is a “sole source” vendor, proof that the expense is from a practical source of supply because of an inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, copyright, or a supplier’s unique capability must be included with the invoice.
- C. Copy of proof of payments such as cleared checks, or detailed credit card receipts. For all out-of-market media buys equaling 20% of the grant funding, provide tear sheets, copies of advertisements, schedules, and signed station affidavits. Proof of payment must match invoices submitted.
- D. Visitor/Tourist and Room Nights documentation as listed in Section VII.
- E. Copies of marketing or advertising materials, and social media showing Leon County Tourism/Visit Tallahassee logo usage.

IX. CONCLUSION

The event director, fiscal administrator or other contact person may be called upon by any one of these groups or their staff at any time during the review process. Applicants shall not contact members of the TDC Grant Review Committee.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

Julie Trezek | (850) 815-0989 | Julie.Trezek@VisitTallahassee.com

DRAFT

Leon County Division of Tourism



Visit
Tallahassee
Pretty. Unexpected.

SPECIAL EVENTS

~~FY26~~FY27 GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



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REVISED May ~~8, 2025~~7, 2026

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**Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee
Special Events Grant Program**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Leon County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Leon County Ordinance #88-01. The TDC administers funds collected from a local option tourist development tax (TDT) on transient lodging sales. i.e. hotels/motels, and condominiums. The funds are designated to promote Tallahassee/Leon County as a preferred tourist destination for meetings and conventions, group leisure travel, special events, cultural activities and amateur sporting events.

Grant funding is based upon the potential to generate room nights. Per section 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes, to be an authorized use of Tourist Development Tax revenue an event “shall have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue or event to tourists.” By Statute, a tourist is a “person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside of the county of his or her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations” including “any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, roominghouse, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort for a term of 6 months or less.” By Statute, “Promotion” is defined as “marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities”.

A “Special Event” is defined as “a new or existing organized concert, exhibition, festival, fair, conference or celebration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and of interest to the general public”. For the purpose of this grant program, the public interest should extend to Tallahassee/Leon County residents and to those living outside Tallahassee/Leon County who would visit the destination and stay overnight to observe or participate.

The Leon County Division of Tourism annually allocates funds to grant programs for ~~local~~ groups and organizations that coordinate local events with a demonstrated history of or significant potential to draw tourists to the area. The Special Events Grants, and Signature/Emerging Signature Grants are reviewed by the TDC Grant Review Committee. The TDC shall appoint a Sports Grant Review Committee annually comprised of 3-5 members of the Tallahassee Sports Council to review the Sports Grants applications. The TDC Grant Review Committee is comprised of TDC members. Legacy Event grants are reviewed by the TDC and recommendations for approval are made by the TDC to the Leon County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

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Applicants found to have submitted applications to both the 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. Applicants receiving grant funds from the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) may not receive grant funding for the same event through the TDC. Further, no applicant may apply to TDC and COCA for funding related to the same event or activity. Applicants may make requests for grant funds to the TDC and COCA, but these must be for a different event or activity.

Each application will be evaluated against established criteria and historic precedent. The amount of grant funds awarded will depend upon the availability of designated funds and specific allocations. Ideally, the TDT funds allocated by the TDC will eventually be returned through increased transient lodging sales resulting from these special events and the tourist development tax generated from those sales. Events are significant motivators for travel that increase destination visibility regionally and tourist spending in the community.

II. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The intent of the Special Event Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract overnight tourists to Tallahassee/Leon County and create business for the commercial lodging industry that collect TDT, (hotels/motels, condominiums, short-term vacation rentals), as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other tourism related business activities. In addition to being compliant with F.S. 125.0104 the following criteria have been established to be considered for funding:

- A. Each application must include a signed Certification and Compliance page in the application submission.
- B. Event must take place between October 1 and September 30 of the upcoming fiscal year.
- C. The event must have the potential to bring-out-of-town tourists that use commercial lodging establishments in Tallahassee/Leon County.
- D. Applicant must provide a marketing/promotional plan that demonstrates out-of-market advertising/promotion to reach potential visitors. For purposes of these grant guidelines “out-of-market” means outside of a 30-mile radius of Leon County.

Commented [JT1]: This is not the affidavit. This is a specific page in the portal application where they certify the information they entered is true.

E. Applicant must provide a detailed event budget that includes details about how 20%, or more, of any grant funding awarded, will be spent out-of-market.

F. Political events are not eligible for Tourism grant funding.

G. Grant applications must conform with Florida Senate Bill 1134 and section 287.139 of the Florida Statutes, and attest that grant award would not be used to funding diversity, equity, or inclusion (“DEI”) programming, promotion, materials or training.

a. DEI includes any effort to influence or manipulate the composition of employees, promote or provide preferential treatment or special benefits, or promote or adopt any activity, training, or programming designed or implemented with reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

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b. Applicant will certify, prior to award, that applicant does not and will not use TDT fund to require any covered person to ascribe to, study, or be instructed using DEI materials.

c. Applicant shall impose equivalent restrictions on vendors paid with grant funds.

III. STATEMENT OF POLICIES

A. Grant applications will only be received during the advertised cycle. One application will be accepted per event, per fiscal year with the exception of a once-a-year event that may coincidentally occur within the same fiscal year due to scheduling. An example would be an early October event that is scheduled for late September the following fall, both occurring the same fiscal year.

B. Grant funds are intended to supplement, not fully fund, the organization’s budget for the event referenced in the application.

C. Non-government organizations must be registered with the Department of State, Division of Corporations, through their Sunbiz.org platform, or be able to provide proof of an exemption under law from such registration prior to submitting their application. Additionally, each applicant shall use their organization’s legal name, exactly as registered in Sunbiz.org, in their application.

a. The name, title, email, and phone number of one of the organization’s officers, listed in the Officer/Director Detail section of the organization’s current annual report, is responsible for signing the grant agreement for an awarded grant.

Commented [JT3]: Moved further up in the Statement of Policies per Kerri’s comments.

~~B-D.~~ Each application will be evaluated against established criteria, past performance and historic precedent. The applicant's performance on past events will also be included as part of the review to award grant funding.

~~a-b.~~ Applicant must provide a statement of sustainability and growth for the event (i.e. How do you define success for the event and what is your long-term plan to sustain and grow the event over the next five years?).

~~b-c.~~ Application must provide a statement of need for grant funding.

~~c-d.~~ Hotels secured for the event must be located within Leon Country.

~~d-e.~~ Estimates for lodging, attendee and tourist counts must be based on the anticipation of the number of tourists drawn to the event specified in the grant application.

~~C-E.~~ Grant Funding shall not be utilized to support administrative costs. Grantee shall be responsible for all expenses associated with the performance and delivery of Services by this Agreement.

~~F.~~ Private events are not eligible for grant funding. Allowable Funding uses (described in further detail on page 9) include marketing and promotional efforts, venue/site rentals and costs associated with visiting artists and/or exhibits.

~~D-G.~~ Grantees are required to spend a minimum of 20% of awarded grant funding on paid out-of-market marketing/advertising for all events (i.e. festivals, concerts, celebrations) except for certain sporting tournaments or ~~sport-meetsevents~~ marketed to organizational members as determined by County staff. 80% of awarded grant funding is available to use on allowable operational expenses as long as such use is consistent with these guidelines and 125.0104, Florida Statute. Failure to meet the 20% of the awarded grant funding on paid out-of-market marketing/advertising will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.

a. If an applicant wishes to state their event should be exempt from the 20% out-of-market advertising, they are to notify the Tourism Grants Manager with an explanation for this exemption prior to the submission of the grant application.

b. The Tourism staff will review the exemption request and determine if the exemption is granted.

c. The applicant will be provided a response to their exemption request within 10 business days of their request.

E.H. Grant funding will not be considered for events that occur during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session. Sports and Special Events grants may be permitted during some FSU home football game weekends except for those games anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory. Each year the Director of Tourism will provide the recommended “peak period” dates to the TDC for consideration/ approval prior to the start of each grant cycle application period.

Events will not be considered for funding if the event occurs during the following peak visitor periods defined for County Fiscal Year ~~2025-2026~~-2027:

October 3-4, 2025 <u>October 2-3, 2026</u>	FSU Football Game vs. Miami Virginia
October 10-11, 2025 October 18-19, 2025 23-24, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Pittsburgh FAMU Football Game (FAMU Homecoming)
October 30-31—November 1, 2025, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Wake Forest (Homecoming) Clemson
November 14-15, 2025 20-21, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Virginia Tech NC State (Homecoming)
December 12, 2025 11, 2026	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
January 9-17, 2026	World Athletics Cross-Country Championships
January 13—March 13, 2026 7- May 6, 2027	Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)
April 30—May 2-3, 2026 1, 2027	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
September, 2027	FSU Football Weekends, dates TBD in Feb 2027

Commented [JT4]: Football game dates are Fridays & Saturdays.

The FSU football schedule was taken from here: [2026 Football Schedule - Florida State University](#)

The FAMU football schedule was taken from here: [2026 Football Schedule - Florida A&M](#)

F.I. If the requested grant amount is \$10,000 or more, the applicant’s budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar match (in-kind services will not be allowed). Applicants shall identify the amount of matching funds in the event budget submitted. If the grant funding award is \$10,000 or more, the 25% dollar-for-dollar match must be verified and documented in the Post-Event Report. Failure to meet the 25% match requirement will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.

