



LEON COUNTY

Tourist Development Council

Thursday, November 6, 2025, 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**
 - September 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes (T1)
 - Financial Reports: Division Budget FY 2025 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: FY25 Q4 Economic Impact Report (T4)
 - FY22-26 Tourism Strategic Plan Update - FY2025 Year-end Recap (T5)
 - Nominations for FY26 TDC Chair
 - Proposed FY26 TDC Meeting Dates (T6)
 - World Athletics Cross Country Championships 2026 Update – 2+ Months To Go!
 - Birmingham, AL Media Activation Recap & Social Media Milestone Highlight
 - Concert Update
 - Tallahassee Sports Council Update
 - FY26 COCA Amended Cultural Grant Applications Review (T7)
 - COCA Update
- VI. Executive Director's Report – **Kerri Post**
 - Amtrak Office Building Repair Update
- VII. Additional Business: "For the Good of the Cause" – **Chair**

Next TDC Meeting:

Thursday, February 5, 2026, 9:00 A.M.
County Commission Chambers



LEON COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 11, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

**County Commission Chambers - Leon County Courthouse, Fifth Floor
301 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 City Commissioner Curtis Richardson, Mayor Pro Tempore Dianne Williams - Cox, Russell Daws, Joshua Brock, Emily Johnson -Truitt, Matt Thompson, Liaison Kathleen Spehar, and Liaison Amanda Heidecker. Carolanne Savage and County Commissioner Bill Proctor were absent.

Tourism Staff present: Kerri Post, Jon LaBarre, Scott Lindeman, Genesis Leggett, Taylor Wheaton, Wendy Halleck, Bryan Smith, Janet Roach, Taylor Walker, Julie Trezek, Trisha Enfinger, Shelby Bishop, and Trent Stukes (Intern).

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Mayor Pro Tempore Williams – Cox requested a moment of silence in remembrance of 9/11.

Request for Additional Agenda Items: None

Public Comment: None

Consent:

Chair Personette entertained a motion for approval for the three items of consent:

1. Meeting Minutes May 8, 2025
2. Financial Reports: Division Budget FY 2025 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

Mayor Pro Tem Williams-Cox moved, seconded by Commissioner Richardson, for approval of the items on Consent. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

General Business:

Downs & St. Germain Research Presentation: FY25 Q3 Economic Impact Report – Jordan Turner presented the quarterly Visitor Tracking Report for FY25 Q3 (APR–JUN.) and overview of the events. The events included Word of South Festival, Chain of Parks Art Festival, 3 Concerts, Emancipation Day, Juneteenth, Southern Shakespeare Festival and ASG Capital Cup.

FY25 Q3 visitor numbers were down 2%, however visitor spending and economic impact increased. Room rates, occupancy, and room nights are also up, despite fewer visitors, as visitors are traveling in smaller parties. The Q3 report also contained comparison of the 2023 and 2025 Legislative Sessions as requested by the TDC. Discussion ensued.

FY26 Tourism Special Event Grant Award Recommendations – Matt Thompson presented the award recommendations for the Special Event Grant Program stating all available funds allocated for Special Event Grants were awarded. He added this years' new evaluation process emphasized historical room night data which was extremely helpful. The Chair thanked the Grant Review Committee on behalf of the entire Council. Discussion ensued on the FY26 Grant Award Recommendations, and it was noted action to approve the award recommendations would require two (2) separate votes due to several stated TDC Member conflicts of interest. Discussion ensued. The Chair entertained a motion to approve the slate of Special Event Grant Award Recommendations omitting number 3, number 18, and number 33.

Mayor Pro Tem Williams-Cox moved, seconded by Commissioner Richardson, for approval of the FY26 Tourism Special Event Grant Award Recommendations. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0 with Matt Thompson and Russell Daws recused.

The Chair entertained a motion for the acceptance of the Special Events Grants number 3, number 18, and number 33, recusing herself.

Commissioner Richardson moved, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Williams–Cox for approval of the FY26 Tourism Special Event Grant Award Recommendations number 3, number 18, and number 33. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0 with Chair Personette recused.

Concert Update – Scott Carswell presented highlights of the spring concerts wrap-up and two upcoming fall concerts: Gladys Knight on October 24, and John Williams Tribute by the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra on November 8, 2025. He also noted 2026 concert planning is underway.

Worlds Cross Country Championships (WXC26) Update Presentation – 4 months to go – Taylor Wheaton and Amanda Heidecker presented Worlds Athletics (WA) updates for the January 10, 2026, event. Highlights included spectator ticket pricing of \$10 for adults, free for children under 12 and Fun Run race registration is \$25, with kids under 12 free. A portion of Fun Run proceeds will be donated to five Leon County High School track programs.

Marketing highlights included WXC26 library cards, local signage and marketing activations, light pole banner activation, the event website, and promotion of a kids' athletics program.

The final WXC26 readiness site visit will be October 16-17, with key WA staff in attendance. Staff are continuing outreach for sponsorships, course development, and how to get involved. At the end of October, Tourism Staff is tabling at the Run Disney Half Marathon in Orlando

The course at Apalachee Regional Park will be closed November 22, 2025 - January 10, 2026, for transformation. Formal "Save the Date" invitations will be extended to the TDC members for a Worlds Welcome Dinner being held on January 9, 2026, at the FSU Champions Club. Staff is also marketing to High Schools and Track Clubs in Leon County and regional areas.

Ms. Post thanked Amanda and Taylor as the event chairs for their leadership, and the Visit Tallahassee Team, also Parks and Recreation staff for all their hard work on the ginormous global event, the Olympics of the sport of cross country.

Tallahassee Sports Council (TSC) Update FY26 Sports Event Grant Award Recommendations & Update – Amanda Heidecker reported cross country season is underway beginning this weekend with Hoka Knights of Thunder and 9 more events to follow, noting there is also a softball tournament this weekend.

Ms. Heidecker also put forth the recommendations for the Sports Event Grant Awards as reviewed and recommended by the TSC. The FY26 Sports Event Grant Program budget is \$140,000 and a total of 38 award recommendations brought before the TDC total \$138,399 included eight new first time grant applicants.

Russell Daws moved, seconded by Commissioner Richardson for approval of the FY26 Tourism Sports Event Grant Award Recommendations. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

COCA – FY26 Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Award Recommendations & Update

Ms. Post stated this is an unusual year and noted it is a banner year for funding as COCA's Cultural Grant Recommendations total over \$2,000,000 in TDT-funding being recommended for 37 Cultural Grant applicants. Of the 37 Cultural Grants, 7 applications had been pulled for eligibility verification by the County and she explained the County's review process for COCA Grant application eligibility verification.

Each year, per the contract, Tourism reviews all COCA Grant Applications for eligibility and alignment with 125.0104, F.S. Since the 7 pulled applications were not identified in the COCA materials provided, Ms. Post shared the following 7 grant applications on the list are pending the final eligibility verification:

1. Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Inc. – Experience Asia 2026
2. Enhance Ability/Able Artists Gallery – Able Artists General Programming
3. FSU – Challenger Learning Center – Launch Boxes: Hands-On STEAM Adventures for Curious Minds
4. Making Light Productions, Inc. – Making Light Theatre Program
5. Tallahassee Bach Parley, Inc. – Bach Parley Concert Series
6. Institute For Music Business – Music, Money and Mindset Program
7. Strikers Youth Arts Project - Capital City Dance Festival

Ms. Post noted the County's eligibility verification review process takes place every year, however this year was delayed due to a tremendous back log in the County Attorney's Office for legal review and also to personal illness. The County has historically been able to verify applications within COCA's published grant schedule, and this year's delay was highly unusual due to these unforeseen circumstances. Ms. Post explained what is also unusual about this grant cycle is the seven (7) COCA Grant Applications still under eligibility review by the County, were evaluated and scored by COCA's Grant Review Panel, with all funding recommendations approved by COCA's Board of Directors and advanced to the TDC for approval.

Ms. Spehar spoke on the TDT funded Grant recommendations for the FY26 Cultural Program Grants containing 37 Cultural Program Grants totaling \$2,000,654 including the 7 applications pending eligibility review and County approval, and asked the Council to approve all 74 total grant recommendations which also include the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grants. Discussion ensued.

Matt Thompson stated his concern over the \$2,000,000+ of TDT funding being distributed and that 34 out of 37 Cultural Grant applications received a score of 90 or above, awarding the applicants their full funding requests. Discussion ensued regarding the review process, grant payment process and the TDC seeing COCA's grant funding results. The Chair asked Ms. Spehar to explain the process to help address the TDC members' questions. Ms. Spehar noted they seek panelists that are experts in non-profits, arts and culture, and communications and their grant program is very different than the Tourism grant program. Discussion ensued. Mayor Pro Tem Williams – Cox called the question and called for a vote on the motion. Discussion ensued with further clarification of the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Williams–Cox moved to forward the 30 applications that have been approved, and if any of the 7 pending applications are deemed to be eligible, then they should move forward to funding as well. But those deemed ineligible and are to be amended per COCA’s Grant Guidelines will be brought back to the November meeting of this Council for approval, seconded by Commissioner Richardson. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Thompson also voiced his concern and opposition to allowing amendment of the applications if the application is found to be ineligible on initial review. Ms. Post explained COCA has an established amendment process in their Grant Guidelines, the process will be followed in this manner. There was consensus that applications could be amended to address any areas of concern but “do-overs” were not allowed. Several members expressed they would not be comfortable approving the pending ineligible grants because any amendment to an application would likely change the score and funding recommendations. Discussion ensued on how COCA funds their grants and not seeing any reported results from previous COCA grant awards.

Mayor Pro Tem Williams–Cox restated the motion on the table, as seconded by Commissioner Richardson, for approval of the FY26 COCA Grants approving the 30 applicants that have been approved, except for the 7 applications under review. If any of the 7 pending applications are deemed to be eligible, then they too should move forward to funding. But those deemed ineligible and are to be amended per COCA’s Grant Guidelines will be brought back to the November meeting of this Council for approval. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0 with Russell Daws and Michelle Personette recused.

Executive Director’s Report

COCA One-Year Extension with Amendments Update- Ms. Post presented updates on the COCA One-year Extension and Amendment Agreement to the current five-year COCA contract which concludes at the end of this month. With the legislative interest in TDT this past session, it is wise not to enter into a multi-year agreement at this point and a revised multi-year agreement is anticipated to be developed next year.

Choose Tallahassee Three-Year Agreement Update - Choose Tallahassee has been a valuable marketing partner with Visit Tallahassee since they were first created in 2012. A yearly investment of \$10,000 - \$15,000 for targeted out-of-market campaigns has generated solid returns each year. Choose Tallahassee will be presenting an update at a TDC meeting in 2026.

Amtrak Office Repair – Roof and building repairs are well underway and a redesigned Railroad Avenue is now open, focused on improved pedestrian walkability. Construction is methodical and consistent on the historic building, with anticipated completion in summer 2026.

Other Updates - Ms. Post will reach out to Michael Alford from FSU to present an update on the renovation of Doak Campbell Stadium at the November TDC meeting.

Ms. Post noted she has received several communications recently regarding two interesting properties in town up for sale and it has been suggested by several community organizations perhaps Visit Tallahassee could consider purchasing them. One property is a historic home on Miccosukee Road and the other is Spring House, the only Frank Lloyd Wright-designed residence in Florida, near U.S.27 and I-10. Ms. Post noted there is no current TDT structure to support capital investment.

Additional Business: “For the Good of the Cause” – Chairperson Personette wished Matt Thompson a Happy Birthday on behalf of the TDC.

Ms. Spehar - COCA and the Downtown Improvement Authority are working together to secure a Levitt Foundation Grant. The Grant presents cities with the opportunity to receive up to \$120,000 each year

for 3 years to activate the downtown with live outdoor concerts. She encouraged everyone to vote for Tallahassee between now and the close of voting, Monday, September 15th at 8:00 p.m. and thanked Visit Tallahassee for posting and helping get the word out.

Chairperson Personette - Meeting Adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Attest: Michelle Personette, Chairperson

Attest: Shelby Bishop, Witness

Next TDC Meeting:

**Thursday, November 6, 2025, 9:00 A.M.
County Commission Chambers**

Leon County Tourist Development Council
Statement of Cash Flow
Period Ending September 30, 2025

4-Cents Collections		YTD	September	FY 2024/25	% Revenue	
Acct #	REVENUES	Actuals	Actuals	Budget	Received	Variance
312100	Local Option Tax (4-cents)	\$ 7,625,526.64	\$ 731,854.88	\$ 6,680,875.00	114%	944,652
361320	Tax Collector FS 219.075	\$ 21,581.41	\$ -	\$ -		21,581
361111	Pooled Interest Allocation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 214,510.00	0%	(214,510)
365000	Merchandise Sales	\$ 22,511.32	\$ 996.70	\$ 10,373.00	217%	12,138
366500	Special Event Grant Reimbursements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,500.00	0%	(12,500)
366930	Other Contributions/Partnerships	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%	-
361300	Interest Inc/FMV Adjustment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%	-
369900	Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 46,899.13	\$ 150.00	\$ 189,400.00	25%	(142,501)
399900	Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 191,860.00	0%	(191,860)
Total Estimated Receipts		\$ 7,716,518.50	\$ 733,001.58	\$ 7,299,518.00	106%	417,001

Acct #	EXPENDITURES	YTD	September	FY 2024/25	FY 2024/25	% Budget	Under/
	<i>Administration (301)/Marketing (303)</i>	Actuals	Actuals	Adopt. Budget	Adj. Budget	Spent	(Over)
51200	Salaries & Wages	\$ 940,995.28	\$ 96,733.21	\$ 976,756.00	\$ 976,756.00	96%	\$ 35,761
51250	Regular OPS Salaries & Wages	\$ 103,809.90	\$ 7,813.61	\$ 209,182.00	\$ 274,182.00	38%	170,372
51500	Special Pay	\$ 24.02	\$ 2.40	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00	1%	3,576
52100	FICA	\$ 75,687.61	\$ 7,466.45	\$ 90,693.00	\$ 90,693.00	83%	15,005
52200	Retirement Contributions	\$ 174,262.71	\$ 17,636.83	\$ 194,115.00	\$ 194,115.00	90%	19,852
52210	Deferred Compensation	\$ 33.77	\$ -	\$ 1,566.00	\$ 1,566.00	2%	1,532
52300	Life & Health Insurance	\$ 203,750.34	\$ 25,006.73	\$ 221,432.00	\$ 221,432.00	92%	17,682
52400	Workers Compensation	\$ 1,680.32	\$ 165.02	\$ 4,814.00	\$ 4,814.00	35%	3,134
53400	Other Contractual Services	\$ 414,025.15	\$ 68,799.21	\$ 688,420.00	\$ 838,420.00	49%	424,395
54000	Travel & Per Diem	\$ 41,828.75	\$ 6,282.21	\$ 101,780.00	\$ 101,780.00	41%	59,951
54100	Communications Services	\$ 10,314.64	\$ 1,648.95	\$ 9,600.00	\$ 9,600.00	107%	(715)
54101	Communications - Phone System	\$ 140.00	\$ 140.00	\$ 102.00	\$ 102.00	137%	(38)
54200	Postage	\$ 11,974.08	\$ 762.10	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	120%	(1,974)
54400	Rental & Leases	\$ 27,135.80	\$ 17,277.75	\$ 31,090.00	\$ 31,090.00	87%	3,954
54505	Vehicle Coverage	\$ 747.00	\$ -	\$ 747.00	\$ 747.00	100%	-
54600	Repair & Maintenance	\$ 6,197.80	\$ -	\$ 16,104.00	\$ 16,104.00	38%	9,906
54601	Vehicle Repair	\$ 177.25	\$ -	\$ 1,125.00	\$ 1,125.00	16%	948
54700	Printing	\$ 13,585.27	\$ 6,616.36	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 32,000.00	42%	18,415
54800	Promotional Activities	\$ 77,096.41	\$ 7,016.10	\$ 80,849.00	\$ 80,849.00	95%	3,753
54860	TDC Direct Sales Promotions	\$ 52,224.73	\$ 1,934.00	\$ 76,943.00	\$ 88,943.00	59%	36,718
54861	TDC Community Relations	\$ 20,447.05	\$ 62.19	\$ 71,050.00	\$ 102,050.00	20%	81,603
54862	TDC Merchandise	\$ 21,268.92	\$ 2,667.28	\$ 50,528.00	\$ 65,528.00	32%	44,259
54900	Other Current Charges	\$ 924,464.34	\$ (34,247.11)	\$ 983,191.00	\$ 1,083,191.00	85%	158,727
54948	Other Current Chrg - Amphitheater	\$ 654,876.04	\$ 95,240.76	\$ 640,618.00	\$ 1,125,618.00	58%	470,742
55100	Office Supplies	\$ 5,024.27	\$ 1,318.38	\$ 18,562.00	\$ 18,562.00	27%	13,538
55200	Operating Supplies	\$ 8,804.31	\$ 187.30	\$ 20,111.00	\$ 20,111.00	44%	11,307
55210	Fuel & Oil	\$ 6,637.63	\$ 187.30	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	66%	3,362
52250	Uniforms	\$ 481.22	\$ -	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 31,500.00	2%	31,019
55400	Publications, Memberships	\$ 51,876.57	\$ 6,269.98	\$ 35,654.00	\$ 35,654.00	146%	(16,223)
55401	Training	\$ 13,456.26	\$ 178.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	90%	1,544
56400	Machinery & Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0%	-
58160	TDC Local T&E	\$ 2,029.97	\$ 1,156.33	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 8,500.00	24%	6,470
58320	Sponsorship & Contributions	\$ 80,869.43	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 82,567.00	\$ 82,567.00	98%	1,698

Advertising/Public Relations (302)

53400	Other Contractual Services	\$	892,939.82	\$	187,602.26	\$	1,500,000.00	\$	1,875,000.00	48%	\$	982,060
54300	Utility Services	\$	1,348.50	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	0%	\$	(1,349)
54600	Repairs and Maintenance	\$	247,050.00	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	0%	\$	(247,050)
54700	Printing and Binding	\$	766.36	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	0%	\$	(766)
54800	Promotional Activities	\$	559.25	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	0%	\$	(559)
54900	Other Current Charges & Obligations	\$	87,600.58	\$	49,520.96	\$	100,000.00	\$	225,000.00	39%	\$	137,399
55408	Machinery and Equip 1,000-19,999	\$	9,186.45	\$	-	\$	-	\$	8,181.00	112%	\$	(1,005)

Special Events/Grants (304)

58300	Grants & Aids	\$	713,141.70	\$	61,206.79	\$	800,000.00	\$	800,000.00	89%		86,858
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Welcome Center CIP (086065)

56201	Building Improvements	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	208,101.00	0%		208,101
56410	Intfstructure Less Than 200,000	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	50,000.00	0%		50,000

Countywide Automation (470)

54110	Com-net Communications	\$	11,216.00	\$	11,216.00	\$	-	\$	11,220.00	100%		4
54600	Repairs and Maintenance	\$	7,015.00	\$	7,015.00	\$	-	\$	7,015.00	100%		-

Risk Allocations (495)

54500	Insurance	\$	14,996.00	\$	-	\$	-	\$	14,996.00	100%		-
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Indirect Cost (499)

54990	Indirect Cost Charges	\$	325,000.00	\$	-	\$	-	\$	325,000.00	100%		-
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Line Item Funding - (888)

58214	Cultural Facilities Grant Program	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	0%		-
58215	Local Arts Agency Program	\$	1,457,030.30	\$	918,212.04	\$	1,646,757.00	\$	1,646,757.00	88%		189,727

Transfers (950)

591001	Transfer to Fund 001	\$	37,121.00	\$	3,343.41	\$	-	\$	40,121.00	0%		3,000
591305	Transfer to Fund 305	\$	1,520,319.00	\$	362,859.91	\$	-	\$	1,520,319.00	100%		0

Salary Contingency (990)

59900	Other Non-operating Uses	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	0%		-
	Reserve for Fund Balance	\$	9,271,217	\$	1,944,298	\$	8,734,956	\$	12,307,909	75%		3,036,692

1-Cent Collections**Acct # REVENUES**

	YTD	September	FY 2024/25	FY 2024/25	% Revenue	
Acct #	Actuals	Actuals	Adopt. Budget	Adj. Budget	Received	Variance
312110 Local Option Resort (1 -cent)	\$ 1,906,378.17	\$ 182,963.72	\$ 1,646,757.00	\$ 1,646,757.00	116%	259,621
361111 Pooled Interest	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
361320 Tax Collector FS 219.075	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
366930 Refund from Prior Years	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
Total Revenues	1,906,378.17	182,963.72	1,646,757	1,646,757	116%	259,621

Acct # EXPENDITURES (305)

	YTD	September	FY 2024/25	FY 2020/21	% Budget	Under/
Acct #	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 September 30, 2025****REVENUES**

¹ - YTD Revenue through July for the 4-cent collections of \$7,625,527 are \$369,952 over last year's collection.

² - YTD Revenue for the 1-cent collections \$1,906,378

³ - Revenue collected in Advance

EXPENSES

54900 Other Current Charges \$(34,247.11) due to posted expenses for World XC event moved to FY26

160-304-58300-552 Grans & Aids- Grant all FY25 disbursements are complete

160-950-591305-552 Transfer to Fund 305-cost is for Amtrak Office Building Repairs which have begun.

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

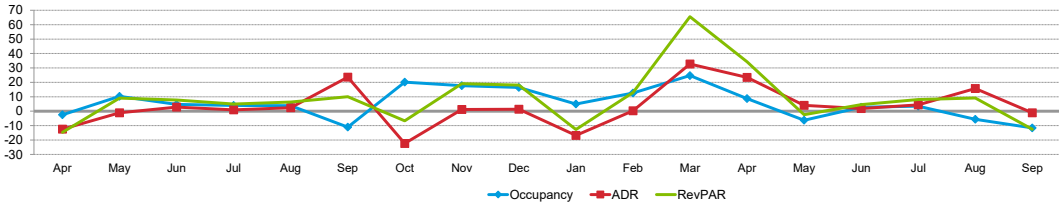
	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
FY2020/2021 (3-cents)	184,026.11	207,635.60	175,507.21	172,333.69	182,644.87	221,694.54	294,363.06	364,179.31	282,604.19	332,719.16	348,411.70	419,988.48	3,186,107.92
(1-cent - 4th Penny)	61,342.04	69,211.87	58,502.40	57,444.56	60,881.62	73,898.18	98,121.02	121,393.10	94,201.40	110,906.39	116,137.23	139,996.16	1,062,035.97
(1-cent - 5th Penny)	61,342.04	69,211.87	58,502.40	57,444.56	60,881.62	73,898.18	98,121.02	121,393.10	94,201.40	110,906.39	116,137.23	139,996.16	1,062,035.97
Total	306,710.19	346,059.34	292,512.02	287,222.82	304,408.11	369,490.90	490,605.10	606,965.52	471,006.98	554,531.93	580,686.16	699,980.80	5,310,179.87
Gain/Loss - Month: 3 cent	(49%)	(40%)	(46%)	-32%	-45%	-33%	48%	304%	140%	112%	106%	77%	
Gain/Loss - YTD: 3 cent	(49%)	(45%)	(45%)	-43%	-43%	-41%	-33%	-20%	-12%	-4%	3%	9%	
Year to date: 3-cent	184,026.11	391,661.72	567,168.93	739,502.62	922,147.49	1,143,842.03	1,438,205.09	1,802,384.40	2,084,988.59	2,417,707.75	2,766,119.44	3,186,107.92	
Year to date: 1-cent (4th)	61,342.04	130,553.91	189,056.31	246,500.87	307,382.50	381,280.68	479,401.70	600,794.80	694,996.20	805,902.58	922,039.81	1,062,035.97	
Year to date: 1-cent (5th)	61,342.04	130,553.91	189,056.31	246,500.87	307,382.50	381,280.68	479,401.70	600,794.80	694,996.20	805,902.58	922,039.81	1,062,035.97	
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.

Tab 2 - Trend Leon County, FL

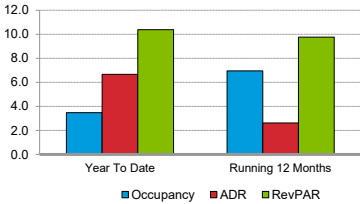
Visit Tallahassee
For the Month of September 2025

Currency: USD - US Dollar

Monthly Percent Change



Overall Percent Change



Occupancy (%)	2024												2025						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
	This Year	61.3	65.3	65.8	57.7	68.1	62.2	74.4	69.1	59.8	60.8	72.7	75.8	66.6	61.2	67.6	59.7	64.3	55.0
	Last Year	62.8	59.2	62.8	55.5	65.6	69.9	61.9	58.7	51.4	58.0	64.6	60.8	61.3	65.3	65.8	57.7	68.1	62.2
Percent Change		-2.5	10.3	4.7	4.0	3.8	-11.0	20.2	17.7	16.5	4.9	12.6	24.7	8.7	-6.3	2.7	3.5	-5.7	-11.6

Year To Date			
2023	2024	2025	
63.1	62.6	64.8	
62.4	63.1	62.6	
1.2	-0.8	3.5	

Running 12 Months			
2023	2024	2025	
61.9	61.3	65.5	
60.9	61.9	61.3	
1.6	-1.0	7.0	

ADR	2024												2025						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
	This Year	111.54	133.96	109.86	100.20	125.81	150.01	136.88	148.34	113.31	113.47	132.38	154.45	137.73	139.46	111.86	104.63	145.58	148.37
	Last Year	127.40	135.48	106.81	99.26	122.86	121.32	176.28	146.58	111.76	136.37	132.01	116.36	111.54	133.96	109.86	100.20	125.81	150.01
Percent Change		-12.4	-1.1	2.9	0.9	2.4	23.6	-22.3	1.2	1.4	-16.8	0.3	32.7	23.5	4.1	1.8	4.4	15.7	-1.1

Year To Date			
2023	2024	2025	
120.56	124.12	132.40	
114.34	120.56	124.12	
5.4	3.0	6.7	

Running 12 Months			
2023	2024	2025	
122.37	129.34	132.73	
116.06	122.37	129.34	
5.4	5.7	2.6	

RevPAR	2024												2025						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
	This Year	68.33	87.44	72.30	57.77	85.71	93.35	101.79	102.47	67.81	69.03	96.29	117.12	91.73	85.33	75.62	62.45	93.55	81.63
	Last Year	80.05	80.18	67.11	55.04	80.60	84.84	109.05	86.03	57.41	79.07	85.26	70.75	68.33	87.44	72.30	57.77	85.71	93.35
Percent Change		-14.6	9.1	7.7	5.0	6.3	10.0	-6.7	19.1	18.1	-12.7	12.9	65.5	34.3	-2.4	4.6	8.1	9.2	-12.6

Year To Date			
2023	2024	2025	
76.08	77.72	85.79	
71.30	76.08	77.72	
6.7	2.1	10.4	

Running 12 Months			
2023	2024	2025	
75.72	79.26	86.99	
70.71	75.72	79.26	
7.1	4.7	9.8	

Supply	2024												2025						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
	This Year	197,070	203,639	196,380	201,376	203,763	197,190	203,763	195,750	202,275	202,275	182,700	204,135	197,550	204,135	197,550	204,135	204,135	197,550
	Last Year	191,760	198,152	191,760	198,152	198,152	191,760	198,059	191,670	203,639	203,639	183,932	203,639	197,070	203,639	196,380	201,376	203,763	197,190
Percent Change		2.8	2.8	2.4	1.6	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.1	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.4	0.2	0.2

Year To Date			
2023	2024	2025	
1,745,016	1,790,628	1,794,165	
1,769,647	1,745,016	1,790,628	
-1.4	2.6	0.2	

Running 12 Months			
2023	2024	2025	
2,335,870	2,383,996	2,395,953	
2,366,083	2,335,870	2,383,996	
-1.3	2.1	0.5	

Demand	2024												2025						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
	This Year	120,717	132,916	129,237	116,115	138,811	122,713	151,521	135,216	121,040	123,068	132,901	154,800	131,575	124,908	133,549	121,854	131,181	108,688
	Last Year	120,488	117,261	120,476	109,886	129,990	134,103	122,528	112,488	104,610	118,072	118,798	123,819	120,717	132,916	129,237	116,115	138,811	122,713
Percent Change		0.2	13.4	7.3	5.7	8.8	-8.5	23.7	20.2	15.7	4.2	11.9	25.0	9.0	3.3	4.9	-5.5	-11.4	

Year To Date			
2023	2024	2025	
1,101,256	1,121,198	1,162,524	
1,103,510	1,101,256	1,121,198	
-0.2	1.8	3.7	

Running 12 Months			
2023	2024	2025	
1,445,405	1,480,824	1,570,301	
1,441,558	1,445,405	1,480,824	
0.3	1.1	7.5	

Revenue	2024												2025						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
	This Year	13,464,900	17,805,531	14,198,241	11,634,403	17,464,142	18,407,722	20,740,559	20,057,923	13,715,354	13,963,927	17,592,860	23,908,916	18,121,421	17,419,220	14,938,702	12,748,999	19,097,285	16,125,611
	Last Year	15,350,404	15,887,028	12,868,200	10,906,787	15,971,075	16,269,697	21,598,724	16,488,663	11,691,302	16,101,166	15,682,498	14,407,200	13,464,900	17,805,531	14,198,241	11,634,403	17,464,142	18,407,722
Percent Change		-12.3	12.1	10.3	6.7	9.3	13.1	-4.0	21.6	17.3	-13.3	12.2	66.0	34.6	-2.2	5.2	9.6	9.4	-12.4

Year To Date			
2023	2024	2025	
132,766,758	139,165,802	153,916,943	
126,177,017	132,766,758	139,165,802	
5.2	4.8	10.6	

Running 12 Months			
2023	2024	2025	
176,872,098	188,944,491	208,430,778	
167,305,391	176,872,098	188,944,491	
5.7	6.8	10.3	

Census %	2024												2025						
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
	Census Props	67	67	67	67	68	68	67	67	67	67	67	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
	Census Rooms	6569	6569	6546	6496	6573	6573	6573	6525	6525	6525	6585	6585	6585	6585	6585	6585	6585	6585
% Rooms Participants		92.5	91.3	91.6	94.1	92.6	92.6	90.6	90.4	90.4	90.4	90.5	90.5	90.5	90.5	90.5	90.5	90.5	90.5

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Visit
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AT A GLANCE



FY 2025 Media Value
YTD: \$2.3 Million

Media Value for September
\$25,000



FY 2025 Earned Media Stories
YTD: 7

Media Stories Sept. = 38



Social Media Followers

Facebook: 123,507

Instagram: 37,097



Consumer E-Newsletters

Sent: 1 YTD: 13

Industry E-Newsletters

Sent: 1 YTD: 15

**CO-OP
ADVERTISING
OPPORTUNITIES**



Rollled out new digital co-op advertising programs to support granted events with affordable promotion opportunities across the Visit Tallahassee website, mobile app, and social media channels. VisitTallahassee.com/Advertise

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

September 2025

Scott Lindeman, Senior Marketing Director

Genesis Leggett, Marketing Communications Director

Bryan Smith, Digital Content Director

Renee Jones, PR/Marketing Specialist

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hosted Skye Rodgers from USA Today Top 10 - reaching 73M+ for a Florida Panhandle-focused trip for inclusion in an upcoming feature.
- Hosted Shandra Hill from South Fulton Lifestyle Magazine, a monthly lifestyle publication with readership of over 73,000 across metro Atlanta and beyond. She visited Tallahassee for a feature on family fun, slated to run in the Spring 2026 issue.
- Continued partnership with accessibility focused media outlet Wheel the World to increase Tallahassee-Leon County's accessible travel promotion.
- Marketing Communications Director, Genesis Leggett, earned her STS (Sports Tourism Strategist) Certification through the Sports Events and Tourism Association (Sports ETA). This achievement reflects her dedication to professional growth and expertise in the sports events and tourism industry.
- Continued preparations and event management with partners for the Taste of Tallahassee activation in Birmingham, AL, planned for October. This immersive activation will highlight Tallahassee's unique dining, shopping, arts, and culture scene, offering national and regional journalists and content creators an authentic taste of the Capital City.
- Finalized planning for the runDisney Half Marathon Health Expo activation scheduled for October to promote ticket sales and awareness of the World Athletics Cross Country Championships Tallahassee 26.
- Attended planning sessions with the Worlds of Work program through the Chamber of Commerce and Lively Technical School. Tourism staff will participate in the hospitality group and introduce area high-school students to potential career paths in the tourism industry.
- Scott Lindeman delivered a presentation to the Rotary Club of Tallahassee to build community support and awareness for the upcoming World Athletics Cross Country Championships Tallahassee 2026.