G.J. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for the approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. Proof of expenditures must be scans, copies, or pictures of the original receipts and invoices provided by a service

provider/vendor. Proof of payment must be provided and may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and front and back copy of cleared check, credit card receipt, bank or credit card statement, ACH transfer or digital wallet receipts. Cash receipts are allowed for reimbursement however, a check or credit card is preferred. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided.

Board-Affiliated Vendor Restrictions

Grant funds derived from Tourist Development Tax revenues shall not be used to compensate any vendor in which a member of the recipient's governing board holds a material interest, except when:

- a. The goods or services were obtained through a competitive solicitation as defined in F.S. 287.012(6), and the board member disclosed the conflict consistent with F.S. 112.313(3) and abstained from related decisions; or
- b. The vendor is a documented sole source per F.S. 287.057(3)(c) – available only from a single source due to the inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, or unique capability.

All exceptions require written documentation submitted with grant reporting. This section applies to all TDT-funded grant programs administered by or on behalf of Leon County.

K. If an event must be cancelled for any reason other than Force Majeure as described in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph V of the agreement, event organizers are required to make that determination at least 60 days prior to the event's originally scheduled date. Leon County Tourism will only reimburse for allowable expenses incurred before 60 days prior to the original event date. Any expenses incurred after that date will not be reimbursed.

Commented [JT5]: A grantee canceled a day before their event and was told they could get reimbursement for everything.

H.L. If an event needs to be rescheduled, the new dates must be between October 1 and September 30 of the current fiscal year and follow the grant guidelines to be eligible for reimbursement. The new date must be provided to Visit Tallahassee to verify continued eligibility for the grant award.

M. To be ~~an~~ eligible for payment, a completed Post-Event Report must be submitted. The Report should be submitted within 60 days after the event has taken place but in no case shall it be submitted any later than September 30- unless the event has occurred on or after September 20th; in which case the report must be submitted by October 10th. The Report must include tracking statistics regarding out-of-town tourists and their use of transient lodging facilities and occupancy. Failure to submit a complete Post-Event Report in a timely manner

may result in disqualification for support. All Post-Event Reports, including requests for reimbursement, must be received no later than September 30 and must include all receipts of expenditures and proof(s) of payment. Post event report submissions found to be intentionally misrepresented will disqualify grantees from grant reimbursement and future applications.

~~J.N.~~ Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff will direct the County's marketing research firm of record to conduct an economic impact study at least every other year of events receiving \$10,000 or more in grant funding. Event organizers must allow for face-to-face interviews with spectators and participants in order for the marketing research firm to conduct their study and to be eligible for payment of grant funding.

~~K.O.~~ Grantees are not eligible to request funding above the projected room nights as outlined in the table on page ~~1213~~. The Grant Review Committee has the authority to adjust anticipated room nights and funding levels based on the previous record of an applicant and/or event.

~~L.~~ ~~Non-government organizations must be registered with the Department of State, Division of Corporations, through their Sunbiz.org platform, or be able to provide proof of an exemption under law from such registration. Additionally, each applicant shall use their organization's legal name, exactly as registered in Sunbiz.org, in their application.~~

~~e.~~ ~~The name, title, email, and phone number of one of the organization's officers, listed in the Officer/Director Detail section of the organization's current annual report, is responsible for signing the grant agreement for an awarded grant.~~

~~M.P.~~ Government entities, including public schools, colleges, and universities, must provide the name, title, email, and phone number of the person who is authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the organization in the application.

Additionally, documentation from the organization showing the person has designated signing authority is required. This documentation could come in various forms, including through adopted policies or a specific written delegation.

~~N.Q.~~ Non-Governmental entities must agree that they do not use coercion for labor or services as defined in 787.06, (14), Florida Statutes 2025, and under penalty of perjury, will attest to such statement through the execution and submittal of a notarized affidavit ~~prior to signing the grant agreement~~. Failure to provide the notarized affidavit will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.

Q.R. Any funds granted will be subject to audit by Leon County, Florida or their designee.

P.S. Indemnity: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant the applicant/grantee shall indemnify Leon County, Florida, a charter county and political subdivision of the State of Florida (the "County") to the extent provided in their grant agreement which will contain language substantially similar to the following:

- f. The applicant agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the County, its officials, officers, employees and agents, from and against any and all claims, damages, liabilities, losses, costs, or suits, of any nature whatsoever arising out of, because of, or due to any acts or omissions of the Grantee, its delegates, employees, subcontractors, volunteers and agents, arising out of or under this Agreement, including a reasonable attorney's fees. Should the County, as a result of the performance or lack thereof by or on behalf of the Grantee, be required to reimburse any sums to any organization, or reimburse funds to any Federal, State or local governmental entity, contribute funds to the performance of this event for which the Grant was approved, or expend County funds to complete or correct such performance, the Grantee, upon demand by the County, shall refund and reimburse the County for all sums so reimbursed or expended by the County. The County may, at its sole option, defend itself or require the Grantee to provide the defense. The Grantee acknowledges that ten dollars (\$10.00) of the amount paid to the Grantee is sufficient consideration of the Grantee's indemnification of the County.
- g. If the applicant is a governmental entity or other such organization to which the protection of sovereign immunity is applicable, the indemnification requirements set forth in subparagraph (1) above shall apply to such applicant only to the extent as allowed in Section 768.28, Florida Statutes and nothing herein shall be deemed to be a waiver of such applicant's sovereign immunity beyond those statutory limits provided therein.
- h. Grantee shall maintain Insurance with limits no less than the following: **General Liability:** \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage with a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate.

T. Force Majeure: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant that a Party shall be excused from performance of an obligation under the Grant Agreement to the extent, and only to the extent, that such performance is affected by a "Force Majeure Event" which term shall mean any cause beyond the reasonable control of the Party affected, except where such Party could have reasonably foreseen and reasonably avoided the occurrence, which materially and adversely affects the performance by such Party of its

obligation under the Grant Agreement. Such events shall include, but not be limited to, an act of God, disturbance, hostility, war, or revolution; strike or lockout; epidemic; pandemic; fire; hurricane; flood; or other unusually severe weather or natural disaster; or any requirements of law.

Q.U. The combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Logo must be included on all printed and online advertisements and ~~prominent~~ promotional materials for the event.

Promotional materials include: banners, signs, t-shirts, programs, brochures, event website, social media posts, etc. Online material developed for the event must include a link to the VisitTallahassee.com website. Before these materials are produced, a draft or design proof **MUST BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED** by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee to assure that the combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Logo appears properly.

V. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee is dedicated to supporting worthwhile local events through our grant programs and other promotional opportunities but reserves the right to reduce or eliminate grant funding for organizations that do not receive prior approval for the correct logo use. The correct logos ~~is provided below:~~ are show below and can be located and accessed



at <https://visittallahassee.com/visit-tallahassee-logos/> :



R.-W. Allowable expenses include:

- 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, and parking attendants.
- Rights fees, sanction fees, non-monetary awards, and travel expenses for guest speakers, performers, judges, event officials, or referees including lodging.

Note: The applicants are required to describe how the grant funds will be used. Any substantial changes to the items submitted in the application **MUST** be submitted in writing and approved by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee office

PRIOR to the purchase and the event. Purchases made without PRIOR written approval from staff will not be allowed.

~~S-X~~. Prohibited Unallowable expenses include:

- General and administrative expenses.
- Building, renovating and/or remodeling expenses.
- Permanent equipment purchases.
- Debts incurred prior to the fiscal year of the grant period/in which the approved event takes place.
- DEI programming, promotion, materials and training.
- Food or beverage.
- Paid advertising that primarily reaches and targets Tallahassee/Leon County and its residents.
- Lodging or travel expenses for attendees.
- In-kind services.
- Monetary awards.
- Raffle prizes.
- Expenses paid to board-affiliated vendors that do not follow the conditions as stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph J.
- Political events and activities.

IV. RATING CRITERIA AND SCORING PROCESS

Each grant application will be reviewed by Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff to ensure that the project is eligible to receive grant funding by complying with 125.0104 Statutory requirements and that all required materials have been supplied. Failure to supply all the required materials will result in disqualification. Following staff review, the applications along with the history of applicant's and event's past performances will be provided to the TDC's Grant Review Committee for scoring. The committee will score each application on a 100-point scale based on the rating criteria outlined in the following Grant Rating Criteria.