ON THE HORIZON: RunDisney Activation in Orlando

Visit Tallahassee staff, assisted by the Zimmerman Agency, is set to launch a dynamic, three-day activation this October at the high-traffic RunDisney Health & Fitness Expo in Orlando. Targeting over 38,000 anticipated runners, this initiative is designed to drive immediate engagement and secure early attendance for the prestigious World Athletics Cross Country Championships Tallahassee 26.

The centerpiece is an experiential, on-site installation that transports attendees directly onto the world-class course at Apalachee Regional Park. Using cutting-edge 360-degree virtual reality headsets, runners will feel the intense, award-winning terrain under their feet, experiencing the course firsthand. Beyond this high-impact VR experience, the booth will facilitate on-site spectator ticket sales and fun-run registrations. Ultimately, the activation positions Tallahassee and Leon County as a premier sports and four-season getaway destination, converting expo traffic into event attendees and year-round visitors.



Digital Marketing Highlights



Partner Feature Goes Viral!

A viral Reel featuring partner Bradley's Country Store generated strong engagement across social platforms, earning 404,816 total views on Facebook and Instagram. The post received over 15,000 interactions and achieved a 9.3% engagement rate per impression on Facebook, making it one of the most popular posts this quarter. The content also resonated strongly with non-followers, helping drive over 350 new Instagram followers from this single post.

Deep Brewing Expansion Highlight

A recent Instagram Reel showcasing Deep Brewing Company's new location and kitchen generated strong engagement, reaching 17,000 views and earning over 700 interactions. The collaborative post with Deep helped expand visibility to new audiences and spotlight a key local partner's growth in Tallahassee's craft beer scene.



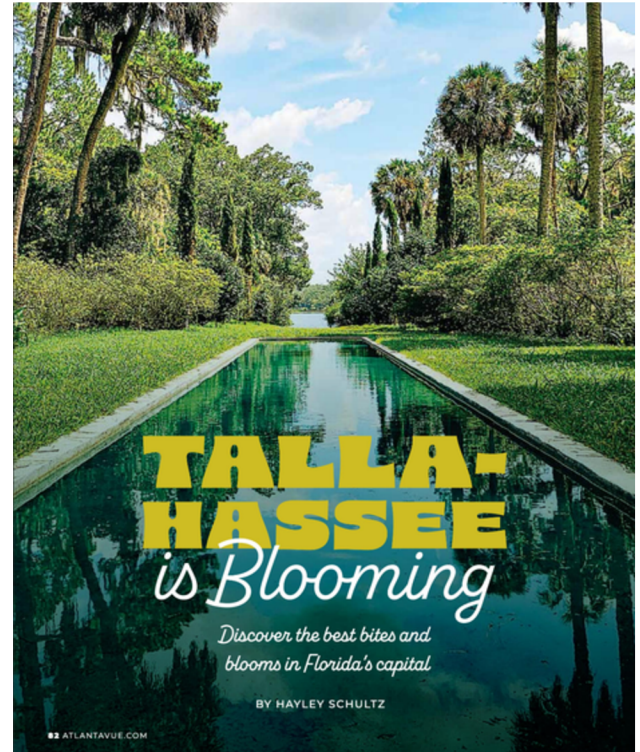
October Events & Festivals

A seasonal Reel promoting the October Events & Festivals blog captured strong attention with 41,453 views and over 700 interactions across Facebook and Instagram. The post spotlighted Tallahassee's lineup of concerts, family activities, Halloween events, and local festivals. The post reinforces that event-driven content remains a major motivator for both residents and visitors exploring the destination.

DIGITAL MARKETING KPI			
2024/2025 GOALS	ANNUAL GOAL	MONTHLY RESULT	% OF GOAL
Maintain an average open rate of over 35% for consumer email campaigns.	35%	37%	N/A
Maintain an average open rate of over 35% for the industry newsletter campaign.	35%	46%	N/A
Net increase annual Facebook followers by 25,000	25,000	1,112	97.8%
Net increase annual Instagram followers by 2,500	2,500	236	246%
Increase annual Mobile App downloads by 1,000	1,000	178	194%

Public Relations

- Continued pitching to Birmingham media for the Taste of Tallahassee event: including Country Living, Garden & Gun, Southern Lady, Cottage Journal, Birmingham Magazine, Good Grit and more - featuring Leon's at Lake Ella, Black Radish, Chef Sylvia Gould, Ology, Hearth & Soul, Lello Co and more.
- Received dedicated digital coverage in Taste of the South spotlighting "Tallahassee's Collegiate Charm," including mention of our surrounding offerings including the Tallahassee Museum, concerts at Cascades, dining at Hayward House, Charlie Park and more.
- Landed inclusion in Taste of the South's "Can't Miss Southern Cities" Fall Guide – reaching nearly 70K engaged readers in and around key drive markets.
- Earned a four-page dedicated spread in VUE Atlanta - the region's premier luxury lifestyle publication, reaching a print circulation of 30,000 readers.
- Secured and executed a curated media visit with South Fulton Lifestyle Magazine - a monthly lifestyle publication with readership across metro Atlanta and worldwide through its digital edition, reaching an audience of more than 73,000.



PUBLIC RELATIONS KPI

2024/2025 GOALS

% Complete

Overall YTD

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



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AT A GLANCE

2024-2025 Grant Program

80 Legacy, Special, & Sports events held
80 Post Event Reports processed

2025-2026 Grant Program

82 Legacy, Special, & Sports events
granted



Visitor Services

Visitor Guides Distributed:
FYTD:62,744

YTD Group Services and
Welcome Bags
78 requests servicing 8,693 visitors

Sept 2025

Visitor Center Walk-Ins: 284

YTD

Visitor Center Walk-Ins: 2,847



Gift Shop Sales:
September 2025
\$996.70

FYTD Gift Shop Sales:
\$22,404.37

VISITOR SERVICE & GRANT MANAGEMENT

September 2025

Wendy Halleck, 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

- Collaborated with local, regional and state agencies to add new brochures to the Visitor Information Center.
- Added new locally made products to the Visitor Center Gift Shop.
- Developed new Tallahassee branded merchandise and refreshed FSU and FAMU products ahead of football season.
- Held first of two Grant Implementation Workshops for FY26 grantees.



Visitor Services staff participate in the Florida DEP Trails Expo at the Tallahassee Senior Center to educate residents about the 700+ miles of trails and parks in Leon County.

ON THE HORIZON

- Grant Implementation Workshop #2 for FY2025/26 Grantees.
- Tourism staff familiarization outing to the Grove Museum and Union Bank.
- Promote the Worlds Athletics Cross Country Championships and sell spectator tickets and fun run registration to Visitor Center guests.
- Develop an e-commerce platform on the Visit Tallahassee website for sale of Tallahassee themed merchandise.



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GOAL AT A GLANCE

Meetings & Groups FY 2025

Room Nights Goal:

14,534

Meetings & Groups

YTD Room Nights:

14,565

PARTNER OPPORTUNITY

**FLORIDA
HUDDLE**

Florida's Official
Travel Trade Show

Visit Tallahassee will be attending Florida Huddle, February 2-4, 2026, in Orlando to meet with tour operators and wholesalers from around the globe. We are excited to offer a co-op opportunity for partners to join the team in showcasing Tallahassee.

Legislative Session

January 13, 2026
through March 13, 2026

2025 Committee Weeks

Nov. 3-7, Nov. 17-21, Dec. 1-5,
and Dec. 8-12

MEETINGS & GROUP SALES

September 2025

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

- Janet Roach was appointed Chair of the **FSAE 2026 FSAE Sponsorship Committee**.
- Met with Jay Green, Director of Sales with **Hotel Indigo to discuss travel trade and group business opportunities** related to the hotel's 88 sleeping rooms addition. The discussion also highlighted the need for a meeting district in Leon County.
- Secured sponsorship to showcase Tallahassee as a travel destination at the **Florida Association of Travel Advisors Conference**.
- Assisted the Jim Moran College of Entrepreneurship in securing destination content for a promotional video showcasing Tallahassee's spirit, venues, and attractions. The video will be shown when the Capital City is announced as the host destination for the **2026 Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers Conference** in February 2026 with over 500 attendees.
- Assisted **Special Event Grant groups** in securing host hotels, meeting venues, catering, and related Visit Tallahassee services.
- Conducted and exhibited at the **North Florida Meeting Professionals International (MPI) EDUCON**, promoting Tallahassee as a regional meeting destination for corporate and association groups.
- Conducted a comprehensive review of **partner hotel listing** and contact information on VisitTallahassee.com, Visitor's Guide, and the Visit Tallahassee Mobile App.



OUT & ABOUT



Taylor Wheaton presented at The Village Square Fast Forward Tallahassee event alongside other leading community members at the Challenger Learning Center.



Introduced our interns to the *Capital of Cross Country* launching the promotion of WXC Tallahassee 26!

Upcoming Hosted Events

Oct. 24: FCSAA Championships
Oct. 25: FSU Pre-State XC Meet
Oct. 27: SWAC XC Championships
Nov. 21-23: SWAC Volleyball Championships
Nov. 21: NAIA XC National Championships
Nov. 22: FHSAA XC State Championships
Jan. 10: World Athletics Cross Country Championships
Jan. 11: USATF Club XC Championships

SPORTS

September 2025

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- Bailey Geason attended the **Sports ETA 4S Summit** a two day event focused on strategies, services, sales, and sponsorships.
- Taylor Wheaton attended a two day **Women's Sports Leadership and Business Summit** hosted by the Compete Sports Network.
- Implemented **PlayEasy** a premier sports tourism platform used to enhance room night tracking and connect with event organizers for future hosting opportunities.
- Kicked off the Cross Country Season hosting the **2nd annual HOKA Nights of Thunder Cross Country Festival**, which saw double the attendance compared to its inaugural year.
- Attended the **Florida Greenways and Recreation Expo**, held at the Tallahassee Senior Center for a chance to further connect the Sports and Senior communities.
- Recorded a podcast with **Gulf Winds Track Club** highlighting Worlds, ARP, and sports tourism.

Year End Review

- Exceeded the FY25 Room Night goal with **over 26,000 Room Nights Generated**.
- Hosted **10 Championships** across multiple sports.
- Signed **5-year agreement** to continue hosting the FHSAA Cross Country State Championships.
- Signed **3-year agreement** to continue hosting the SWAC Cross Country Championships.
- Launched **Pilot Program** for sports clubs & smaller events.
- Began new partnerships with **USA Artistic Swimming, The National Fishing League, The Golf Experience, Next Level 7-on-7 Flag Football & The Kayak Adventure Series** to host new events in the future.

LEON COUNTY DIVISION OF TOURISM – VISIT TALLAHASSEE

Fiscal Year 2025
Economic Impact Report



*Visit
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DS downs & st. germain
RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

Visitor Tracking Study



» The economic impact of tourism for the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee was based on data from the following sources:

- » 2,222 interviews conducted by Downs & St. Germain Research with visitors to Leon County
- » Twelve (12) monthly STR Reports
- » Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR)
- » Key Data (via Zartico)
- » Downs & St. Germain Research's tourism database
- » Various government agencies and data sources
- » IMPLAN Online Economic Impact Modeling software
- » TDT collections provided by Leon County

A tropical landscape featuring a long, narrow pool that reflects the sky and surrounding palm trees. The pool is flanked by lush greenery and tall palm trees. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The right side of the image is darkened, providing a background for the text.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FY2025 ECONOMIC IMPACT

Visitor spending generated

\$1,435,317,000

in economic impact to Leon County's
economy, up 8.4% from FY2024



FY2025 TOTAL DIRECT SPEND

Visitors to Leon County spent

\$898,849,500

throughout the county in FY2025 on accommodations, transportation, groceries, restaurants, shopping, entertainment, and other expenses, up 11.3% from FY2024



FY2025 VISITORS

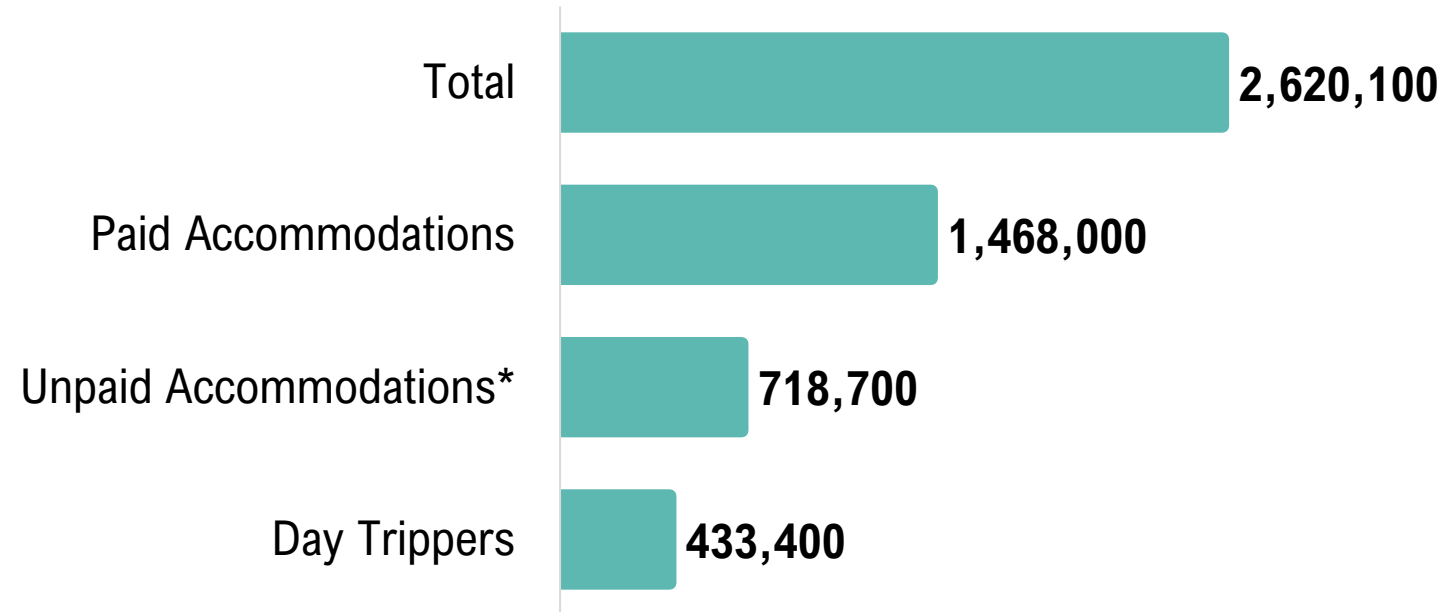
Leon County attracted

2,620,100

visitors in FY2025, up 5.4% from
FY2024



FY2025 VISITORS BY TYPE



*Visitors staying in personal second homes or with friends/relatives.

FY2025 TOTAL ROOM NIGHTS

Visitors to Leon County generated

1,601,400

nights in county accommodations
throughout FY2025, up 6.1% from
FY2024



FY2025 JOBS SUPPORTED

Visitors to Leon County supported

12,060

jobs throughout the county in
FY2025, down 1.1% from FY2024



FY2025 WAGES SUPPORTED

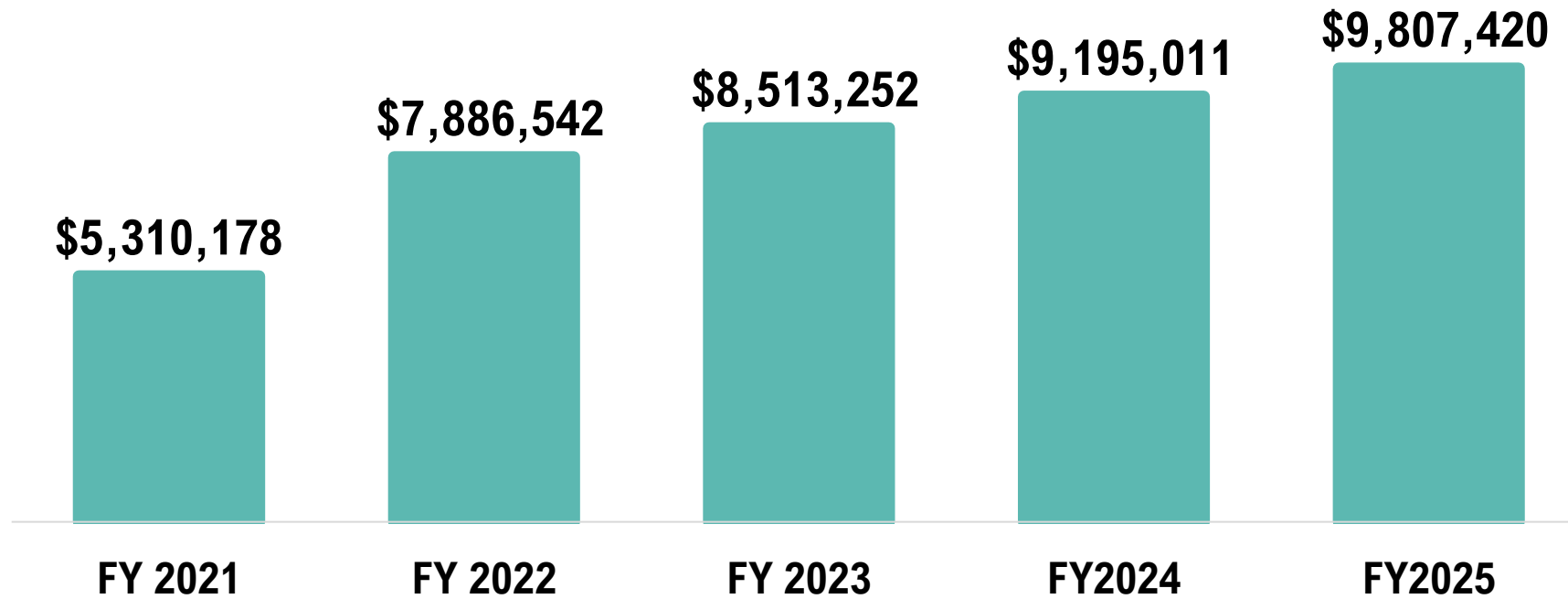
Visitors to Leon County supported

\$437,835,300

in wages paid to employees who
live in Leon County in FY2025, up
7.3% from FY2024



TDT COLLECTIONS FY2021 – FY2025



FY2025 TOP MARKETS OF ORIGIN

Market	FY2024	FY2025
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	8%	10%
Surrounding Areas ¹	11%	10%
Atlanta	7%	7%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	8%	7%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota	7%	7%
Panama City	5%	6%
Jacksonville	6%	6%
Mobile	4%	4%
Dallas-Fort Worth	2%	3%
Gainesville	2%	3%
Raleigh-Durham	1%	2%
Charlotte	1%	2%
West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce	3%	2%

¹Includes counties surrounding Tallahassee and Thomasville.

A tropical landscape featuring a long, narrow pool that reflects the sky and surrounding palm trees. The pool is flanked by lush greenery and tall palm trees. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The right side of the image is darkened, providing a background for the text.

DETAILED FINDINGS

FY2025 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

	FY2024	FY2025	% Change
Visitors	2,485,300	2,620,100	+ 5.4%
Direct Expenditures ¹	\$807,682,200	\$898,849,500	+ 11.3%
Total Economic Impact ^{2,3}	\$1,324,598,900	\$1,435,317,000	+ 8.4%
Room Nights Generated ⁴	1,509,300	1,601,400	+ 6.1%
Jobs Supported	12,200	12,060	- 1.1%
Wages Supported	\$407,860,400	\$437,835,300	+ 7.3%
County Taxes Supported ⁵	\$45,763,387	\$52,581,400	+ 14.9%
Tourist Development Tax ⁶	\$9,195,011	\$9,807,420	+ 6.7%

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

²IMPLAN multiplier updated from 1.64 to 1.60.

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

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

⁵County tax collections supported by tourism.

⁶From Leon County Tax Collector.



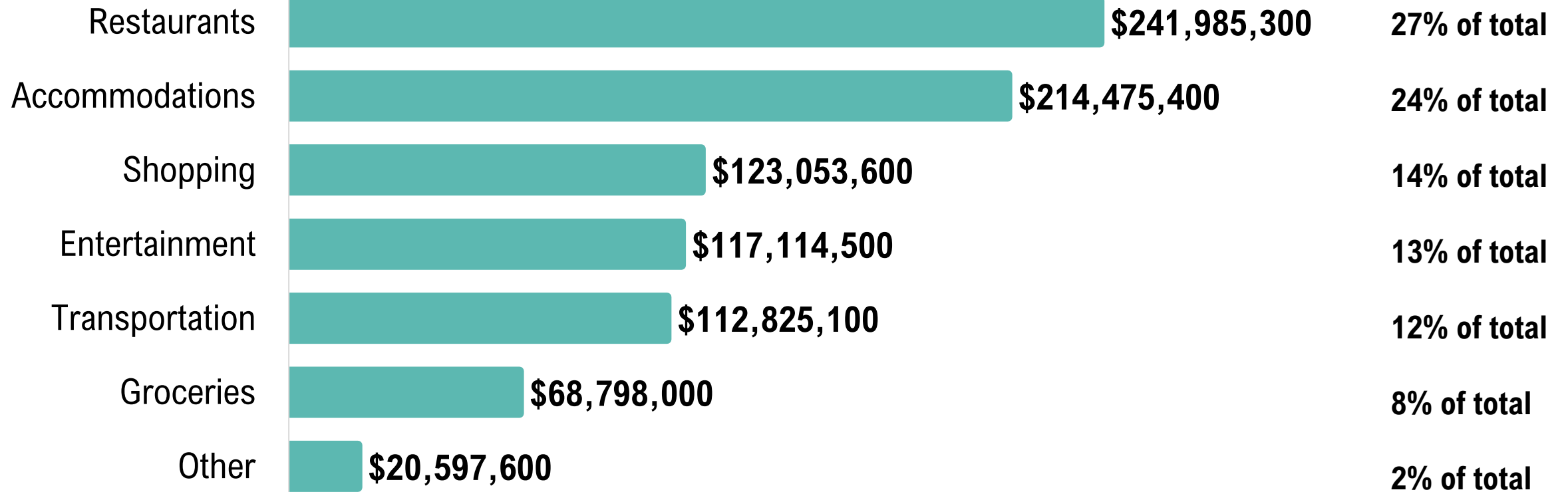
FY2025 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

	FY2024	FY2025	% Change
Occupancy	60.7%	64.0%	+5.4%
Room rates	\$129.83	\$134.20	+3.4%
Travel party size	2.7	2.5	-0.2
Nights spent	3.1	3.0	-0.1
Will return	92%	94%	+2% points
Rating of experience ¹	8.0	7.9	-0.1



FY2025 DIRECT SPENDING BY CATEGORY

Total FY2025 Direct Spend: \$898,849,500



FY2025 VISITORS BY QUARTER

Total FY2025 Visitors: 2,620,100



FY2025 DIRECT SPENDING BY QUARTER

Total FY2025 Direct Spend: \$898,849,500



FY2025 ROOM NIGHTS BY QUARTER*

Total FY2025 Room Nights: 1,601,400



FY2025 QUARTERLY COMPARISONS

	Oct-Dec 2024 (Q1)	Jan-Mar 2025 (Q2)	Apr-Jun 2025 (Q3)	July-Sept 2025 (Q4)
Visitors	710,700	616,600	628,400	664,400
Occupancy	66.1%	68.0%	63.5%	58.2%
Travel Party Size	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.6
Mean Nights Stayed	3.0	3.2	2.9	2.8
Median Age	45	46	45	42
Median HH Income	\$85,700	\$87,500	\$87,000	\$85,400
From Southeast*	26%	29%	33%	36%
From Florida	58%	52%	51%	45%
Drove	87%	80%	83%	83%
First-Time Visitor	16%	24%	21%	25%



FY2025 QUARTERLY COMPARISONS

	Oct-Dec 2024 (Q1)	Jan-Mar 2025 (Q2)	Apr-Jun 2025 (Q3)	July-Sept 2025 (Q4)
Rating of Leon County ¹	8.2	7.7	7.7	7.9
Likely to Return	97%	96%	91%	92%
Travel Party Spend Per Trip	\$888	\$901	\$775	\$878
Used VisitTallahassee.com ²	2%	3%	3%	2%
Married	60%	65%	61%	57%
Has Bachelor's Degree	72%	73%	69%	68%
Trade/Technical Degree	NA ³	2%	4%	1%

¹On a 10-point scale.

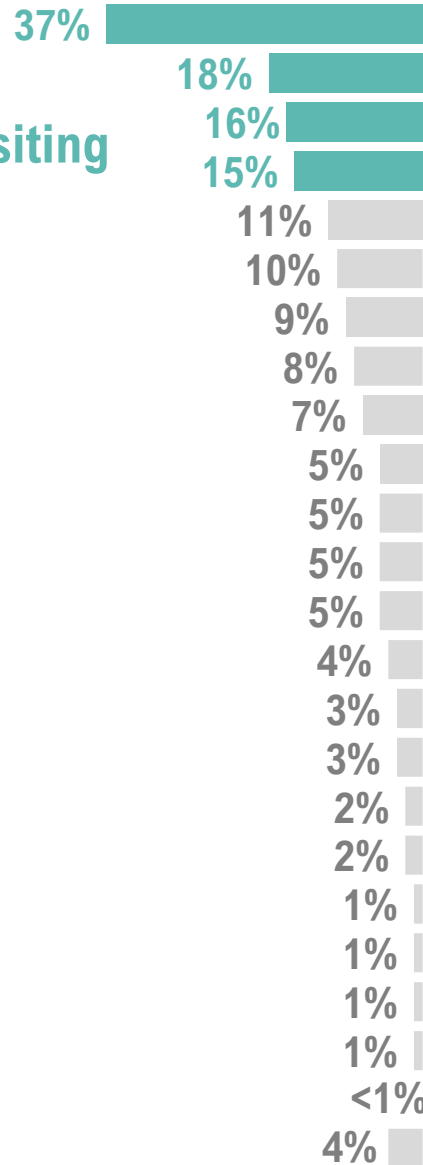
²As a trip-planning source.

³Response option added January 2025.



FY2025 REASONS FOR VISITING VS. VISITOR ACTIVITIES¹

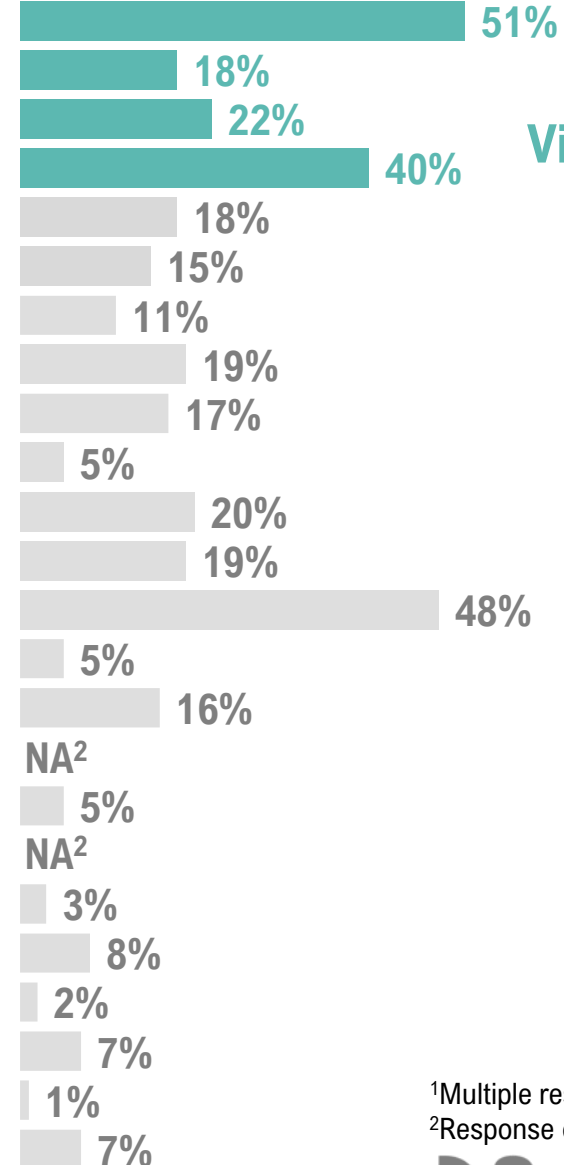
Reasons for Visiting



Key
Motivations

Trip
Enhancers

Visit friends and relatives
Business conference or meeting
Watch a sporting event
Relax and unwind
Special event/festival
Special occasion
Education-related
Family vacation
Attractions
Government-related
Nature, bird watching, etc.
Shopping
Restaurants
Participate in a sporting event
Bars/nightclubs
Wedding, party, tour, guys/girls trip, etc.
Historical sites
Reunion
Fishing, golfing, hunting, etc.
Biking, hiking, running, etc.
Performance art show
Art galleries, museums, etc.
Spas
Other



Visitor Activities



Visit
Tallahassee

Pretty. Unexpected.

¹Multiple responses permitted.

²Response option not in survey question.

LEON COUNTY DIVISION OF TOURISM – VISIT TALLAHASSEE

Fiscal Year 2025 Economic Impact Report

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

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2026

TOURISM

STRATEGIC PLAN

UPDATE SUMMARY FY2025

for the Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee



FY2022-FY2026 TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN

BOLD GOAL: GROW OUR TOURISM ECONOMY, VERTICAL MARKETS, COMPETITIVENESS, AND ECONOMIC IMPACT BY GENERATING \$5 BILLION IN ECONOMIC IMPACT OVER THE NEXT FIVE (5) YEARS.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY NO. 1	INCREASE THE VISITATION OF TALLAHASSEE THROUGH STRATEGIC MARKETING AND SALES BY 3% ANNUALLY.	Current Progress	
STRATEGIC GOAL 1.0	Sales Department (sports, meetings and groups sales) to generate 275,000 room nights over the next five (5) years targeting high-profile and high-impact events.	200,934-Room Nights Generated	73%
STRATEGIC GOAL 2.0	Marketing Department to develop and implement at least 15 new high-impact multi-media marketing, advertising, and promotional programs/campaigns across all vertical markets on an annual basis.	68-Programs and campaigns 21-Programs and Campaigns in FY25	91%
STRATEGIC GOAL 3.0	Host 100,000 residents and visitors as part of the County Amphitheater Concert Series over the next five (5) years.	96,498- concert attendees	96%
STRATEGIC PRIORITY NO. 2	INCREASE LOCAL AWARENESS OF THE DIVISION OF TOURISM/VISIT TALLAHASSEE AND THE VALUE OF TOURISM IN TALLAHASSEE/LEON COUNTY.	Current Progress	
STRATEGIC GOAL 2.0	Identify a minimum of 20 opportunities per year to create collaborative partnerships to increase local awareness of the role of the Division and economic impact of tourism in Tallahassee.	113- Partnerships 30- Partnerships in FY25	103%

FY2022-FY2026 TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN

BOLD GOAL: GROW OUR TOURISM ECONOMY, VERTICAL MARKETS, COMPETITIVENESS, AND ECONOMIC IMPACT BY GENERATING \$5 BILLION IN ECONOMIC IMPACT OVER THE NEXT FIVE (5) YEARS.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY NO. 3	INCREASE INDUSTRY/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CULTIVATE NEW PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT.	Current Progress	
STRATEGIC GOAL 3.0	Increase outreach and engagement by cultivating a minimum of 10 new or expanded program partnerships and collaborations annually throughout all sectors of Leon County.	47- Collaborations 15-Partnerships and Collaborations in FY 25	96%
STRATEGIC PRIORITY NO. 4	INCREASE VISITOR SERVICES IN MARKET TO ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND EXTEND STAYS.	Current Progress	
STRATEGIC GOAL 4.0	Increase visitor services through various vertical markets and collaborations with other government entities and community organizations.	119- Collaborations	27-Collaborations in FY25

FY2022-FY2026 TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN

BOLD GOAL: GROW OUR TOURISM ECONOMY, VERTICAL MARKETS, COMPETITIVENESS, AND ECONOMIC IMPACT BY GENERATING \$5 BILLION IN ECONOMIC IMPACT OVER THE NEXT FIVE (5) YEARS.