Grant Rating Criteria

	Rating Criteria	Possible Points
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 will be reviewed. Event does not occur during peak visitor periods as defined in the grant policies. (30 points)	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 points)	25
Description, Event Sustainability	Event description includes event goals, a plan for measurement of success, and a statement of event sustainability and growth. (10 points)	10
Event Funding Need and Budget	An appropriate statement of need for funding and a complete budget are included for the event. (10 points)	10
Marketing Plan	<p>For Events with open <u>marketed to public</u> attendance, the application contains a well-defined, thorough, and realistic marketing plan which includes strategies for attracting out-of-county tourists with that at least 20% of the budget appropriated for out-of-market advertising. OR</p> <p>For Events with pre-registration <u>For events marketed only to organizational members</u>, the applicant provides a well-defined, thorough and realistic outreach plan to their event participants.</p> <p>ALL plans include the planned usage of the combined Visit Tallahassee/Leon County logo or audible mention (for radio advertising) of Visit Tallahassee/Leon County funding support for the event. (25 points)</p>	25
Total possible points:		100

V. GUIDELINES FOR GRANT REQUEST FUNDING LEVELS

The following table reflects guidelines for the funding level possible based on the event’s estimated number of hotel room nights. **The estimated number of hotel room does not guarantee the level of funding at which an event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on the Review Committee’s discretion and the funding available. As an example, if the Grant Review Committee believes the event has overstated the potential room nights, the Committee has the authority to place the application in a lower funding category and adjust the requested funding amount.**

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Special Event Funding Levels
Less than 100	\$0 - \$2,999
100 – 199	\$3,000 - \$5 7,999
200 – 499	\$68,000 - \$10,499 12,999
500 – 1,000	\$10,500 - \$17,499 13,000 - \$19,999
1,001 – 1,499	\$17,500 - \$26,250 20,000 - \$29,999

The following formula will be used to determine the final grant amounts:

- A. The average score of the panel will be determined for each application based on the maximum of 100 points as outlined in the grant rating criteria on page ~~11~~12.
- B. Applications scoring at the minimum threshold of 70% or above will be considered for grant funding based on the formula outlined below.
- C. The average score for each application will first be converted into a percentage of the 100 maximum points possible. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90, the percentage for Application #1 would be 90%.
- D. The grant requested/adjusted amount will then be multiplied by the percentage to determine the initial award based on the TDC Grant Review Committee’s combined scores. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90% and requested/adjusted \$5,000, the initial award would be \$4,500.
- E. The same process will be followed for each application and the total of potential initial awards will be calculated.
- F. If the total amount of potential grant allocations exceeds the total budgeted for all grants, staff will adjust all of the proposed allocations by the same percentage to keep the totals awarded equal to or less than the total available grant funds.

- G. After the preceding steps are complete, to ensure funding for the highest scoring application, the TDC Grant Review Committee reserves the right to adjust recommended grant awards.

VI. SPECIAL EVENT ANNUAL GRANT TIMELINE

June 24, 2025 <u>25, 2026</u>	Grant Application Cycle Opens (45-day cycle)
July/August, 2025 <u>2026</u>	Mandatory Grant Application Workshops
August 7, 2025 <u>August 6, 2026</u>	Grant Application Cycle Closes
August 26, 2025 <u>25, 2026</u>	Public Meeting of TDC Grant Review Committee
September 11, 2025 <u>10, 2026</u>	TDC consideration of Grant Funding Recommendations
September 12, 2025 <u>11, 2026</u>	Grantees notified of Grant Awards
September 15 <u>October 1</u> –	Grant Agreements sent to Grantees
December 31, 2025 <u>2026</u>	

Applicants are required to attend the Grant Application Orientation Workshop either in person or online or they will not be eligible for a grant award.

It is strongly encouraged that applicants be in attendance or send a representative to the TDC Grant Review Committee meeting in case there are questions or clarifications.

VII. VISITOR/TOURIST TRACKING

- A. To assess the impact of each event on the Tallahassee/Leon County transient lodging industry, the TDC emphasizes the importance of tracking the number of overnight tourists attending the event.
- Room block reports from hotels are the preferred method of reporting room data. The information will be used to help track the number of tourists attending the event. Furthermore, this information helps determine the growth of a particular event. Subsequently, an event's growth can impact the future funding level of the grant awarded to the organization.
 - If your event uses an advanced registration procedure, utilize the **Visitor/Tourist Tracking Form** located on the Visit Tallahassee Grants website to gather the requested information. Each participant/group should sign his or her name, list the hotel in which they are residing, the number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room.
 - Include question in the event registration form asking if participant will stay overnight in a Leon County lodging, along with number of rooms and nights booked.
 - Conduct a brief survey at check-in, or on-site to confirm if participant is staying in Leon County lodging, including the number of rooms and nights booked.

- B. The County reserves the right to conduct a post-audit of information presented on the **Post-Event Report**. All lodging accommodations listed will be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the event. **ANY MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION PRESENTED CAN AND WILL ADVERSLEY AFFECT FUTURE GRANT AWARDS.**

VIII. POST-EVENT REPORT

Funding shall only be provided as reimbursement for approved expenditures upon completion of the event. Reimbursement will not be issued until all necessary post-event information is provided. Such Information is the responsibility of the grantee to provide and includes:

- A. An invoice from the awarded organization to the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee for payment of the awarded grant amount. This invoice must be dated and include an invoice number.

B. Valid invoices for allowable expenses. ~~Open~~

- a. Events marketed to public attendance ~~events~~ must include invoices for paid out-of-market advertising (equaling at least 20% of the grant funding).

b. If an expense is from a board-affiliated vendor, it must be explained in the post event report and noted on the invoice on the invoice. Proof that a competitive procurement process was used following the conditions stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph J must be included with the invoice.

i. If the board-affiliated vendor is a "sole source" vendor, proof that the expense is from a practical source of supply because of an inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, copyright, or a supplier's unique capability must be included with the invoice.

B-C. Copy of proof of payments such as cleared checks, or detailed credit card receipts. For all out-of-market media buys equaling 20% of the grant funding, provide tear sheets, copies of advertisements, schedules, and signed station affidavits. Proof of payment must match invoices submitted.

C-D. Visitor/Tourist and Room Nights documentation as listed in Section VII.

D-E. Copies of marketing or advertising materials, and social media showing Leon County Tourism/Visit Tallahassee logo usage.

IX. CONCLUSION

The event director, fiscal administrator or other contact person may be called upon by any one of these groups or their staff at any time during the review process. Applicants shall not contact members of the TDC Grant Review Committee.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

[Wendy Halleck](#)[Julie Trezek](#) | (850) ~~606-2331~~ | [Wendy.Halleck](#)[815-0989](#) |
[Julie.Trezek](#)@VisitTallahassee.com

DRAFT

Leon County Division of Tourism



Visit
Tallahassee
Pretty. Unexpected.

SPORTS EVENTS

FY27 GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



REVISED May 7, 2026

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**Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee
Sports Events Grant Program**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Leon County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Leon County Ordinance #88-01. The TDC administers funds collected from a local option Tourist Development Tax (TDT) on transient lodging sales. i.e. hotels/motels, and condominiums. The funds are designated to promote Tallahassee/Leon County as a preferred tourist destination for meetings and conventions, group leisure travel, special events, cultural activities and amateur sporting events.

Grant funding is based upon the potential to generate room nights. Per section 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes, to be an authorized use of Tourist Development Tax revenue an event “shall have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue or event to tourists.” By Statute, a tourist is a “person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside of the county of his or her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations” including “any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, roominghouse, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort for a term of 6 months or less.” By Statute, “Promotion” is defined as “marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities”.

A “Sports Event” is defined as a new or existing sporting event, exhibition, competition, team training, conference or celebration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and of interest to the general public. For the purpose of this grant program, the public interest should extend to Tallahassee/Leon County residents and to those living outside Tallahassee/Leon County who would visit the destination and stay overnight to observe or participate.

The Leon County Division of Tourism annually allocates funds to grant programs for groups and organizations that coordinate local events with a demonstrated history of or significant potential to draw tourists to the area. The Special Events Grants, and Signature/Emerging Signature Grants are reviewed by the TDC Grant Review Committee. The TDC shall appoint a Sports Grant Review Committee annually comprised of 3-5 members of the Tallahassee Sports Council to review the Sports Grants applications. The TDC Grant Review Committee is comprised of TDC members. Legacy Event grants are reviewed by the TDC and recommendations for approval are made by the TDC to the Leon County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The Leon County Division of Tourism grants programs are funded by the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) to support hosting events that have tourist appeal. Some grant programs administered by the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) are also funded by TDT revenue and are designed to support year-round arts and culture programming.

Applicants found to have submitted applications to both the 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. Applicants receiving grant funds from the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) may not receive grant funding for the same event through the TDC. Further, no applicant may apply to TDC and COCA for funding related to the same event or activity. Applicants may make requests for grant funds to the TDC and COCA, but these must be for a different event or activity.

Each application will be evaluated against established criteria and historic precedent. The amount of grant funds awarded will depend upon the availability of designated funds and specific allocations. Ideally, the TDT funds allocated by the TDC will eventually be returned through increased transient lodging sales resulting from these events and the tourist development tax generated from those sales. Events are significant motivators for travel that increase destination visibility regionally and tourist spending in the community.

II. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The intent of the Sports Event Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract overnight tourists to Tallahassee/Leon County and create business for the commercial lodging industry that collect TDT, (hotels/motels, condominiums, short-term vacation rentals), as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other tourism related business activities. In addition to being compliant with F.S. 125.0104 the following criteria have been established to be considered for funding:

- A. Each application must include a signed Certification and Compliance page in the application submission.
- B. Event must take place between October 1 and September 30 of the upcoming fiscal year.
- C. The event must have the potential to bring-out-of-town tourists that use commercial lodging establishments in Tallahassee/Leon County.
- D. Applicant must provide a marketing/promotional plan that demonstrates out-of-market advertising/promotion to reach potential visitors. For purposes of these grant guidelines “out-of-market” means outside of a 30-mile radius of Leon County.

- E. Applicant must provide a detailed event budget.
- F. Political events are not eligible for Tourism grant funding.
- G. Grant applications must conform with Florida Senate Bill 1134 and section 287.139 of the Florida Statutes, and attest that grant award would not be used to fund diversity, equity, or inclusion (“DEI”) programming, promotion, materials or training.
 - a. DEI includes any effort to influence or manipulate the composition of employees, promote or provide preferential treatment or special benefits, or promote or adopt any activity, training, or programming designed or implemented with reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
 - b. Applicant will certify, prior to award, that applicant does not and will not use TDT fund to require any covered person to ascribe to, study, or be instructed using DEI materials.
 - c. Applicant shall impose equivalent restrictions on vendors paid with grant funds.