	STRATEGIC PRIORITY HIGHLIGHTS	DEPARTMENT	4 YEAR TOTALS
TARGET 1.1.2	Meetings and Conventions Target: Attract 85 new vertical market meetings and conventions in the next five (5) years.	MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS	70-Hosted and/or Supported 31- Hosted and supported Meetings in FY25
TARGET 1.2.3	Expand the development vertical marketing assets working with industry partners and subject matter experts.	MARKETING	18-New Marketing Assets/Partnerships 5- New in FY25
TARGET 1.3.1	Increase annual concert budget and target at least 10 artists/acts of varying genres each year and increase advance bookings.	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & OPERATIONS MGR	47-Concerts hosted 12- Concerts Hosted in FY25
TARGET 2.2.1	Division staff to present to at least five (5) community groups annually (Rotary, Chambers of Commerce, Leadership Tallahassee, etc.)	ALL	60-Presentations 8-Persentations in FY25
TARGET 3.3.10	Support 900 of community events, sporting competitions, festivals, performances, and cultural programming that will attract visitors and residents.	ALL	616-Events Supported 158- Supported In FY25
TARGET 4.4.3	Expand local product offerings by featuring new local items and/or vendors annually in the gift shop(s) at Visitor Information Center(s).	VISITOR SERVICES	51 -New Local Vendors Sourced 8- New in FY25

4-Year Economic Impact of Tourism
\$5,160,339,500 (\$5.1B*)

103.2% of total 5-year goal
of
\$5,000,000,000 (\$5B)

*Source Downs & St. Germain Research



*Visit
Tallahassee*
Pretty. Unexpected.

PROPOSED FY26 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Below are proposed 2026 TDC meeting dates being presented for your consideration. We took holiday dates for Emancipation Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day into consideration.

Friday, February 6, 2026, or Thursday, February 12, 2026 – 9:00 AM

Thursday, May 7, 2026 – 9:00 AM

Thursday, July 9, 2026 – 9:00 AM

Thursday, September 10, 2026 – 9:00 AM

Thursday, November 5, 2026 – 9:00 AM



MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 6, 2025

TO: Leon County Tourist Development Council Members

THROUGH: Kerri L. Post, Director, Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee

FROM: Jon Labarre, Senior Operations Manager, Leon County Division of Tourism/Visit Tallahassee

SUBJECT: COCA Grant Program Informational Update

During the September 11, 2025 TDC Meeting, several questions were raised by members of the Tourist Development Council (TDC) about the COCA Cultural Grant Program scoring and funding levels:

- How is it that 34 out of 37 Applicants received scores of 90+?
- Is this normal or are these scores higher than previous years?
- How is it that COCA has enough funds to distribute more than \$2 Million in Grants and nearly that much last year?

This memo seeks to clarify the application scoring process, scoring trends, and amount of funding disbursed during the 5-year contract between Leon County Division of Tourism/ Visit Tallahassee (VT) and COCA to administer the Cultural Program Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Programs.

COCA Cultural Program Grant Review and Scoring

In recent years, COCA Cultural Grants and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grants applications are combined into one online application that is submitted to COCA and these applications are reviewed by COCA staff for compliance with 125.0104 Florida Statutory requirements for eligible uses of TDT. Once COCA staff completes their eligibility review of all of the grant applications funded with TDT, those applications are then forwarded to the County (Tourism Director and County Attorney's Office) to conduct an eligibility verification review.

Should any grant applications be deemed not to comport with Statutory requirements for eligible uses of TDT or other Grant Guideline requirements, the County provides COCA their written feedback on each specific applicant's area(s) of concern for then COCA to notify the applicants and work with them to amend the application for resubmittal to then go through the scoring and review process. However for FY26, as previously noted, the COCA Board already approved the grant applications scores and funding recommendations advanced to the TDC for their consideration, even though the applications have since been revised.

Every year for the last 5 years, COCA has forwarded ineligible grant applications to the County, where

ultimately those applications have been amended, or the organization has chosen to withdraw their application. Per the County's agreement with COCA, no ineligible applications should be advanced to the COCA Grant Review Panel for scoring and funding recommendations, however for FY26, that did not occur as the seven (7) grant applications pending County eligibility verification review were scored, with funding recommendations approved by the COCA Board of Directors and advanced to the TDC for their approval.

Each year COCA promotes and solicits community participation on the COCA Grants Review Panel, who evaluates and scores all of the COCA grant applications received each year. COCA typically seeks volunteer citizens with a background in non-profits, arts and culture, and communications/marketing and provides training to potential reviewers. The number of reviewers varies depending on the number of volunteers. For FY 26, seven (7) Grant Review panelists were recruited and publicized as reviewers this year, however only three (3) reviewers ended up evaluating and scoring the applicants in the Grant Review Panel public-meeting.

Scoring of the Grant the COCA Grant program is guided by a scoring Rubrik created by COCA. In 2023, the Rubrik change from a 25-point system to a 50-point system. However, COCA's *reported* scoring beginning in FY23 reflects a 100-point scale. The following is the current scoring Rubrik used from FY23-FY26:

- **Organizational Capacity (up to 20 points)**

- o The organization's planning shows realistic and appropriate future programming plans.
- o This organization's artistic, education, and/or administrative personnel (paid or volunteer) can conduct its programs effectively.
- o The applicant has demonstrated support for the organization through other sources of funding, volunteer efforts, program partnerships, and documented participation data.
- o The applicant exhibits sound fiscal management and administration as evidenced by the grant's narrative and the organization's past and current operating budgets.

- **Program Evaluation (up to 20 points)**

- o This program reflects the mission of the organization, and the scope of this program is feasible to implement in timeline provided and resources allocated (facilities, staff/volunteers, funding, etc.).
- o This program serves an appropriate number of people for the amount requested (considering special, diverse, underserved population it targets or unique niche it fills).
- o There are clearly articulated goals and useful methods of evaluating and documenting the success of this program (that extends beyond attendance figures).
- o Whether serving a large constituency, a special or diverse population or fulfilling a unique niche, this program's impact on and/or service to the community is an effective use of public funding.

- **Tourism Impact (up to 10 points)**

- o The application indicates the project is for a tourist-related business or activity and clearly conveys it has the attraction of tourists as a main purpose.
- o The application clearly identifies PR/promotional/marketing tactics to reach visitors from clearly identified geographic markets outside Leon County.

The next section provides an analysis of the Grant Applications scores and funding levels over the last 5 years.

COCA Cultural Program Grant Application Scoring and Award Analysis

Average scoring and funding for the Cultural Program Grants over the past 5 years beginning with FY22 and including the current fiscal year are illustrated in the chart below:

COCA Grant Averages	FY26	FY25	FY24	FY23	FY22	5-Year Average
# of Applications w/Score of 90+	34	21	20	16	9	20
Total Applications	37	38	35	29	23	32.4
Average Score	93.62	88.46	90.19	87.9	83.85*	90.04
Percent of Applications +90	92%	55%	57%	55%	39%	60%
90+ Score % Increase YOY	62%	5%	25%	78%	-	42%
Total Funding in Millions	\$2.0	\$1.8	\$1.3	\$0.88	\$0.60	\$1.35
Average Funding per Applicant	\$55,950	\$47,368	\$37,143	\$30,276	\$30,000	\$41,667

*FY22 Scores are adjusted to 100-point scale by VT for consistent comparison of scoring variance year over year as reported by COCA

For reference, the Tourism Special Event Grant, Sports Tourism Event Grant and Legacy Event Grant Program average funding per applicant was about \$9K combined in FY26; and the full program was funded with \$800K. However, the Tourism and COCA grants are markedly different in scope, as COCA's Cultural Grant program allows for year-round program funding and single event funding, the Tourism Program allows only for single event funding.

The COCA grant average scoring has remained generally steady over this time with changes ranging from about 2-5% year over year, for a 10-point increase over the last 5 years. However the percentage of applicants scoring over 90% increased significantly in two (2) cycles, FY23 and FY26:

- FY23 saw a 78% increase (7 more 90+ scores than the previous year)
- FY26 saw a 62% increase (13 more 90+ scores than the previous year)

COCA's Grant application steady scoring increase and increasing TDT funding has driven COCA's increase in disbursement of grant funding to applicants by nearly 90%, even as the number of applicants has risen over 60% over the past 5 years.

COCA Grant funding is awarded based on the scoring of each application as documented in each year's Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Guidelines:

Final Score	Maximum Funding
90 – 100	100% of request
80 – 89.99	90% of request
70 – 79.99	80% of request

Applications scoring less than 70 are not eligible for funding. When determining the final scores for funding purposes, numbers are rounded to two decimal places only and not to the whole number. For example, 89.99 is not rounded to 90.

COCA Cultural Program Grant Funding Analysis

The annual total of COCA Cultural Program Grant funding allocation is consistent with the increase in TDT

receipts over the past 5 years and therefore illustrates consistent increases at a rate of about \$7k-\$10K per year, with current FY26 average grant funding of about \$56K per applicant, whereas in FY22 the average grant funding was about \$30,000 per applicant.

During the last 5 years, TDT distributions to COCA have increased dramatically coinciding with the County's increase in Tourist Development Tax collections. TDT distributions to COCA have increased from \$680,313 to \$1,902,639 between FY2022 and the most recent FY2025 distribution; FY2022 being the first year of increased TDT funding after the Covid-19 Pandemic.

COCA's budgeted grant disbursement funding generally followed the same pattern of increases as TDT collection receipts increasing from \$690,000 to \$2,252,987 between FY2022 and our current fiscal year FY2026. (These figures include both the Cultural Program and Tourism Marketing Grant budgeted disbursements). The rise in TDT collections annually coupled with COCA's change in budgeting tactics from forecasted TDT receipts to surplus funding has allowed COCA to continue increasing the budgeted Cultural Grant Funding and reach \$2 million each of the last 2 years.

Typical COCA Grants disbursements fall below budgeted funds as well as TDT collections. The following table illustrates a variance between COCA's Budgeted Disbursement Funds and the Actual Disbursement of Grant funding (noting that budgeted funds don't always coincide with grant application awards):

	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25</u>	<u>FY26</u>
Grant Budget	\$690,000	\$1,119,801	\$1,313,470	\$2,218,742	\$2,252,987
Grants Disbursed	\$602,900	\$ 878,088	\$1,296,562	\$1,998,866	\$2,099,077
Budget-Surplus	\$ 87,100	\$ 241,713	\$ 16,908	\$ 219,876	\$ 153,910

Prior to the Covid Pandemic, COCA would plan the Grant Program Budget based on estimated annual TDT and pay grantees with TDT funds received throughout the year from the County in quarterly installments. Post-Covid Pandemic, COCA changed the annual TDT grant funding procedure from projected funding based on budget figures received from the County, to budgeting only with TDT funds currently on hand.

COCA TDT Funding Analysis FY21-FY26

The Agreement between COCA and the County stipulates COCA receive 20%, or 1-penny, of the 5-penny Tourist Development Tax collected each year from overnight stays at commercial lodging. (The County also provides COCA with \$150,000 in General Revenue (GR) annually to offset COCA's operating costs.) Over the past years roughly 11% of the TDT Distribution to COCA by VT is used for operating costs and the remaining 89% is typically used for COCA's Grant disbursement. These combine to be their total use of TDT toward expenses.

During the 5-years Agreement, TDT payments (TDT) to COCA exceeded COCA's distributed TDT (EXP), leaving an increased surplus (SUR) of funding available each year. The surplus is then used to augment funding for the following year's grant program. The chart on the next page illustrates the expenses and surpluses each year for the last five years.

	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>FY25 (Budget/Actual)</u>	<u>5-Year Total</u>
EXP	\$454,834	\$680,313	\$972,952	\$1,457,473	\$2,218,742 (Estimated)	\$5,784,314
TDT	\$1,008,934	\$1,529,997	\$1,651,571	\$1,781,832	\$1,902,639 (Actual)	\$7,874,973
SUR	\$ 554,100	\$ 849,684	\$ 678,619	\$ 324,359	\$ (316,103) (Estimated)	\$2,090,659

	<u>FY26 Budget</u>
EXP	\$2,383,658
TDT/SUR	\$2,090,659

As illustrated above, COCA currently has a surplus (SUR) of approximately \$2.1 million TDT funds on hand, which will be utilized for the FY26 COCA grant program. The growing surplus has allowed additional Grant distributions for FY2025 and FY2026 while COCA has restored their reserve funds which were depleted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Per COCA's one-year extension with amendments of their current Agreement with the County, any remaining TDT on their balance sheet at the end of the Agreement Term, is to be used for eligible pre-approved expenses within 180 Days or paid back to the County.

In conclusion, this document provides background and information on COCA's Cultural Program Grant scoring and award methodology, and the TDT funding levels for COCA's annual grant awards. COCA's Grant applications steady scoring increase and increasing TDT funding has driven COCA's increase in disbursement of grant funding to applicants by nearly 90% even as the number of applicants has risen over 60% over the past 5 years. The rise in TDT collections annually coupled with COCA's change in budgeting tactics from forecasted TDT receipts to surplus funding has allowed COCA to continue increasing the budgeted Cultural Grant Funding and reach \$2 million each of the last 2 years.



COUNCIL ON
**CULTURE
& ARTS**

To: Kerri L. Post, Executive Director, Leon County Division of Tourism
From: Summer Callahan, Grants Manager, Council on Culture & Arts (COCA)
Kathleen Spehar, Executive Director, Council on Culture & Arts (COCA)
Re: Secondary County Tourism Eligibility Verification Results
Date: October 29, 2025

COCA is pleased to continue its partnership with Leon County, continuing the the tourism eligibility verification process for FY26 Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant programs.

In accordance with COCA's contract, the County reviews all applications for compliance with § 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes prior to panel scoring. Due to unexpected County delays, the tourism eligibility verification for seven applications for the FY26 Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant was not completed before the panel occurred.

Guided by consultations with legal counsel and discussions at COCA board meetings, the COCA Board of Directors approved the slate of FY26 Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant recommendations, pending the completion of County reviews and approvals.

At the September 11th Tourism Development Council (TDC) meeting, the Council chose to approve the applications that already passed the County's tourism eligibility verification, and to bring back the remaining applications that needed to complete the review at the November 6 TDC meeting.

At that time, the applications still under County review included:

- #3. Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Inc
- #9. Enhanceability / Able Artists Gallery
- #11. Florida State University (Challenger Learning Center)
- #14. Institute for Music Business
- #17. Making Light Productions
- #22. Strikers Youth Arts Project
- #23. Tallahassee Bach Parley, Inc.

To complete the tourism eligibility verification process, in accordance with COCA guidelines, the following steps remained:

1. If the County determines that the application is ineligible, the rationale will be provided to COCA in writing on or before July 11 and transmitted to the applicant by COCA.
2. The applicant has the option to either withdraw their TDT-funded grant application from consideration or revise their application to address the County's concerns.
3. The County must review any revisions and provide a written decision on the eligibility of the same to COCA.

4. If the County does not inform COCA of the ineligibility of any specific application(s) and the rationale for such decision by July 24, then such application may be presumed eligible and proceed to evaluation by the grant scoring panel.*
5. Any applications deemed ineligible by COCA and/or the County as described above will not proceed to the scoring panel, and such decisions are final and unappealable.

Working with the Director of Tourism, the following alternative tourism eligibility verification schedule was confirmed:

- The County would identify ineligible applications and provide rationale in writing on or by September 24.
- COCA would work with those identified applicants to revise or withdraw their applications, and submit any revisions to the County, on or by October 6.
- The County would review any revisions and provide a written decision on the eligibility of the same on or by October 14.
- Any applications that underwent revision and were found eligible by the County would be reviewed at the November 6 TDC meeting.

On September 22, the County informed COCA staff that one applicant (Asian Coalition of Tallahassee) passed the tourism eligibility verification review and could proceed without revisions.

On September 24, the County provided written feedback on the remaining six applications.

COCA provided the County feedback to the applicants, then worked with each one on their revisions. An applicant could also choose not to revise their application and withdraw from the round. The revised applications and list of revisions by applicant were sent to the Director of Tourism on October 6 for review.