III. STATEMENT OF POLICIES

- A. Grant applications will only be received during the advertised cycle. One application will be accepted per event, per fiscal year with the exception of a once-a-year event that may coincidentally occur within the same fiscal year due to scheduling. An example would be an early October event that is scheduled for late September the following fall, both occurring the same fiscal year.
- B. Grant funds are intended to supplement, not fully fund, the organization’s budget for the event referenced in the application.
- C. Non-government organizations must be registered with the Department of State, Division of Corporations, through their Sunbiz.org platform, or be able to provide proof of an exemption under law from such registration. Additionally, each applicant shall use their organization’s legal name, exactly as registered in Sunbiz.org, in their application.
 - a. The name, title, email, and phone number of one of the organization’s officers, listed in the Officer/Director Detail section of the organization’s current annual report, is responsible for signing the grant agreement for an awarded grant.
- D. Each application will be evaluated against established criteria, past performance and historic precedent. The applicant’s performance on past events will also be included as part of the review to award grant funding.

- a. Applicant must provide a statement of sustainability and growth for the event (i.e. How do you define success for the event and what is your long-term plan to sustain and grow the event over the next five years?).
 - b. Application must provide a statement of need for grant funding.
 - c. Hotels secured for the event must be located within Leon County.
 - d. Estimates for lodging, attendee and tourist counts must be based on the anticipation of the number of tourists drawn to the event specified in the grant application.
- E. Grant Funding shall not be utilized to support administrative costs. Grantee shall be responsible for all expenses associated with the performance and delivery of Services by this Agreement.

Private events are not eligible for grant funding. Allowable Funding uses (described in further detail on page 10) include marketing and promotional efforts, venue/site rentals and costs associated with visiting artists and/or exhibits.

- F. Grant funding will not be considered for events that occur during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session. Sports and Special Events grants may be permitted during some FSU home football game weekends except for those games anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory. Each year the Director of Tourism will provide the recommended “peak period” dates to the TDC for consideration/ approval prior to the start of each grant cycle application period.

Events will not be considered for funding if the event occurs during the following peak visitor periods defined for County Fiscal Year 2026-2027:

October 2-3, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Virginia
October 23-24, 2026	FAMU Football Game (FAMU Homecoming)
October 30-31, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Clemson
November 20-21, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. NC State (Homecoming)
December 11, 2026	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
March 7- May 6, 2027	Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)
April 30 – May 1, 2027	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
September, 2027	FSU Football Weekends, dates TBD in Feb 2027

- G. If the requested grant amount is \$10,000 or more, the applicant's budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar match (in-kind services will not be allowed). Applicants shall identify the amount of matching funds in the event budget submitted. If the grant funding award is \$10,000 or more, the 25% dollar-for-dollar match must be verified and documented in the Post-Event Report. Failure to meet the 25% match requirement will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.
- H. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for the approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. Proof of expenditures must be scans, copies, or pictures of the original receipts and invoices provided by a service provider/vendor. Proof of payment must be provided and may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and front and back copy of cleared check, credit card receipt, bank or credit card statement, ACH transfer or digital wallet receipts. Cash receipts are allowed for reimbursement however, a check or credit card is preferred. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided.

Board-Affiliated Vendor Restrictions

Grant funds derived from Tourist Development Tax revenues shall not be used to compensate any vendor in which a member of the recipient's governing board holds a material interest, except when:

- a. The goods or services were obtained through a competitive solicitation as defined in F.S. 287.012(6), and the board member disclosed the conflict consistent with F.S. 112.313(3) and abstained from related decisions; or
- b. The vendor is a documented sole source per F.S. 287.057(3)(c) – available only from a single source due to the inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, or unique capability.

All exceptions require written documentation submitted with grant reporting. This section applies to all TDT-funded grant programs administered by or on behalf of Leon County.

- I. If an event must be cancelled for any reason other than Force Majeure as described in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph R of the agreement, event organizers are required to make that determination at least 60 days prior to the event's originally scheduled date. Leon County Tourism will only reimburse for allowable expenses incurred before 60 days prior to the original event date. Any expenses incurred after that date will not be reimbursed.
- J. If an event needs to be rescheduled, the new dates must be between October 1 and September 30 of the current fiscal year and follow the grant guidelines to be eligible

for reimbursement. The new date must be provided to Visit Tallahassee to verify continued eligibility for the grant award.

- K. To be eligible for payment, a completed Post-Event Report must be submitted. The Report should be submitted within 60 days after the event has taken place but in no case shall it be submitted any later than September 30 unless the event has occurred on or after September 20th; in which case the report must be submitted by October 10th. The Report must include tracking statistics regarding out-of-town tourists and their use of transient lodging facilities and occupancy. Failure to submit a complete Post-Event Report in a timely manner may result in disqualification for support. All Post-Event Reports, including requests for reimbursement, must be received no later than September 30 and must include all receipts of expenditures and proof(s) of payment. Post event report submissions found to be intentionally misrepresented will disqualify grantees from grant reimbursement and future applications.
- L. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff will direct the County's marketing research firm of record to conduct an economic impact study at least every other year of events receiving \$10,000 or more in grant funding. Event organizers must allow for face-to-face interviews with spectators and participants in order for the marketing research firm to conduct their study and to be eligible for payment of grant funding.
- M. Grantees are not eligible to request funding above the projected room nights as outlined in the table on page 13. The Grant Review Committee has the authority to adjust anticipated room nights and funding levels based on the previous record of an applicant and/or event.
- N. Government entities, including public schools, colleges, and universities, must provide the name, title, email, and phone number of the person who is authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the organization in the application. Additionally, documentation from the organization showing the person has designated signing authority is required. This documentation could come in various forms, including through adopted policies or a specific written delegation.
- O. Non-Governmental entities must agree that they do not use coercion for labor or services as defined in 787.06 (14), Florida Statutes 2025, and under penalty of perjury, will attest to such statement through the execution and submittal of a notarized affidavit prior to signing the grant agreement. Failure to provide the notarized affidavit will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.
- P. Any funds granted will be subject to audit by Leon County, Florida or their designee.
- Q. Indemnity: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant the applicant/grantee shall indemnify Leon County, Florida, a

charter county and political subdivision of the State of Florida (the "County") to the extent provided in their grant agreement which will contain language substantially similar to the following:

- a. The applicant agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the County, its officials, officers, employees and agents, from and against any and all claims, damages, liabilities, losses, costs, or suits, of any nature whatsoever arising out of, because of, or due to any acts or omissions of the Grantee, its delegates, employees, subcontractors, volunteers and agents, arising out of or under this Agreement, including a reasonable attorney's fees. Should the County, as a result of the performance or lack thereof by or on behalf of the Grantee, be required to reimburse any sums to any organization, or reimburse funds to any Federal, State or local governmental entity, contribute funds to the performance of this event for which the Grant was approved, or expend County funds to complete or correct such performance, the Grantee, upon demand by the County, shall refund and reimburse the County for all sums so reimbursed or expended by the County. The County may, at its sole option, defend itself or require the Grantee to provide the defense. The Grantee acknowledges that ten dollars (\$10.00) of the amount paid to the Grantee is sufficient consideration of the Grantee's indemnification of the County.
 - b. If the applicant is a governmental entity or other such organization to which the protection of sovereign immunity is applicable, the indemnification requirements set forth in subparagraph (1) above shall apply to such applicant only to the extent as allowed in Section 768.28, Florida Statutes and nothing herein shall be deemed to be a waiver of such applicant's sovereign immunity beyond those statutory limits provided therein.
 - c. Grantee shall maintain Insurance with limits no less than the following: **General Liability:** \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage with a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate.
- R. Force Majeure: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant that a Party shall be excused from performance of an obligation under the Grant Agreement to the extent, and only to the extent, that such performance is affected by a "Force Majeure Event" which term shall mean any cause beyond the reasonable control of the Party affected, except where such Party could have reasonably foreseen and reasonably avoided the occurrence, which materially and adversely affects the performance by such Party of its obligation under the Grant Agreement. Such events shall include, but not be limited to, an act of God, disturbance, hostility, war, or revolution; strike or lockout; epidemic; pandemic; fire; hurricane; flood; or other unusually severe weather or natural disaster; or any requirements of law.

- S. The combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Sports Logo must be included on all printed and online advertisements and promotional materials for the event.

Promotional materials include: banners, signs, t-shirts, programs, brochures, event website, social media posts, etc. Online material developed for the event must include a link to the VisitTallahassee.com website. Before these materials are produced, a draft or design proof **MUST BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED** by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee to assure that the combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Sports Logo appears properly.

- T. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee is dedicated to supporting worthwhile local events through our grant programs and other promotional opportunities but reserves the right to reduce or eliminate grant funding for organizations that do not receive prior approval for the correct logo use. The correct logos are shown below and can be located and accessed at <https://visittallahassee.com/visit-tallahassee-logos/> :



- U. Allowable expenses include:

- 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, athletic trainers, and parking attendants.
- Rights fees, sanction fees, non-monetary awards, and travel expenses for guest speakers, performers, judges, event officials, or referees including lodging.

Note: The applicants are required to describe how the grant funds will be used. Any substantial changes to the items submitted in the application **MUST** be

submitted in writing and approved by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee office PRIOR to the purchase and the event. Purchases made without PRIOR written approval from staff will not be allowed.