The following applicants withdrew their applications:

- #9. Enhanceability / Able Artists Gallery
- #22. Strikers Youth Arts Project

The following applicants revised their applications:

- #11. Florida State University (Challenger Learning Center)
- #14. Institute for Music Business
- #17. Making Light Productions
- #23. Tallahassee Bach Parley, Inc.

On October 14, all four revised applications submitted to the County for the County's tourism eligibility verification review were approved.

COCA presents the following FY26 COCA Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications for approval.

FY26 Cultural Grant

Grant #	Organization	Group	Score	Award*
FY26CG-05	Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Inc.	4	93.33	\$15,280

Experience Asia 2026

FY26CG-19	Institute for Music Business LLC	3	94.67	\$55,956
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Music, Money and Mindset (MMM) Year Round Music Career Exploration

FY26CG-21	Making Light Productions, Inc.	3	93.33	\$80,000
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Making Light Productions Theatre Program

FY26CG-22	Tallahassee Bach Parley, Inc.	3	93.33	\$29,488
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Bach Parley Concert Series

FY26CG-36	Florida State University (Challenger Learning Center)	1	94.00	\$155,000
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Launch Boxes: STEAM Souvenirs that Bring Visitors Back to Tallahassee

CG Applications Submitted for Approval by TDC	\$335,724
CG Applications Approved by TDC on 9/11/2025	\$1,370,484
CG Applications Total	\$1,706,208

FY26 Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Grant #	Organization	Group	Score	Award*
FY26CTMG-05	Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Inc.	4	93.33	\$4,000

Experience Asia 2026

FY26CTMG-19	Institute for Music Business LLC*	3	94.67	\$4,000
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Music, Money and Mindset (MMM) Year Round Music Career Exploration

FY26CTMG-20	Making Light Productions, Inc.*	3	93.33	\$4,000
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Making Light Productions Theatre Program

FY26CTMG-21	Tallahassee Bach Parley, Inc.*	3	93.33	\$4,000
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Bach Parley Concert Series

FY26CTMG-35	Florida State University (Challenger Learning Center)*	1	94.00	\$4,000
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Launch Boxes: STEAM Souvenirs that Bring Visitors Back to Tallahassee

CTMG Applications Submitted for Approval by TDC	\$20,000
CTMG Applications Approved by TDC on 9/11/2025	\$90,405
CTMG Applications Total	\$110,405



Leon County's Eligibility Verification Review of COCA's FY26 TDT-Funded Grant Applications

Overall comments on Eligibility Verification Review Process:

- The applications received for review for COCA's FY26 grant programs funded with the County's Tourism Development Tax (TDT) are ALL meaningful, worthwhile programs, however the question is whether the programs/projects are eligible uses of TDT based on all the information in the respective applications.
- Since both of COCA's grant programs funded with TDT (Cultural Program Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant) are combined into one set of COCA Grant Guidelines and are combined into one single application, the County's feedback applies to BOTH grant applications for each applicant, as the applicants cannot market an ineligible program/project. Further, to correct this problematic systemic "blending" of the two distinct grant programs going forward, beginning next year, COCA must separate these two distinct programs into two distinct application processes as out-of-county Tourism marketing is a requirement of utilizing TDT funding for both distinct grant programs. Even though COCA separates them on the grant award recommendations list presented to the COCA Board and TDC, it is clear the applicants consider it one single grant process – as both grant guidelines are combined and both grant applications are combined into one single process - with one set of Guidelines and they fill out only one application with multiple components, which leads to eligibility confusion for the applicants and contributes to application eligibility review verification problem of obfuscated information as noted below.
- Each year, when the County reviews all of COCA's grant applications for TDT eligibility verification, there is significant confusion generated by all of the organization's other programs and extra information also included in the applications, which typically goes way beyond the scope of the specific grant program/project, obfuscating the truly relevant information to clearly comprehend and verify eligibility.
 - Therefore, COCA must work with all of the applicants next year to include only the focused relevant application project/program information – so that IF the TDT grant application is for an event or event series (annual/seasonal Theatre Programs, Concert Series, etc.) then ALL the information in the application, including the Marketing Plan and Budget should only pertain that one event or event series, and it should NOT include any other information on any other organizational programming or events, particularly those events/activities that are NOT eligible for TDT funding i.e, Summer Camps, Private dance lessons, etc.) Happy to discuss further for additional clarification.

1. #3-Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Inc. – Experience Asia 2026 (\$19,282)

As confirmed and communicated to COCA on 9/22/25, this application is eligible as presented and can continue in COCA's grant contracting process along with the other 30 eligible COCA grant applications.

2. #9-EnhanceAbility/Able Artists Gallery – Able Artists General Programming (\$32,000)

- The workshops and exhibits are only Tourism products that have visitor appeal, and as such marketing efforts should be focused on these two products/experiences to generate visitation;
- While they “checked the boxes” on COCA's grant application drop-down menu listing various geographic target markets, unfortunately ALL advertising in their submitted Marketing Plan is LOCAL so they must revise their Marketing Plan to include out-of-county marketing and advertising tactics that reach potential visitors and COCA must verify they actually did that on their close-out Grant Report;
- RE the revised/amended Marketing Plan, the application also states they want to “establish” a social presence, so please clarify to the applicant that establishing/maintaining an organization's social media platforms does NOT constitute tourism marketing or advertising or promotion to visitors;
- Please clarify and explain why is that both the current and next fiscal year budgets indicate nothing being spent on advertising/promotion? The Marketing Plan in the application references “advertising in tourism magazines and publications and tourist websites” but they have not reached out to anyone at Visit Tallahassee, the official tourism office in Leon County, in the past or currently to explore the space-limited options available for advertising.
- The Print Shop and all Print Shop-related expenses, including personnel and supplies, are not Tourism-related and therefore not eligible uses of TDT.

3. #11-FSU – Challenger Learning Center (CLC) – Launch Boxes: Hands-On STEAM Adventures for Curious Minds (\$159,000)

- This application shows the organization's Tourism impact through various other programs the CLC produces annually, but the program they applied for, the “Launch Boxes” project however is not an eligible use of TDT, although is a clever idea for kids education. The “Launch Box” program will send the boxes themselves to people/kids outside the community, distributing the boxes directly to their homes, as the boxes are designed for use at home, which does not promote tourism and therefore is an ineligible grant project. Additionally, there are no identified tactics to promote visitation (no call to action) in the grant application, and they also plan to distribute the boxes to local schools and libraries, and give the boxes out on-site at CLC-hosted events, such as planetarium shows, science festivals, etc., meaning any visitors receiving them are already here in Tallahassee. Further, the “Launch Boxes” are consistently referenced in the application as a “community outreach initiative” or “educational outreach program”, and the additional information in the application, including the supplemental materials, are education-based, not promoting visitation or with visitor-based messaging.

- The project itself as presented in the application clearly does not comport with the requirements for statutory uses of TDT funding, which is unfortunate because many of the other CLC programming and projects would be eligible for TDT funding. To that point, the required revisions to the application to make it potentially eligible would likely be substantial and go way beyond an amendment to one or two areas of the application. QUESTION FOR COCA: *In COCA's established amendment process, what is the percentage or threshold of revisions/modifications to still considered an "amendment" to an application, and not a new project or application re-write? As you will recall from the COCA grant discussions at the 9/11/25 TDC meeting, the TDC discussed and confirmed "do-overs" are not allowable.*
4. #14-Institute For Music Business – Music, Money and Mindset Program (MMMP) (\$59,000)
- This organization typically produces eligible large events that are Tourism draws, they work well with hotels, and their marketing is solid however one of the issues with this application is that it is not clear what exactly the MMMP is – therefore please provide clarification on the components and timeline/duration of this program. (Also see below.)
 - The application also states it features Immersive Summer Camps – and summer camps for local kids are not eligible uses of TDT (as you know Kathleen from past year's COCA grants), and there may other ineligible programs listed on their "core-year-round" programs, such as providing programs to local neighborhoods and after-school programs. These components would need to be removed from the application if they are part of the MMMP project as they are not eligible uses of TDT.
 - It is recommended they revise their application to focus on the tourism-related programs that have a visitor draw, such as the events they have listed throughout the year, i.e. Black History/Women's History Months, Juneteenth, season showcases, guest-speaker series, targeted (WOMB) workshops, etc.
 - Please provide clarification on the \$3500 expense for Computer Workstations and Recording Equipment– what specific program are they for and are they rentals or purchase? Also please provide clarification on the \$2K for "Technical" expense - is for what exactly and is it a rental or purchase?
 - Also please provide clarification on Administrative staffing/personnel fees and more detail on Artistic & Programming expenses as this program grant application is only for the MMMP, although it is not clear what exactly the MMMP entails, and the application lists various other projects and programs, and some are ineligible uses of TDT.
5. #17-Making Light Productions, Inc. – Making Light Theatre Program (\$84,000)
- The major Theatre Program productions are the main visitor appeal/tourism draw, so it is recommended to focus marketing efforts on the major productions to expand the reach and visitation for friends and family attending.
 - Please provide clarification on the \$20,000 expense in the category of "Educational Programs & Materials (classes, workshops, excluding staff)" - (again, no camps with Tourism funding) –

yet the descriptions state it is for "Show licenses w/Concord, costumes, sets, etc." which seems to be more of an Exhibit/Production expense.

- Please clarify the \$2400 expense for "Rental equipment" - two copiers/printers for scripts, programs, marketing materials - is the rental for the two copiers seasonal or year-long?

6. #22-Strikers Youth Arts Project - Capital City Dance Festival (\$8,000)

- Great to see they stated a goal/target (15%) for visitors in their estimated event attendance numbers. 🌐
- The application doesn't specify where the 3-day CCD Festival will be held - please confirm the location.
- The application lists \$4K travel (Artist & Tech) yet the narrative it states it will be staff visiting other cities to promote the event - please clarify as the grant organization staff travel is not an allowable expense of use of TDT. If paying for travel for "nationally-recognized" artist/instructors, how will COCA verify it is covering the travel for artists/instructors coming to event, not staff travel?
- The Marketing Plan is actually not a plan, it's more of a wish list - i.e., "look to publicize in local ads", "Map out a plan to advertise", "hire someone to manage social" yet there is no budget listed for any of these, as the budget in the application only shows \$4K for Website, with no advertising or marketing expenditures listed. This applicant must submit an actual Marketing plan with definitive actions and budget allocations supporting the marketing/media tactics.

7. #23-Tallahassee Bach Parley, Inc. - Bach Parley Concert Series (\$33,488)

- *Each year, when the County reviews all of COCA's grant applications, much confusion is generated by all of the other organizational programs and extra information included in the applications which typically goes way beyond the scope of the specific grant program/project, obfuscating the truly relevant information to clearly comprehend and verify project eligibility. This application perfectly illustrates that point.*
- This grant application is for the Bach Parley Concert Series, and therefore it should only contain a dedicated Concert Series Marketing Plan and the total Budget the Concert Series ONLY. It's not an annual program grant but that's how it seems to read because all of their other LOCAL programs and LOCAL Marketing tactics are included in the application. They applied for both COCA grants funded with TDT for the Bach Parley Concert Series. What is the total cost of the Concert Series? The grant budget seems to include a \$5K expenditure for the String Academy Administration, which is a separate Bach Parley program, unique from the Concert Series, so again the lines are blurred. Please revise the application to include only the Concert Series information.



To: Kerri L. Post, Director, Leon County Division
From: Summer Callahan, Grants Manager, Council on Culture & Arts (COCA)
Kathleen Spehar, Executive Director, Council on Culture & Arts (COCA)
Re: FY26 Cultural Grant County Eligibility Verification
Date: October 6, 2025

COCA is pleased to continue the tourism eligibility verification process that offers cultural grant support to eligible organizations and programs again for FY26. COCA's contract with Leon County stipulates that the County review all applications for eligibility and compliance with § 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes before presenting the applications to the panel for scoring.

The role of COCA as the administrator of the grant program is two-fold:

- To confirm eligibility to the goals of the COCA grant program; and
- To confirm compliance with the Florida Tourism statute, as defined in the COCA guidelines.
 - o This memo addresses this step of the tourism eligibility verification process.

COCA's Cultural Grant Program supports programs that meet at least one of the following:

- Offer arts, history, or cultural programs with exemplary standards and objectives.
- Provide educational opportunities in arts, culture, and/or history for young people or adults.
- Serve a special or diverse population or need, fill a unique niche or engage the community in the creative or artistic process.

COCA's Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Program provides additional funds for out-of-county marketing and promotion to ensure compliance with Florida Statute 125.0104. For the FY26 grant round, Cultural Grant (TDT) applicants may request these additional funds.

Compliance with the Florida Tourism statute, as defined in the COCA guidelines.

Per COCA's contract, the role of the County is to confirm eligibility to the tourism statute. Therefore, COCA developed the following process with the County, as defined in COCA's FY26 guidelines:

"COCA staff will review all applications to confirm eligibility to the goals of the COCA grant program and for TDT applicants, to the Tourism Statute 125.0104 F.S.

All Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Grant Applications will be provided to the Director of Tourism to verify eligibility to the Tourism Statute 125.0104 F.S. If the County determines that the application is ineligible, the rationale will be provided to COCA in writing on or before July 11 and transmitted to the applicant by COCA.

The applicant will then have until July 23 to revise and submit their application. The revised application will be transmitted by COCA to the County.



*The County will review the revised applications and provide a written decision on the eligibility of the same to COCA on or before July 29. If the County does not inform COCA of the ineligibility of any specific application(s) and the rationale for such decision by July 24, then such application may be presumed eligible and proceed to evaluation by the grant scoring panel. * Any applications deemed ineligible by COCA and/or the County as described above will not proceed to the scoring panel, and such decisions are final and unappealable.*

** Both COCA and the County are committed to ensuring that they meet the deadlines provided in these guidelines. However, neither body has the authority to waive the requirements of the Tourism Statute cited above. Therefore, applicants should be aware that, if unforeseen emergencies delay the eligibility review pertaining to the Tourism Statute, submission of applications to the grant scoring panel may be delayed and no presumptions of eligibility shall apply pending the completion of that eligibility review. In such an event, COCA will undertake efforts to keep applicants as informed as possible of the status of any delays."*

There were timeline delays in the County's schedule. COCA worked with the County on the revised timeline to complete the process, which is shared below.

TIMELINE

- **June 18, 2025** – Applications to the FY26 Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant were due.
 - o COCA received Cultural Grant applications from 37 organizations. COCA staff reviewed all applications for eligibility to both the goals of the Cultural Grant Program and eligibility to the Tourism statute. COCA staff determined that 37 applications are eligible.
 - o COCA received Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications from 38 organizations. COCA staff reviewed all applications for eligibility to both the goals of the Cultural Grant Program and eligibility of out-of-county marketing and promotion of programs to ensure compliance with Florida Statute 125.0104. One organization was found ineligible due to 501(c)3 nonprofit status. COCA staff determined that 37 applications are eligible.
- **June 25, 2025** – COCA staff provided the FY26 TDT-funded applications to the County, in accordance with the FY26 Guidelines.
- **July 11, 2025** – the County informed COCA staff that five applications were still in legal review.
- **July 17, 2025** – the County informed COCA staff that an additional two applications had been moved to legal review, for a total of seven
- **September 2, 2025** – to prevent unnecessary delays to funding, all applicants considered eligible by COCA were scored by a panel, pending final County approval and final eligibility determinations.



- **September 4, 2025** – the FY26 Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant recommendations were approved by COCA's Board of Directors, pending final County approval and final tourism eligibility determinations, and forwarded to the Leon County Tourist Development Council.
- **September 11, 2025** – the Leon County Tourist Development Council (TDC) voted to approve 30 of the FY26 Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications that did not have tourism verification eligibility issues. The remaining 7 applications, which were identified as having tourism eligibility verification issues, were not approved and needed to complete the verification process. Once the County feedback is received, if no revisions are required, the application may proceed to approval. If revisions are necessary, the applicant must complete the revision process for tourism eligibility verification, after which the application will be brought back to the TDC for consideration at their November 6 meeting.
- **September 22, 2025** – the County informed COCA staff that one applicant (Asian Coalition) had passed legal review.
- **September 24, 2025** – the County provided feedback on the remaining six applications.
- **October 6, 2025** – COCA provided applicant status and revisions to the County.
- **October 14, 2025** – the County will provide their final tourism eligibility verification results to any applicant revisions.
- **November 6, 2025** – the Leon County Tourist Development Council will review and vote on any revised applications.