V. Unallowable expenses include:

- General and administrative expenses.
- Building, renovating and/or remodeling expenses.
- Permanent equipment purchases.
- Debts incurred prior to the fiscal year of the grant period/in which the approved event takes place.
- DEI programming, promotion, materials and training.
- Food or beverage.
- Paid advertising that primarily reaches and targets Tallahassee/Leon County and its residents.
- Lodging or travel expenses for attendees.
- In-kind services.
- Monetary awards.
- Raffle prizes.
- Expenses paid to board-affiliated vendors that do not follow the conditions as stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph H.
- Political events and activities.

IV. RATING CRITERIA AND SCORING PROCESS

Each grant application will be reviewed by Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff to ensure that the project is eligible to receive grant funding by complying with 125.0104 Statutory requirements and that all required materials have been supplied. Failure to supply all the required materials will result in disqualification. Following staff review, the applications along with the history of applicant's and event's past performances will be provided to the TDC's Grant Review Committee for scoring. The committee will score each application on a 100-point scale based on the rating criteria outlined in the following Grant Rating Criteria.

Grant Rating Criteria

	Rating Criteria	Possible Points
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 will be reviewed. 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
Description, Event Sustainability	Event description includes event goals, a plan for measurement of success, and a statement of event sustainability and growth.	10
Event Funding Need and Budget	An appropriate statement of need for funding and a complete budget are included for the event.	10
Marketing Plan	Plans include an approach to marketing to event participants and public attendance. Includes 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
Total possible points:		100

V. GUIDELINES FOR GRANT REQUEST FUNDING LEVELS

The following table reflects guidelines for the funding level possible based on the event’s estimated number of hotel room nights. **The estimated number of hotel room does not guarantee the level of funding at which an event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on the Review Committee’s discretion and the funding available. As an example, if the Grant Review Committee believes the event has overstated the potential room nights, the Committee has the authority to place the application in a lower funding category and adjust the requested funding amount.**

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Special Event Funding Levels
Less than 100	\$0 - \$2,999
100 – 199	\$3,000 - \$7,999
200 – 499	\$8,000 - \$12,999
500 – 1,000	\$13,000 - \$19,999
1,001 – 1,499	\$20,000 - \$29,999

The following formula will be used to determine the final grant amounts:

- A. The average score of the panel will be determined for each application based on the maximum of 100 points as outlined in the grant rating criteria on page 12.
- B. Applications scoring at the minimum threshold of 70% or above will be considered for grant funding based on the formula outlined below.
- C. The average score for each application will first be converted into a percentage of the 100 maximum points possible. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90, the percentage for Application #1 would be 90%.
- D. The grant requested/adjusted amount will then be multiplied by the percentage to determine the initial award based on the TSC Grant Review Committee’s combined scores. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90% and requested/adjusted \$5,000, the initial award would be \$4,500.
- E. The same process will be followed for each application and the total of potential initial awards will be calculated.
- F. If the total amount of potential grant allocations exceeds the total budgeted for all grants, staff will adjust all of the proposed allocations by the same percentage to keep the totals awarded equal to or less than the total available grant funds.
- G. After the preceding steps are complete, to ensure funding for the highest scoring application, the TSC Grant Review Committee reserves the right to adjust recommended grant awards.

VI. SPORTS EVENT ANNUAL GRANT TIMELINE

First Cycle

June 25, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Opens (45-day cycle)
July/August, 2026	Mandatory Grant Application Workshops
August 6, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Closes
August, 2026	TSC Grant Committee Application Review and Recommendations
September 10, 2026	TDC consideration of Grant Funding Recommendations
September 11, 2026	Grantees notified of Grant Awards
October 1 – December 31, 2026	Grant Agreements sent to Grantees

Second Cycle

November 11, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Opens (30-day cycle)
December 11, 2026	Grant Application Cycle Closes
December 14-23, 2026	TSC Grant Committee Application Review and Recommendations
February 4, 2027*	TDC Consideration of Grant Funding Recommendations
February 5, 2027	Grantees notified of Grant Awards
February 8 – March 31, 2027	Grant Agreements sent to Grantees

*February TDC date subject to FY2027 TDC meeting schedule approval.

Applicants are required to attend the Grant Application Orientation Workshop either in person or online or they will not be eligible for a grant award.

VII. VISITOR/TOURIST TRACKING

- A. To assess the impact of each event on the Tallahassee/Leon County transient lodging industry, the TDC emphasizes the importance of tracking the number of overnight tourists attending the event.
 - a. Room block reports from hotels are the preferred method of reporting room data. The information will be used to help track the number of tourists attending the event. Furthermore, this information helps determine the growth of a particular event. Subsequently, an event’s growth can impact the future funding level of the grant awarded to the organization.
 - b. If your event uses an advanced registration procedure, utilize the **Visitor/Tourist Tracking Form** located on the Visit Tallahassee Grants website to gather the requested information. Each participant/group should sign his or her name, list the hotel in which they are residing, the number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room.
 - c. Include question in the event registration form asking if participant/team will stay overnight in a Leon County lodging, along with number of rooms and nights booked.

- d. Utilize the point-of-origin (zip code) provided at registration to assess the likelihood of participants needing overnight lodging.
 - e. Conduct a brief survey at check-in, packet pickup, or on-site registration to confirm if participant/team are staying in Leon County lodging, including the number of rooms and nights booked.
- B. The County reserves the right to conduct a post-audit of information presented on the **Post-Event Report**. All lodging accommodations listed will be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the event. **ANY MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION PRESENTED CAN AND WILL ADVERSLEY AFFECT FUTURE GRANT AWARDS**

VIII. POST-EVENT REPORT

Funding shall only be provided as reimbursement for approved expenditures upon completion of the event. Reimbursement will not be issued until all necessary post-event information is provided. Such Information is the responsibility of the grantee to provide and includes:

- A. An invoice from the awarded organization to the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee for payment of the awarded grant amount. This invoice must be dated and include an invoice number.
- B. Valid invoices for allowable expenses.
 - a. If an expense is from a board-affiliated vendor, it must be explained in the post event report and noted on the invoice on the invoice. Proof that a competitive procurement process was used following the conditions stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph H must be included with the invoice.
 - i. If the board-affiliated vendor is a “sole source” vendor, proof that the expense is from a practical source of supply because of an inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, copyright, or a supplier’s unique capability must be included with the invoice.
- C. Copy of proof of payments such as cleared checks, or detailed credit card receipts. Proof of payment must match invoices submitted.
- D. Visitor/Tourist and Room Nights documentation as listed in Section VII.
- E. Copies of marketing or advertising materials, and social media showing Leon County Tourism/Visit Tallahassee Sports logo usage.

IX. CONCLUSION

The event director, fiscal administrator or other contact person may be called upon by any one of these groups or their staff at any time during the review process. Applicants shall not contact members of the TSC Grant Review Committee.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

Taylor Walker | (850) 606-2318 | Taylor.Walker@VisitTallahassee.com

DRAFT

Leon County Division of Tourism



Visit
Tallahassee
Pretty. Unexpected.

SPORTS EVENTS

~~FY26~~FY27 GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES



REVISED May ~~8, 2025~~, 2026

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DRAFT

**Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee
Sports Events Grant Program**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Leon County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Leon County Ordinance #88-01. The TDC administers funds collected from a local option Tourist Development Tax (TDT) on transient lodging sales. i.e. hotels/motels, and condominiums. The funds are designated to promote Tallahassee/Leon County as a preferred tourist destination for meetings and conventions, group leisure travel, special events, cultural activities and amateur sporting events.

Grant funding is based upon the potential to generate room nights. Per section 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes, to be an authorized use of Tourist Development Tax revenue an event “shall have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue or event to tourists.” By Statute, a tourist is a “person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside of the county of his or her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations” including “any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, roominghouse, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort for a term of 6 months or less.” By Statute, “Promotion” is defined as “marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities”.

A “Sports Event” is defined as a new or existing sporting event, exhibition, competition, team training, conference or celebration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and of interest to the general public. For the purpose of this grant program, the public interest should extend to Tallahassee/Leon County residents and to those living outside Tallahassee/Leon County who would visit the destination and stay overnight to observe or participate.

The Leon County Division of Tourism annually allocates funds to grant programs for ~~local~~ groups and organizations that coordinate local events with a demonstrated history of or significant potential to draw tourists to the area. The Special Events Grants, and Signature/Emerging Signature Grants are reviewed by the TDC Grant Review Committee. The TDC shall appoint a Sports Grant Review Committee annually comprised of 3-5 members of the Tallahassee Sports Council to review the Sports Grants applications. The TDC Grant Review Committee is comprised of TDC members. Legacy Event grants are reviewed by the TDC and recommendations for approval are made by the TDC to the Leon County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The Leon County Division of Tourism grants programs are funded by the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) to support hosting events that have tourist appeal. Some grant programs administered by the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) are also funded by TDT revenue and are designed to support year-round arts and culture programming.

Applicants found to have submitted applications to both the 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. Applicants receiving grant funds from the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) may not receive grant funding for the same event through the TDC. Further, no applicant may apply to TDC and COCA for funding related to the same event or activity. Applicants may make requests for grant funds to the TDC and COCA, but these must be for a different event or activity.

Each application will be evaluated against established criteria and historic precedent. The amount of grant funds awarded will depend upon the availability of designated funds and specific allocations. Ideally, the TDT funds allocated by the TDC will eventually be returned through increased transient lodging sales resulting from these events and the tourist development tax generated from those sales. Events are significant motivators for travel that increase destination visibility regionally and tourist spending in the community.

II. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The intent of the Sports Event Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract overnight tourists to Tallahassee/Leon County and create business for the commercial lodging industry that collect TDT, (hotels/motels, condominiums, short-term vacation rentals), as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other tourism related business activities. In addition to being compliant with F.S. 125.0104 the following criteria have been established to be considered for funding:

- A. Each application must include a signed Certification and Compliance page [in the application submission.](#)
- B. Event must take place between October 1 and September 30 of the upcoming fiscal year.
- C. The event must have the potential to bring-out-of-town tourists that use commercial lodging establishments in Tallahassee/Leon County.
- D. Applicant must provide a marketing/promotional plan that demonstrates out-of-market advertising/promotion to reach potential visitors. For purposes of these grant guidelines “out-of-market” means outside of a 30-mile radius of Leon County.

E. Applicant must provide a detailed event budget.

F. Political events are not eligible for Tourism grant funding.

G. Grant applications must conform with Florida Senate Bill 1134 and section 287.139 of the Florida Statutes, and attest that grant award would not be used to fund diversity, equity, or inclusion (“DEI”) programming, promotion, materials or training.

a. DEI includes any effort to influence or manipulate the composition of employees, promote or provide preferential treatment or special benefits, or promote or adopt any activity, training, or programming designed or implemented with reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

b. Applicant will certify, prior to award, that applicant does not and will not use TDT fund to require any covered person to ascribe to, study, or be instructed using DEI materials.

~~b.c.~~ Applicant shall impose equivalent restrictions on vendors paid with grant funds.

III. STATEMENT OF POLICIES

A. Grant applications will only be received during the advertised cycle. One application will be accepted per event, per fiscal year with the exception of a once-a-year event that may coincidentally occur within the same fiscal year due to scheduling. An example would be an early October event that is scheduled for late September the following fall, both occurring the same fiscal year.

B. Grant funds are intended to supplement, not fully fund, the organization’s budget for the event referenced in the application.

C. Non-government organizations must be registered with the Department of State, Division of Corporations, through their Sunbiz.org platform, or be able to provide proof of an exemption under law from such registration. Additionally, each applicant shall use their organization’s legal name, exactly as registered in Sunbiz.org, in their application.

a. The name, title, email, and phone number of one of the organization’s officers, listed in the Officer/Director Detail section of the organization’s current annual report, is responsible for signing the grant agreement for an awarded grant.

~~B.D.~~ Each application will be evaluated against established criteria, past performance and historic precedent. The applicant's performance on past events will also be included as part of the review to award grant funding.

- a. Applicant must provide a statement of sustainability and growth for the event (i.e. How do you define success for the event and what is your long-term plan to sustain and grow the event over the next five years?).
- b. Application must provide a statement of need for grant funding.
- c. Hotels secured for the event must be located within Leon County.
- d. Estimates for lodging, attendee and tourist counts must be based on the anticipation of the number of tourists drawn to the event specified in the grant application.

~~C.E.~~ Grant Funding shall not be utilized to support administrative costs. Grantee shall be responsible for all expenses associated with the performance and delivery of Services by this Agreement.

~~D.~~ Private events are not eligible for grant funding. Allowable Funding uses (described in further detail on page [910](#)) include marketing and promotional efforts, venue/site rentals and costs associated with visiting artists and/or exhibits.

~~E.F.~~ Grant funding will not be considered for events that occur during peak visitor periods. Peak visitor periods are generally defined as FSU home football game weekends anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory, FAMU homecoming weekend, FSU or FAMU spring and fall graduation weekends, and Monday through Thursday during the regular legislative session. Sports and Special Events grants may be permitted during some FSU home football game weekends except for those games anticipated to fill existing hotel room inventory. Each year the Director of Tourism will provide the recommended "peak period" dates to the TDC for consideration/approval prior to the start of each grant cycle application period.

Events will not be considered for funding if the event occurs during the following peak visitor periods defined for County Fiscal Year ~~2025-2026~~ 2027:

October 3-4, 2025 <u>October 2-3, 2026</u>	FSU Football Game vs. Miami <u>Virginia</u>
October 10-11, 2025	FSU Football Game vs. Pittsburgh

October 18-19, 2025 <u>23-24, 2026</u>	FAMU Football Game (FAMU Homecoming)
October 30-31 — November 1, 2025, 2026	FSU Football Game vs. Wake Forest (Homecoming) <u>Clemson</u>
November 14-15, 2025 <u>20-21, 2026</u>	FSU Football Game vs. Virginia Tech <u>NC State (Homecoming)</u>
December 12, 2025 <u>11, 2026</u>	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
January 9-17, 2026	World Athletics Cross-Country Championships
January 13 —March 13, 2026 <u>7-May 6, 2027</u>	Florida Legislative Session (Monday – Thursday)
<u>April 30 – May 2-3, 2026</u> <u>1, 2027</u>	FSU/FAMU/TSC Graduation
<u>September, 2027</u>	<u>FSU Football Weekends, dates TBD in Feb 2027</u>

G. If the requested grant amount is \$10,000 or more, the applicant’s budget must reflect at least a 25% dollar-for-dollar match (in-kind services will not be allowed). Applicants shall identify the amount of matching funds in the event budget submitted. If the grant funding award is \$10,000 or more, the 25% dollar-for-dollar match must be verified and documented in the Post-Event Report. Failure to meet the 25% match requirement will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.

F. ~~Example:~~

- ~~a. Grantee is awarded \$22,000.~~
- ~~b. Proof of total spending must be at least \$27,000.~~
- ~~c. $\$22,000 + \$5,500$ (25% match) = $\$27,500$.~~

G.H. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for the approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. Proof of expenditures must be scans, copies, or pictures of the original receipts and invoices provided by a service provider/vendor. Proof of payment must be provided and may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and front and back copy of cleared check, credit card receipt, bank or credit card statement, ACH transfer or digital wallet receipts. Cash receipts are allowed for reimbursement however, a check or credit card is preferred. Written confirmation from vendor that expenditure has been paid in full is necessary if only a copy of the front of the cleared check is provided.

Board-Affiliated Vendor Restrictions

Grant funds derived from Tourist Development Tax revenues shall not be used to compensate any vendor in which a member of the recipient’s governing board holds a material interest, except when:

- a. The goods or services were obtained through a competitive solicitation as defined in F.S. 287.012(6), and the board member disclosed the conflict consistent with F.S. 112.313(3) and abstained from related decisions; or

b. The vendor is a documented sole source per F.S. 287.057(3)(c) – available only from a single source due to the inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, or unique capability.

All exceptions require written documentation submitted with grant reporting. This section applies to all TDT-funded grant programs administered by or on behalf of Leon County.

H.I. If an event must be cancelled for any reason other than Force Majeure as described in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph U of the agreement, event organizers are required to make that determination at least 60 days prior to the event's originally scheduled date. Leon County Tourism will only reimburse for allowable expenses incurred before 60 days prior to the original event date. Any expenses incurred after that date will not be reimbursed.

H.J. If an event needs to be rescheduled, the new dates must be between October 1 and September 30 of the current fiscal year and follow the grant guidelines to be eligible for reimbursement. The new date must be provided to Visit Tallahassee to verify continued eligibility for the grant award.

H.K. To be ~~an~~ eligible for payment, a completed Post-Event Report must be submitted. The Report should be submitted within 60 days after the event has taken place but in no case shall it be submitted any later than September 30. unless the event has occurred on or after September 20th; in which case the report must be submitted by October 10th. The Report must include tracking statistics regarding out-of-town tourists and their use of transient lodging facilities and occupancy. Failure to submit a complete Post-Event Report in a timely manner may result in disqualification for support. All Post-Event Reports, including requests for reimbursement, must be received no later than September 30 and must include all receipts of expenditures and proof(s) of payment. Post event report submissions found to be intentionally misrepresented will disqualify grantees from grant reimbursement and future applications.

H.L. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff will direct the County's marketing research firm of record to conduct an economic impact study at least every other year of events receiving \$10,000 or more in grant funding. Event organizers must allow for face-to-face interviews with spectators and participants in order for the marketing research firm to conduct their study and to be eligible for payment of grant funding.

H.M. Grantees are not eligible to request funding above the projected room nights as outlined in the table on page ~~12~~13. The Grant Review Committee has the authority to adjust anticipated room nights and funding levels based on the previous record of an applicant and/or event.

~~M.A. Non government organizations must be registered with the Department of State, Division of Corporations, through their Sunbiz.org platform, or be able to provide proof of an exemption under law from such registration. Additionally, each applicant shall use their organization's legal name, exactly as registered in Sunbiz.org, in their application.~~

~~a. The name, title, email, and phone number of one of the organization's officers, listed in the Officer/Director Detail section of the organization's current annual report, is responsible for signing the grant agreement for an awarded grant.~~

N. Government entities, including public schools, colleges, and universities, must provide the name, title, email, and phone number of the person who is authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the organization in the application. Additionally, documentation from the organization showing the person has designated signing authority is required. This documentation could come in various forms, including through adopted policies or a specific written delegation.

O. Non-Governmental entities must agree that they do not use coercion for labor or services as defined in 787.06 (14), Florida Statutes 2025, and under penalty of perjury, will attest to such statement through the execution and submittal of a notarized affidavit prior to signing the grant agreement. Failure to provide the notarized affidavit will be considered a breach of the requirements of the grant award.

~~P.P.~~ Any funds granted will be subject to audit by Leon County, Florida or their designee.

~~P.Q.~~ Indemnity: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant the applicant/grantee shall indemnify Leon County, Florida, a charter county and political subdivision of the State of Florida (the "County") to the extent provided in their grant agreement which will contain language substantially similar to the following:

a. The applicant agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the County, its officials, officers, employees and agents, from and against any and all claims, damages, liabilities, losses, costs, or suits, of any nature whatsoever arising out of, because of, or due to any acts or omissions of the Grantee, its delegates, employees, subcontractors, volunteers and agents, arising out of or under this Agreement, including a reasonable attorney's fees. Should the County, as a result of the performance or lack thereof by or on behalf of the Grantee, be required to reimburse any sums to any organization, or reimburse funds to any Federal, State or local governmental entity, contribute funds to the performance of this event for which the Grant was approved, or expend

County funds to complete or correct such performance, the Grantee, upon demand by the County, shall refund and reimburse the County for all sums so reimbursed or expended by the County. The County may, at its sole option, defend itself or require the Grantee to provide the defense. The Grantee acknowledges that ten dollars (\$10.00) of the amount paid to the Grantee is sufficient consideration of the Grantee's indemnification of the County.

- b. If the applicant is a governmental entity or other such organization to which the protection of sovereign immunity is applicable, the indemnification requirements set forth in subparagraph (1) above shall apply to such applicant only to the extent as allowed in Section 768.28. Florida Statutes and nothing herein shall be deemed to be a waiver of such applicant's sovereign immunity beyond those statutory limits provided therein.
- c. Grantee shall maintain Insurance with limits no less than the following:
General Liability: \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage with a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate.

R. Force Majeure: By submitting a Grant Application each applicant agrees that upon final approval of a Grant that a Party shall be excused from performance of an obligation under the Grant Agreement to the extent, and only to the extent, that such performance is affected by a "Force Majeure Event" which term shall mean any cause beyond the reasonable control of the Party affected, except where such Party could have reasonably foreseen and reasonably avoided the occurrence, which materially and adversely affects the performance by such Party of its obligation under the Grant Agreement. Such events shall include, but not be limited to, an act of God, disturbance, hostility, war, or revolution; strike or lockout; epidemic; pandemic; fire; hurricane; flood; or other unusually severe weather or natural disaster; or any requirements of law.

Q.S. The combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Sports Logo must be included on all printed and online advertisements and ~~prominent~~ promotional materials for the event.

Promotional materials include: banners, signs, t-shirts, programs, brochures, event website, social media posts, etc. Online material developed for the event must include a link to the VisitTallahassee.com website. Before these materials are produced, a draft or design proof **MUST BE SUBMITTED AND APPROVED** by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee to assure that the combined Leon County/Visit Tallahassee Sports Logo appears properly.

T. Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee is dedicated to supporting worthwhile local events through our grant programs and other promotional

opportunities but reserves the right to reduce or eliminate grant funding for organizations that do not receive prior approval for the correct logo use. The correct logo is provided below:



R.U.



S.V. Allowable expenses include:

- 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, athletic trainers, and parking attendants.
- Rights fees, sanction fees, non-monetary awards, and travel expenses for guest speakers, performers, judges, event officials, or referees including lodging.

Note: The applicants are required to describe how the grant funds will be used. Any substantial changes to the items submitted in the application **MUST** be submitted in writing and approved by the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee office **PRIOR** to the purchase and the event. Purchases made without **PRIOR** written approval from staff will not be allowed.

T.W. ~~Prohibited~~ ~~Unallowable~~ expenses include:

- General and administrative expenses.
- Building, renovating and/or remodeling expenses.
- Permanent equipment purchases.
- Debts incurred prior to the fiscal year of the grant period/in which the approved event takes place.
- DEI programming, promotion, materials and training.
- Food or beverage.
- Paid advertising that primarily reaches and targets Tallahassee/Leon County and its residents.
- Lodging or travel expenses for attendees.
- In-kind services.
- Monetary awards.
- Raffle prizes.
- Expenses paid to board-affiliated vendors that do not follow the conditions as stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph J.
- Political events and activities.

IV. RATING CRITERIA AND SCORING PROCESS

Each grant application will be reviewed by Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee staff to ensure that the project is eligible to receive grant funding by comporting with 125.0104 Statutory requirements and that all required materials have been supplied. Failure to supply all the required materials will result in disqualification. Following staff review, the applications along with the history of applicant’s and event’s past performances will be provided to the TDC’s Grant Review Committee for scoring. The committee will score each application on a 100-point scale based on the rating criteria outlined in the following Grant Rating Criteria.

Grant Rating Criteria

	Rating Criteria	Possible Points
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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 will be reviewed. Event does not occur during peak visitor periods as defined in the grant policies. (45 points)	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 points)	25
Description, Event Sustainability	Event description includes event goals, a plan for measurement of success, and a statement of event sustainability and growth. (10 points)	10
Event Funding Need and Budget	An appropriate statement of need for funding and a complete budget are included for the event. (10 points)	10
Marketing Plan	<p>For Events with open attendance, the application contains a well-defined, thorough, and realistic Plans include an approach to marketing plan which includes strategies for attracting out-of-county. OR</p> <p>For Events with pre-registration, the applicant provides a well-defined, thorough and realistic outreach plan to their to event participants-</p> <p><u>ALL plans include and public attendance. Includes</u> 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 points)</p>	10
Total possible points:		100

V. GUIDELINES FOR GRANT REQUEST FUNDING LEVELS

The following table reflects guidelines for the funding level possible based on the event's estimated number of hotel room nights. **The estimated number of hotel room does not guarantee the level of funding at which an event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on the Review Committee's discretion and the funding available. As an example, if the Grant Review Committee believes the event has overstated the potential room nights, the Committee has the authority to place the application in a lower funding category and adjust the requested funding amount.**

Room Nights	Recommended Tourism Special Event Funding Levels
Less than 100	\$0 - \$2,999
100 – 199	\$3,000 - \$7,999
200 – 499	\$68,000 - \$10,499 <u>\$12,999</u>
500 – 1,000	\$10,500 – \$17,499 <u>\$13,000 - \$19,999</u>
1,001 – 1,499	\$17,500 – \$26,250 <u>\$20,000 - \$29,999</u>

The following formula will be used to determine the final grant amounts:

- A. The average score of the panel will be determined for each application based on the maximum of 100 points as outlined in the grant rating criteria on page ~~11~~12.
- B. Applications scoring at the minimum threshold of 70% or above will be considered for grant funding based on the formula outlined below.
- C. The average score for each application will first be converted into a percentage of the 100 maximum points possible. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90, the percentage for Application #1 would be 90%.
- D. The grant requested/adjusted amount will then be multiplied by the percentage to determine the initial award based on the TSC Grant Review Committee’s combined scores. As an example, if Application #1 scored 90% and requested/adjusted \$5,000, the initial award would be \$4,500.
- E. The same process will be followed for each application and the total of potential initial awards will be calculated.
- F. If the total amount of potential grant allocations exceeds the total budgeted for all grants, staff will adjust all of the proposed allocations by the same percentage to keep the totals awarded equal to or less than the total available grant funds.
- G. After the preceding steps are complete, to ensure funding for the highest scoring application, the TSC Grant Review Committee reserves the right to adjust recommended grant awards.

VI. SPORTS EVENT ANNUAL GRANT TIMELINE

First Cycle

June 24, 2025 <u>25, 2026</u>	Grant Application Cycle Opens (45-day cycle)
July/August, 2025 <u>2026</u>	Mandatory Grant Application Workshops
August 7, 2025 <u>August 6, 2026</u>	Grant Application Cycle Closes
August, 2025 <u>2026</u>	TSC Grant Committee Application Review and Recommendations
September 11, 2025 <u>10, 2026</u>	TDC Consideration <u>consideration</u> of Grant Funding Recommendations
September 12, 2025 <u>11, 2026</u>	Grantees notified of Grant Awards
September 15 <u>October 1</u> – December 31, 2025 <u>2026</u>	Grant Agreements sent to Grantees

Second Cycle

November 12, 2025 <u>11, 2026</u>	Grant Application Cycle Opens (30-day cycle)
December 12, 2025 <u>11, 2026</u>	Grant Application Cycle Closes
December 16-22, 2025 <u>14-23, 2026</u>	TSC Grant Committee Application Review and Recommendations
February 5, 2026 <u>4, 2027</u> *	TDC Consideration of Grant Funding Recommendations
February 6, 2026 <u>5, 2027</u>	Grantees notified of Grant Awards
February 9 <u>8</u> – March 31, 2026 <u>2027</u>	Grant Agreements sent to Grantees

*February TDC date subject to ~~FY2026~~FY2027 TDC meeting schedule approval.

Applicants are required to attend the Grant Application Orientation Workshop either in person or online or they will not be eligible for a grant award.

VII. VISITOR/TOURIST TRACKING

- A. To assess the impact of each event on the Tallahassee/Leon County transient lodging industry, the TDC emphasizes the importance of tracking the number of overnight tourists attending the event.
- Room block reports from hotels are the preferred method of reporting room data. The information will be used to help track the number of tourists attending the event. Furthermore, this information helps determine the growth of a particular event. Subsequently, an event's growth can impact the future funding level of the grant awarded to the organization.
 - If your event uses an advanced registration procedure, utilize the **Visitor/Tourist Tracking Form** located on the Visit Tallahassee Grants website to gather the requested information. Each participant/group should sign his or her name, list the hotel in which they are residing, the number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room.