In accordance with these requirements, existing and new, COCA presents its FY26 combined Cultural Grant Program and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications to the County for the final tourism eligibility verification.



**APPLICANT RESPONSE: LEON COUNTY'S ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION REVIEW OF COCA'S FY26 TDT-
FUNDED GRANT APPLICATIONS**

In accordance with the TDC's motion on September 11 and the County's confirmation on September 19, any application not requiring County revisions is considered approved and may proceed in COCA's grant contracting process, including the following eligible applications:

- #1. 621 Gallery
- #2. Arts and Cultural Experiences at Railroad Square
- #3. Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Inc (*confirmed as eligible on September 22, 2025*)
- #4. Ayoka Afrikan Dum and Dance, Inc.
- #5. Big Bend Filipino-American Association, Inc.
- #6. Choice Impact Community Development Corporation
- #7. DJ DEMP Foundation
- #8. Embrace World Cultures
- #10. Florida Litfest, Inc.
- #12. FSU Board of Trustees (Opening Nights)
- #13. Goodwood Museum and Gardens, Inc.
- #15. John Gilmore Riley Center
- #16. LeMoyne Art Foundation, Inc.
- #18. Mickee Faust Alternative Performance Club, Inc.
- #19. Pas de Vie, Inc.
- #20. Southern Shakespeare Company
- #21. SPEBSQSA Chapter PO24, Inc. / Capital Chordsmen
- #24. Tallahassee Ballet
- #25. Tallahassee Civic Chorale, Inc.
- #26. Tallahassee Community Friends of Old Time Dance, Inc.
- #27. Tallahassee Film Society
- #28. Tallahassee Hispanic Theater
- #29. Tallahassee Historical Society, Inc.
- #30. Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science, Inc.
- #31. Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Inc.
- #32. Tallahassee Youth Orchestras Inc
- #33. The Artist Series of Tallahassee, Inc.
- #34. The Tallahassee Community Chorus
- #35. Theater with a Mission Inc.
- #36. Theatre Tallahassee, Inc.
- #38. Young Actors Theatre Of Tallahassee Inc.



#9. Enhanceability / Able Artists Gallery

Visit Tallahassee feedback:

- The workshops and exhibits are only Tourism products that have visitor appeal, and as such marketing efforts should be focused on these two products/experiences to generate visitation;
- While they “checked the boxes” on COCA’s grant application drop-down menu listing various geographic target markets, unfortunately ALL advertising in their submitted Marketing Plan is LOCAL so they must revise their Marketing Plan to include out-of-county marketing and advertising tactics that reach potential visitors and COCA must verify they actually did that on their close-out Grant Report;
- RE the revised/amended Marketing Plan, the application also states they want to “establish” a social presence, so please clarify to the applicant that establishing/maintaining an organization’s social media platforms does NOT constitute tourism marketing or advertising or promotion to visitors;
- Please clarify and explain why is that both the current and next fiscal year budgets indicate nothing being spent on advertising/promotion? The Marketing Plan in the application references “advertising in tourism magazines and publications and tourist websites” but they have not reached out to anyone at Visit Tallahassee, the official tourism office in Leon County, in the past or currently to explore the space-limited options available for advertising.
- The Print Shop and all Print Shop-related expenses, including personnel and supplies, are not Tourism-related and therefore not eligible uses of TDT.

Applicant response:

- COCA discussed the possible changes with the applicant. Instead of revising their application, the applicant has decided to withdraw their application from consideration in the FY26 round.



#11. Florida State University (Challenger Learning Center)

Visit Tallahassee feedback:

- This application shows the organization's Tourism impact through various other programs the CLC produces annually, but the program they applied for, the "Launch Boxes" project however is not an eligible use of TDT, although is a clever idea for kids education. The "Launch Box" program will send the boxes themselves to people/kids outside the community, distributing the boxes directly to their homes, as the boxes are designed for use at home, which does not promote tourism and therefore is an ineligible grant project. Additionally, there are no identified tactics to promote visitation (no call to action) in the grant application, and they also plan to distribute the boxes to local schools and libraries, and give the boxes out on-site at CLC-hosted events, such as planetarium shows, science festivals, etc., meaning any visitors receiving them are already here in Tallahassee. Further, the "Launch Boxes" are consistently referenced in the application as a "community outreach initiative" or "educational outreach program", and the additional information in the application, including the supplemental materials, are education-based, not promoting visitation or with visitor-based messaging.
- The project itself as presented in the application clearly does not comport with the requirements for statutory uses of TDT funding, which is unfortunate because many of the other CLC programming and projects would be eligible for TDT funding. To that point, the required revisions to the application to make it potentially eligible would likely be substantial and go way beyond an amendment to one or two areas of the application.
- QUESTION FOR COCA: In COCA's established amendment process, what is the percentage or threshold of revisions/modifications to still considered an "amendment" to an application, and not a new project or application re-write? As you will recall from the COCA grant discussions at the 9/11/25 TDC meeting, the TDC discussed and confirmed "do-overs" are not allowable.

Applicant response:

- This applicant chose to revise their application.
- To address concerns about the Launch Boxes project not qualifying as an eligible use of TDT funds, the applicant revised their answer to program summary and the question, "Describe the program for which you are requesting funding." The applicant made the following changes:
 - Residency verification at event check-in ensures only families from outside Leon County receive Launch Boxes.
 - Distribution is limited to on-site CLC events—planetarium shows, science festivals, and other special programs—rather than at-home mail-outs and school/library giveaways.



- Each box includes a free family pass to the Fogg Planetarium redeemable on a future visit, "return visit coupons" and/or QR-coded STEAM passports, to incentivize repeat overnight visits in a six-month window
- Launch Boxes will include Visit Tallahassee maps, seasonal event calendars, and partner dining/hotel guides.
- To address concerns about the lack of tactics to promote visitation, the applicant revised their answer to the question "How does your program attract tourists and/or lengthen tourist stays in Leon County?" The applicant now details three core marketing tactics: regional advertising (radio, digital, and social) targeting family travelers in North Florida, South Georgia, and South Alabama; cross-promotions with Visit Tallahassee to highlight seasonal travel packages; and partnership marketing with hotels and cultural venues to promote "STEAM Day Out" bundles tied to Launch Box events.

To answer the County's question about the amendment process, COCA's amendment process allows for a revision of the original project. It does not allow the substitute of a new project, in accordance with the Tourist Development Council's discussion and confirmation of no "do-overs" from their September 11, 2025 meeting.



#14. Institute for Music Business

Visit Tallahassee feedback:

- This organization typically produces eligible large events that are Tourism draws, they work well with hotels, and their marketing is solid however one of the issues with this application is that it is not clear what exactly the MMMP is – therefore please provide clarification on the components and timeline/duration of this program. (Also see below.)
- The application also states it features Immersive Summer Camps – and summer camps for local kids are not eligible uses of TDT (as you know Kathleen from past year’s COCA grants), and there may other ineligible programs listed on their “core-year-round” programs, such as providing programs to local neighborhoods and after-school programs. These components would need to be removed from the application if they are part of the MMMP project as they are not eligible uses of TDT.
- It is recommended they revise their application to focus on the tourism-related programs that have a visitor draw, such as the events they have listed throughout the year, i.e. Black History/Women’s History Months, Juneteenth, season showcases, guest-speaker series, targeted (WOMB) workshops, etc.
- Please provide clarification on the \$3500 expense for Computer Workstations and Recording Equipment– what specific program are they for and are they rentals or purchase? Also please provide clarification on the \$2K for “Technical” expense - is for what exactly and is it a rental or purchase?
- Also please provide clarification on Administrative staffing/personnel fees and more detail on Artistic & Programming expenses as this program grant application is only for the MMMP, although it is not clear what exactly the MMMP entails, and the application lists various other projects and programs, and some are ineligible uses of TDT.

Applicant response:

- The applicant chose to revise their application.
- To address concerns about the clarity of the “Music, Money and Mindset” program (MMM), the applicant revised their answer to the question, “Describe the program for which you are requesting funding,” detailing what events/programs are part of MMM and a timeline of activities to take place between October 2025 and September 2026.
- To address concerns about summer camps, the applicant revised their answer to the question, “Describe the program for which you are requesting funding,” removing all summer camps and after-school programs. Only year-round workshops, showcases and certificate programs that are



available to the public and marketed as tourism draws are affiliated with this application. Those events include:

- Black History Month
 - Women's History Month
 - Juneteenth
 - Winter and Summer Showcases
 - Spring and Summer Guest Speaker Series
 - Women of Music Business (WOMB) Workshops
- To clarify concerns about the \$3,500 expense for "Computer Workstations and Recording Equipment," the applicant revised their proposal budget. The applicant reduced that expense to \$2,500 and includes "Computer work stations and recording equipment including peripheral items such as headphones, clip on mics, podcast equipment. Individual items are <\$1000 each. Purchased." The remaining \$1,000 was moved to "Educational Programs & Materials," to purchase "program and activity materials."
 - To clarify concerns about the \$2,000 "Administrative: Technical/Production," the applicant revised their proposal budget. This expense is paying an individual for "DJ services, sound, presentation A/V equipment, and lighting services."



#17. Making Light Productions, Inc.

Visit Tallahassee feedback:

- The major Theatre Program productions are the main visitor appeal/tourism draw, so it is recommended to focus marketing efforts on the major productions to expand the reach and visitation for friends and family attending.
- Please provide clarification on the \$20,000 expense in the category of “Educational Programs & Materials (classes, workshops, excluding staff)” - (again, no camps with Tourism funding) – yet the descriptions state it is for “Show licenses w/Concord, costumes, sets, etc.” which seems to be more of an Exhibit/Production expense.
- Please clarify the \$2400 expense for “Rental equipment” - two copiers/printers for scripts, programs, marketing materials – is the rental for the two copiers seasonal or year-long?

Applicant response:

- This applicant chose to revise their application.
- To address concerns about focusing marketing efforts on major Theatre Program productions, the applicant revised their marketing plan to spotlight key shows likely to attract theatre enthusiasts and fans of specific productions. They incorporated targeted outreach through press releases, the Thespians network, and national promotion tied to individual performances. The strategy shifted from broadly targeting socially conscious families to geo-targeting families within realistic travel distance, using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Google. Additionally, they removed on-site banners and signage, recognizing that such materials do not effectively reach out-of-town visitors.
- To address concerns about the misclassification of \$20,000 in expenses under “Educational Programs & Materials,” the applicant revised their proposal budget to reallocate those funds—originally listed for show licenses, costumes, props, and sets—to the appropriate category of “Other Exhibit/Production Expenses.”
- To address concerns about the \$2,400 “Rental equipment” expense and whether the copier/printer lease was seasonal or year-long, the applicant revised their proposal budget to clarify that the expense covers an annual lease of two multifunction copiers used consistently throughout the year. These devices support marketing collateral, scripts, and production materials for public performances, and are not capital acquisitions. The clarification confirms that the rental aligns with allowable expenses under program and marketing support guidelines.



#22. Strikers Youth Arts Project

Visit Tallahassee feedback:

- Great to see they stated a goal/target (15%) for visitors in their estimated event attendance numbers.
- The application doesn't specify where the 3-day CCD Festival will be held – please confirm the location.
- The application lists \$4K travel (Artist & Tech) yet the narrative it states it will be staff visiting other cities to promote the event – please clarify as the grant organization staff travel is not an allowable expense of use of TDT. If paying for travel for “nationally-recognized” artist/instructors, how will COCA verify it is covering the travel for artists/instructors coming to event, not staff travel?
- The Marketing Plan is actually not a plan, it's more of a wish list – i.e., “look to publicize in local ads”, “Map out a plan to advertise”, “hire someone to manage social” yet there is no budget listed for any of these, as the budget in the application only shows \$4K for Website, with no advertising or marketing expenditures listed. This applicant must submit an actual Marketing plan with definitive actions and budget allocations supporting the marketing/media tactics.

Applicant response:

- COCA discussed the possible changes with the applicant. Instead of revising their application, the applicant has decided to withdraw their application from consideration in the FY26 round.



#23. Tallahassee Bach Parley, Inc.

Visit Tallahassee Feedback

- This grant application is for the Bach Parley Concert Series, and therefore it should only contain a dedicated Concert Series Marketing Plan and the total Budget the Concert Series ONLY. It's not an annual program grant but that's how it seems to read because all of their other LOCAL programs and LOCAL Marketing tactics are included in the application. They applied for both COCA grants funded with TDT for the Bach Parley Concert Series. What is the total cost of the Concert Series? The grant budget seems to include a \$5K expenditure for the String Academy Administration, which is a separate Bach Parley program, unique from the Concert Series, so again the lines

Applicant response:

- The applicant chose to revise their application.
- To address concerns about the inclusion of non-Concert Series programming and expenses in the grant application, the applicant revised their proposal budget to remove the \$5,000 allocation for String Academy administration—a separate program not part of the Bach Parley Concert Series. Those funds were moved to "Outside Fees & Services: Artistic" to support "Concert Musicians and Music Director" for the Concert Series.

FY26 Cultural Grant Awards

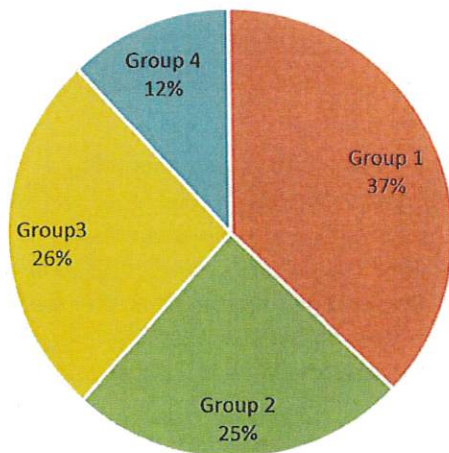
The mission of COCA's Cultural Grant Program is to serve and support the community of non-profit arts and cultural organizations within Tallahassee and Leon County through program funding which enhances the quality of life as well as the tourism and economic development of our community. An applicant's programming must contribute to the tourism development of Leon County in accordance with Florida Statute 125.0104.

The grant program seeks to fund programming that offers a unique service in arts, culture and history not otherwise provided in the community; programs that provide distinctive arts, history, and cultural offerings; programs that highlight cultural diversity and/or access for persons with disabilities; programs that bring arts, cultural and historic exhibits, or events to underserved areas; programs which engage members of the community in the creative and/or artistic process.

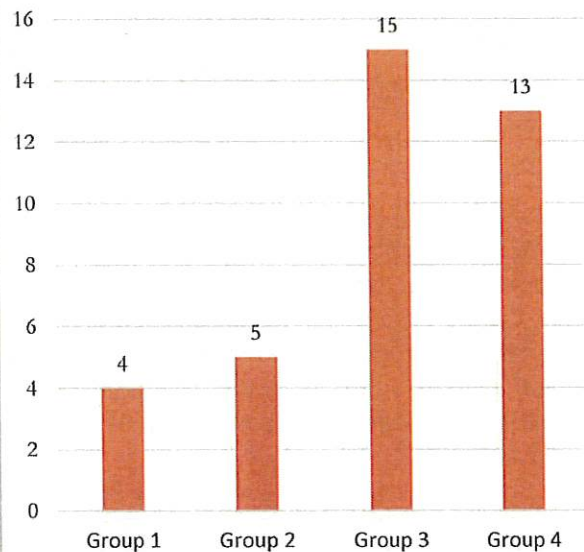
Application Summary	Award Summary*		
38 applications received	Group 1	4 awardees	\$744,425
All applications reviewed by COCA Grants Manager	Group 2	5 awardees	\$490,982
38 eligible applications reviewed by panel	Group 3	15 awardees	\$526,206
Tourism eligibility pending	Group 4	13 awardees	\$239,059
	Total	37 awardees	\$2,000,672

* All awards are pending County approval and final eligibility determinations

FY26 Cultural Grant Awards



Number of Awardees by Group



FY26 Cultural Grant*			
Grant #	Organization	Group	Award* & Score
FY26CG-01	Arts and Cultural Experiences at Railroad Square	4	\$16,000 94.67

First Fridays at Railroad Square

First Fridays at Railroad Square is a free, monthly community festival held in Tallahassee's historic art district, featuring local artists and creative entrepreneurs. With music, culturally diverse food, street performances, and family-friendly activities, the event both features and draws a diverse demographic. Known for its vibrant, inclusive atmosphere, First Fridays offers a consistent, year-round opportunity for residents and tourists alike, even during the City's quieter seasons. Over 20 years strong, it is one of Tallahassee's most unique and longest-running monthly traditions, nationally recognized by Forbes, Huffington Post, Trip Advisor, Forbes, and ESPN's "3-Day Weekend" as a top local experience.