- c. Include question in the event registration form asking if participant/team will stay overnight in a Leon County lodging, along with number of rooms and nights booked.
 - d. Utilize the point-of-origin (zip code) provided at registration to assess the likelihood of participants needing overnight lodging.
 - e. Conduct a brief survey at check-in, packet pickup, or on-site registration to confirm if participant/team are staying in Leon County lodging, including the number of rooms and nights booked.
- B. The County reserves the right to conduct a post-audit of information presented on the **Post-Event Report**. All lodging accommodations listed will be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the event. **ANY MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION PRESENTED CAN AND WILL ADVERSLEY AFFECT FUTURE GRANT AWARDS**

VIII. POST-EVENT REPORT

Funding shall only be provided as reimbursement for approved expenditures upon completion of the event. Reimbursement will not be issued until all necessary post-event information is provided. Such Information is the responsibility of the grantee to provide and includes:

- A. An invoice from the awarded organization to the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee for payment of the awarded grant amount. This invoice must be dated and include an invoice number.

B. Valid invoices for allowable expenses.

a. If an expense is from a board-affiliated vendor, it must be explained in the post event report and noted on the invoice on the invoice. Proof that a competitive procurement process was used following the conditions stated in Section III. Statement of Policies, Paragraph J must be included with the invoice.

i. If the board-affiliated vendor is a "sole source" vendor, proof that the expense is from a practical source of supply because of an inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, copyright, or a supplier's unique capability must be included with the invoice.

B-C. Copy of proof of payments such as cleared checks, or detailed credit card receipts. Proof of payment must match invoices submitted.

C-D. _____ Visitor/Tourist and Room Nights documentation as listed in Section VII.

D.E. Copies of marketing or advertising materials, and social media showing Leon County Tourism/Visit Tallahassee Sports logo usage.

IX. CONCLUSION

The event director, fiscal administrator or other contact person may be called upon by any one of these groups or their staff at any time during the review process. Applicants shall not contact members of the TSC Grant Review Committee.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

Taylor Walker | (850) 606-2318 | Taylor.Walker@VisitTallahassee.com

DRAFT



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 7, 2026

TO: Leon County Tourist Development Council Members

FROM: Kerri L. Post, Executive Director, Leon County Tourism/Visit Tallahassee

SUBJECT: Process Options for Appointment of a TDC Member or Their Designee to COCA's FY27 Grant Review Panel

BACKGROUND

The County's FY26 one-year funding agreement with COCA stipulates a TDC member, or the TDC's designee, shall serve on COCA's FY27 Grant Review Panel evaluating and scoring the grant applications COCA receives for their two grant programs funded with Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue – the Cultural Grant Program and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Program. COCA combines the two grant programs into one application with one set of Grant Guidelines.

The requirement for a TDC member, or the TDC's designee, to serve on COCA's FY27 Grant Review Panel was put in place after the expiration of COCA's previous 5-year agreement to ensure a minimum of at least one member of COCA's Grant Review Panel will actually have tourism industry knowledge and experience when reviewing the FY27 grant applications that have applied to receive TDT-funding support.

A TDC member has previously served on COCA's Grant Review Panel Pre-COVID, and as the County Attorney's Office recently confirmed, there are no Sunshine Law issues or "double voting" concerns if a TDC member chooses to serve on COCA's Grant Review Panel.

ANALYSIS

According to COCA's published FY27 Grant Programs timeline, the Grant Review Panel training is scheduled on Friday, July 17, with online application evaluation and scoring beginning immediately through August 28, 2026, via COCA's grant administration platform Submittable, which is the same grant software platform Visit Tallahassee utilizes. The Grant Review Panel public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 1, 2026.

For your consideration, there are three (3) process options to appoint a TDC member, or a designee, to COCA's FY27 Grant Review Panel at the May 7th or July 9th TDC meeting:

Option 1 – A TDC member will be nominated or volunteer to serve on COCA's FY27 Grant Review Panel.

Option 2 – The TDC will accept and deliberate recommendations from TDC members to appoint a tourism industry designee to serve on COCA's FY27 Grant Review Panel.

Option 3 – On behalf of the TDC, the TDC Chairman, at their discretion, will appoint a tourism industry designee to serve on COCA's FY27 Grant Review Panel.

Visit Tallahassee staff would be happy to provide additional information and/or answer any questions regarding the County's FY26 one-year agreement and the actions that lead to adding the requirement for a TDC member or your designee to serve to COCA's FY27 Grant Review Panel.

Kathleen Spehar, COCA's liaison to the TDC, may also provide additional information and/or answer any questions you may have on COCA's Grant Review Panel functions and operational considerations.

Thank you.



FY 2027 PROPOSED Division of Tourism (Visit Tallahassee) Budget

FY27 TDT Collection Projection @100%	\$	1,936,163
FY27 TDT Collection Projection @97%	\$	1,877,920
FY27 TDT Collection Projection @95%	\$	1,784,024
FY27 TDT Collection 4-Cent	\$	7,137,018
Other Revenue (merchandise sales, misc revenue, Sports Foundation Grants, Event Sponsorships)	\$	130,751
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	229,342
	\$	-
Total Actual Budget (5 cent @ 95% + Other Revenue+Appropriated Fund Balance)	\$	9,281,135

Acct #	EXPENDITURES	FY 2026 Adopted Budget	FY 2027 PROPOSED Budget	Year-Over-Year % Difference
<i>Administration(301)/Marketing(303)</i>				
51200	Salaries & Wages	1,016,532	1,016,002	0%
51250	Regular OPS Salaries & Wages	210,042	235,448	11%
51500	Special Pay	3,600	3,700	3%
52100	FICA	94,224	96,352	2%
52200	Retirement Contributions	199,159	201,229	1%
52210	Deferred Compensation	1,566	1,566	0%
52300	Life & Health Insurance	244,421	263,216	7%
52400	Workers Compensation	4,606	4,521	-2%
53400	Other Contractual Services	643,711	597,675	-8%
54000	Travel & Per Diem	108,890	105,890	-3%
54100	Communications Services	9,600	9,600	0%
54101	Communications - Phone System	102	102	0%
54200	Postage	15,000	17,500	14%
54400	Rental & Leases	31,090	33,090	6%
54505	Vehicle Coverage	747	991	25%
54600	Repair & Maintenance	6,597	16,597	60%
54601	Vehicle Repair	1,136	1,136	0%
54700	Printing	10,000	16,000	38%
54800	Promotional Activities	41,299	67,299	39%
54860	TDC Direct Sales Promotions	73,958	75,004	1%
54861	TDC Community Relations	54,632	44,632	-22%
54862	TDC Merchandise	41,254	52,005	21%
54900	Other Current Charges	1,709,720	1,205,851	-42%
54948	Other Current Chrg-Amphitheater	498,780	607,187	18%
55100	Office Supplies	16,625	18,625	11%
55200	Operating Supplies	18,225	20,225	10%
55210	Fuel & Oil	498	338	-47%
55250	Uniforms	6,000	5,000	-20%
55400	Publications, Memberships	49,266	52,399	6%
55401	Training	13,000	8,000	-63%
56400	Machinery & Equipment	-	-	
58160	TDC Local T&E	3,500	3,500	0%
58320	Sponsorship & Contributions	86,431	86,431	0%

Acct #	EXPENDITURES	FY 2026 Adopted Budget	FY 2027 PROPOSED Budget	Year-Over- Year % Difference
	<u><i>Advertising/Public Relations (302)</i></u>			
53400	Other Contractual Services	1,500,000	1,500,000	0%
54900	Other Current Charges - Bicentennial	-	-	
	<u><i>Special Events/Grants (304)</i></u>			
58300	Grants & Aids	800,000	980,000	18%
	<u><i>Welcome Center CIP (086065)</i></u>			
56200	Building	-	-	
	<u><i>Countywide Automation (470)</i></u>			
54110	Com-net Communications	-	-	
54600	Repairs and Maintenance	-	-	
	<u><i>Risk Allocations (495)</i></u>			
54500	Insurance	-	-	
	<u><i>Indirect Cost (499)</i></u>			
54900	Indirect Cost Charges	-	-	
	<u><i>Line Item Funding - (888)</i></u>			
58215	Local Arts Agency Program (160)	150,000	150,000	0%
58215	Local Arts Agency Program (001)	1,679,693	1,784,024	6%
	<u><i>Transfers (950)</i></u>			
591220	Transfer to Fund 220	-	-	
591220	Transfer to Fund 305	-	-	
	<u><i>Salary Contingency (990)</i></u>			
59900	Other Non-operating Uses	-	-	
	Reserve for Fund Balance	-	-	
Total		9,343,904	9,281,135	-1%



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FY26 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL UPDATED MEETING DATES
with 2 Venue Changes

Thursday, February 5, 2026, 9:00 AM – Meeting Room at ORS

Thursday, May 7, 2026 – 9:00 AM – Meeting Room at ORS

Thursday, July 9, 2026 – 9:00 AM – County Commission Chambers

Thursday, September 10, 2026 – 9:00 AM – County Commission Chambers

Thursday, November 5, 2026 – 9:00 AM – Meeting Room at ORS

**** Note*** As discussed by the Council at the February 5, 2026 meeting future meetings will be hosted at the Leon County Office of Resource Stewardship – The Gathering Room, (ORS) for convenience when available.*