FY26CG-02	Ayoka Afrikan Drum and Dance, Inc.	4	\$24,985 94.67
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It's Ayoka for ME!

We request funding for two core facets of our "It's Ayoka for ME!" programming that share cultural traditions of Africa while fostering stronger and healthier communities locally: 1) Ongoing community drum and dance classes offered free of charge across Leon County and surrounding areas, and 2) the 2026 Ayoka Afrikan Drum and Dance Festival, featuring twenty five invited artists and class instruction in drum and dance traditions of Senegal, Guinea, Zimbabwe, Congo, Haiti, and Cuba.

FY26CG-03	Tallahassee Film Society	4	\$26,957 94.67
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Reels on the Rails©

Reels on the Rails© is the Tallahassee Film Society's year-round film series showcasing outstanding independent, documentary, and international films not otherwise shown in the region. The program fosters appreciation for film as a relevant art form while promoting cultural diversity and social awareness. Screenings feature global perspectives, including foreign-language films that introduce audiences to new cultures, histories, and ideas. Designed to reach historically underrepresented groups in art-house cinema, Reels on the Rails© offers accessible, inclusive programming in ADA-compliant venues. Post-film discussions and community engagement are central to the experience, creating space for reflection, conversation, and cultural connection.

FY26CG-04	Tallahassee Hispanic Theater	4	\$6,500 94.00
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9th Annual Micro Theater Festival

THT is requesting funding to produce the 9th Annual Micro Theater Festival, which will be celebrated during the Summer of 2026 at Goodwood Museum and Gardens. The past editions of the festival have been very successful and we are continuing to work on making it a Summer cultural landmark in Tallahassee that can attract visitors during a time of the year when the local cultural offer isn't very extensive.

FY26CG-05	Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Inc.	4	\$15,280 93.33
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Experience Asia 2026

Asian Coalition of Tallahassee (ACT) projects go on all year with activities that embraces culture with projects that promote the Asian culture. Experience Asia, our signature event, is held at the end of September to commemorate the contributions of the Asian and Asian American groups in Tallahassee and the community at large. Our event ranks number 3 as one of the favorite events in the city. People are fascinated by the Asian culture and Experience Asia showcases Asian culture.

FY26CG-06	EnhanceAbility / Able Artists Gallery	4	\$28,000 92.00
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Able Artists Gallery General Programming

Our gallery, which showcases the works of local, regional, national, and international artists with disabilities, is seeking funding to expand our marketing, exhibitions, workshops, events, and outreach as we strive to facilitate a sense of hope, pride, and opportunity for all artists. We believe that the arts have the power to promote understanding, inspire change, and create a more inclusive and equitable society. We are committed to creating a welcoming and accessible space for all visitors and strive to have a greater impact on the community and tourism while serving as a hub for cultural and artistic activities.

FY26CG-07	Tallahassee Community Friends of Old Time Dance, Inc.	4	\$6,915 92.00
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Tallahassee Community Friends of Old Time Dance, Inc. General Programming

Tallahassee Community Friends of Old-Time Dance (TCFOOTD), Inc., promotes traditional folk dance and music traditions from New England, Ireland, Quebec, Scotland, England and Appalachia by holding contra dances one to two times per month. A contra dance is a communal dance where a caller, accompanied by a live string band, guides dancers through a variety of folk dances. TCFOOTD welcomes dancers of all experience levels and all walks of life regardless of gender identity, marital status, physical ability, culture, age, race or religion. Contra dances are about building community: meeting new people and making new friends, set to music.

FY26CG-08	621 Gallery	4	\$28,000 91.33
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General Programming

621 Gallery offers unique and contemporary exhibition season programming and outreach which is extended through special annual events and festivals. The gallery strives to provide a platform for local, regional & national emerging to mid-career artists. These include artist talks, workshops, open studio hours and more. Visiting artists stay at hotels in the area for the installation & de-installation of their exhibit. These exhibitions & programs draw a large range of local patrons, in addition to numerous weekly visits from tourists staying in local hotels.

FY26CG-09	Big Bend Filipino-American Association, Inc.	4	\$10,500 90.67
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Big Bend Filipino-American Association General Programming

The Big Bend Filipino-American Association, Inc. (BBFAA) is requesting Cultural Grant funding and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant funding for the 2025 to 2026 fiscal year. BBFAA is a non-profit organization with the goal of fostering cultural and social ties between the Filipinos and the community at large while generating resources towards charity and humanitarian causes.

FY26CG-10	SPEBSQSA Chapter PO24, Inc.	4	\$14,000 90.67
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Barbershop Harmony Public Performances

During two distinct periods of the year - the Christmas Holiday season and in early summer - our chorus will present high quality public performances of choral music arranged in the distinctive 4-part acapella style known as barbershop harmony.

FY26CG-11	Tallahassee Civic Chorale, Inc.	4	\$20,000 90.67
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Tallahassee Civic Chorale 40th Anniversary season

The 40th concert season will consist of three concerts, each celebrating some aspect of the Chorale, using its repertoire and place in the cultural life of North Florida.

FY26CG-12	Embrace World Cultures Inc	4	\$25,033 90.00
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CrystalFire World Dance and Wellness Conference

The CrystalFire World Dance and Wellness Conference is a four-day cultural event that brings internationally acclaimed artists, educators, and audiences to Leon County for an immersive experience in global dance, music, and holistic wellness. Designed to promote cross-cultural understanding and artistic excellence, the conference offers workshops, public showcases, and community engagement opportunities. It serves as a unique platform for education, inclusion, and cultural tourism—positioning Tallahassee as a vibrant hub for the arts. CrystalFire supports local economic development while addressing the community's need for diverse,

high-quality cultural programming that uplifts underrepresented voices and fosters global connection through the performing arts.

FY26CG-13	Tallahassee Historical Society, Inc.	4	\$16,889
			81.33

Tallahassee Historical Society Inc General Programming

The Tallahassee Historical Society's programs focus on preserving, educating, and fostering an appreciation for the history of Tallahassee, Leon County, and surrounding areas. They offer monthly meetings with guest speakers, participate in local events, and support various historical preservation projects. The society presents programs and lectures on various historical topics, including local and state history, architecture, archeology, and preservation. The society actively supports and participates in projects related to preserving historic buildings, cemeteries, and other historical sites. They participate in local historical events The society publishes a historical journal called "Apalachee" and other publications to disseminate historical information.

FY26CG-14	Theater with a Mission Inc	3	\$42,728
			97.33

Loco for Love Festival 2026

Theater with a Mission (TWAM) creates once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to experience Florida during the American Revolution. At a historic site unique to Leon County, Loco for Love Festival 2026 musters experts from all over the nation to lead workshops in songs, dances, games, and foods from 1776. Performers from all over the South re-create Revolutionary stories, military drills, and debates. TWAM's new play "Family Feud 1776" invites audiences to become residents of Florida 250 years ago, watch competing versions of Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare's tragedy and Lope de Vega's comedy), and plot to support the Patriot Montagues or the Loyalist Capulets.

FY26CG-15	Pas de Vie, Inc.	3	\$37,938
			96.67

Pas de Vie Ballet 2025-26 Performance Season

"The Arts Live Here" is a familiar saying in the Tallahassee arts and cultural community. After more than 37 years of performances, Pas de Vie is proud to be part of Tallahassee's cultural tradition. Our annual performance season includes special school performances of The Nutcracker and Peter & the Wolf, and full performances of The Nutcracker and Spotlight on Dance. These events have seen an increased number of attendees from outside of Leon County and we hope to continue to draw additional visitors to our community to enjoy our performances and everything Tallahassee and Leon County have to offer visitors.

FY26CG-16	Southern Shakespeare Company	3	\$53,264
			96.67

A Walking Midsummer

This innovative production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream will take place on the grounds of the beautiful Tallahassee Museum and actors will perform scenes from the play in various locations throughout.

Audiences will travel down Tallahassee Museum's wooded trails, ambling boardwalks, and through their animal exhibits, all while taking in scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Featuring the fairy King and Queen on ziplines, custom drinks and snacks from local vendors, and family-friendly pre-show activities, this event is sure to be utterly magical and truly unforgettable.

FY26CG-17	Mickee Faust Alternative Performance Club, Inc	3	\$19,131
			96.00

Support for Mickee Faust's 39th Season

Mickee Faust Club's 39th year of programming: Fall's "Faust of Horrors," "Faust Springs Into Spring" and Community Collaborations.

FY26CG-18	The Tallahassee Community Chorus	3	\$31,827
			96.00

2025-2026 Concert Season

The Tallahassee Community Chorus seeks grant funding to support its 2025-2026 concert season, its 38th season of filling Tallahassee and the surrounding areas with song! The Chorus presents three major choral works with orchestra each season and draws in-person audiences from across Florida, South Georgia, and South Alabama, as well as online audiences from across the globe. Alongside our musical programming, the Chorus offers non-auditioned singing opportunities to community members, educational and singing opportunities for students, and provides graduate students with conducting and internship experiences.

FY26CG-19	Institute for Music Business LLC	3	\$55,956
			94.67

Music, Money and Mindset Program

The Institute for Music Business (IMB) empowers youth, young adults and lifelong learners across Leon, Gadsden, Jefferson, Wakulla, and Taylor counties through immersive summer career camps and mentorship programs focused on music, media, and workforce readiness. On evenings and weekends, students engage in college tours, studio tours, songwriting, production, business training, and real-world experiences. IMB also provides vocational rehabilitation, career pathways training for youth (14-21) with disabilities, including foster youth through the Music for Life program. Funding will support marketing efforts to expand awareness and attract youth from across Florida and beyond, building a creative pipeline to postsecondary success.

FY26CG-20	Florida Litfest, Inc.	3	\$10,000
			93.33

Florida Litfest Books and Music All Year

The program for which we are requesting funding is a series of author and/or musician appearances for community at-large.

FY26CG-21		3	\$80,000
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Making Light
Productions, Inc.

93.33

Making Light Productions Theatre Program

Making Light Productions is seeking an \$80,000 grant to support our inclusive and award-winning theatre program. Annually, we stage over 28 productions with 76 performances, emphasizing cultural value and artistic excellence. Our educational initiatives welcome children, teens, and adults of all abilities, showcasing musicals and plays at the Making Light Theatre. We embrace neurodiverse casting, necessitating additional staff to assist with physical and cognitive challenges, ensuring comprehensive support for all students. Our program uniquely attracts regional families and offers performance and crew opportunities to neurodivergent adults through our Tallahassee Children's Theatre at MLP.

FY26CG-22

Tallahassee Bach Parley,
Inc.

3

\$29,488

93.33

Bach Parley Concert Series

Tallahassee Bach Parley concerts showcase local professional musicians alongside guest artists from out of town, performing Baroque music on period instruments. This unique programming appeals to a broad audience and highlights Leon County as a tourist destination, as the nearest similar organization is in Atlanta, GA. Bach Parley concerts are free and open to the public, with a suggested donation of \$10. However, it is not required, making it accessible for community members of all income levels to attend.

FY26CG-23

Choice Impact
Community
Development
Corporation

3

\$29,645

92.00

Arts-in-the-Heart Concert Series present Javacya Elite Chamber Orchestra and Special Guests

Now entering its ninth season in 2026, the Arts-In-The-Heart Concert Series was founded by the 45-year-old Javacya Arts Conservatory as an extension of its esteemed educational platform supporting the Javacya Elite Chamber Orchestra. Known for bold programming and artistic excellence, the series features newly commissioned works and acclaimed performers such as violinist Rachel Barton Pine, cellist Dr. Khari Joyner, and vocalist Darryl Tookes. Through solo recitals, chamber ensembles, and orchestral collaborations, Arts-In-The-Heart offers audiences fresh, compelling compositions and masterful interpretations, serving as a vital platform for both emerging and established voices in classical music.

FY26CG-24

John Gilmore Riley
Center/Museum of
African American History
and Culture Inc.

3

\$65,960

91.33

John Gilmore Riley Center General Programming

The four-year exhibition and lecture series (2024-2027): "African Americans in Tallahassee: From the Antebellum Period to the Civil Rights Era."

FY26CG-25

The Artist Series of
Tallahassee, Inc.

3

\$28,314

91.33

The Artist Series of Tallahassee Concert Season Tourism/Marketing FY26

The Artist Series of Tallahassee will present a public, five-concert series, featuring world renowned classical music ensembles and soloists, encouraging tourists and locals to explore all that Tallahassee has to offer through the Arts. Programs of The Artist Series contribute to Tallahassee's thriving cultural scene and help attract visitors who shop, dine, and book lodging in Tallahassee and Leon County. The Artist Series impacts tourism and stimulates the local economy by presenting a high quality arts experience performed by world class artists not typically appearing outside of major markets.

FY26CG-26	Strikers Youth Arts Project, Inc	3	\$4,000 90.67
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Capital City Dance Festival

Capital City Dance Festival: The three-day festival will highlight different genres of dance from master instructors from around the country. People will have the opportunity to take master classes in Hip Hop, Jazz, Contemporary, Urban Soul, Drill, and Heels, and much more! The festival will end with a culminating performance by the master instructors, visiting dance companies, and festival participants. We anticipate up to 2200 people in attendance at the festival whether in-person or virtually and we believe at minimum, 15% of our participants will be from out-of-town. This will bring tourism into the Capital City.

FY26CG-27	DJ DEMP Foundation	3	\$15,885 88.67
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DJ DEMP General Programming

Our programs fulfill the Cultural Grant's objectives by: Offering culturally relevant arts and educational experiences rooted in Southern hip-hop, music history, and live performance. These programs are developed with exemplary educational standards, providing meaningful exposure to music as a cultural art form. Creating educational opportunities for youth through outreach, performances, and interactive community events where students learn to build emotional resilience, creative expression, and confidence through music and storytelling. Serving a diverse population and support creative expression through performing arts. We attract visitors through our signature, high-impact programs which regularly draw attendees and performers from across Florida and adjoining states.

FY26CG-28	Tallahassee Youth Orchestras Inc	3	\$22,070 88.67
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Tallahassee Youth Orchestras General Programming

Tallahassee Youth Orchestras provides the only full-orchestra experience for students in the region. We offer ensembles appropriate to all levels of young musicians, with a need-based scholarship program to ensure all can afford to participate. We present four concerts each season in FSU concert halls, two additional performances featuring smaller ensembles in community locations, and travel to Jackson County for a residency each August. Our high-quality performances feature low ticket prices, making live music accessible. Our Community Orchestra provides free performances in support of civic events. We provide educational outreach programs that reach over 550 students every year.

FY26CG-29		2	\$102,800
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LeMoyne Art
Foundation, Inc.

98.67

LeMoyne Arts Programs, Exhibits, and Related Events

LeMoyne Arts seeks grant support for our gallery exhibits, exhibit-related events and hands on art making workshops from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026. This includes 11 rotating exhibits and at least 24 supporting events and workshops associated with the exhibits.

FY26CG-30

Goodwood Museum and
Gardens, Inc

2

\$94,525

98.00

Goodwood Museum and Gardens General Programming

Goodwood Museum & Gardens seeks funding for cultural programming set amidst historic architecture and heirloom gardens. The 21-acre property is an intact cultural landscape with 16 historic structures and gardens reflecting 200 years of history. Programming includes music, theater and visual arts, exhibits featuring historic collections and new research, and educational offerings for all ages. Goodwood has local, national and international appeal, welcoming approximately 50,000 visitors from 46 states and 20 countries in the past twelve months alone. Moreover, through strategic partnerships, creativity and well-being intersect at Goodwood, contributing to a vibrant, healthy community with a high quality of life.

FY26CG-31

Tallahassee Ballet

2

\$134,062

98.00

The Tallahassee Ballet's 2025-2026 Season Performances and Programming

The Tallahassee Ballet (TTB) is seeking funding to support its 2025–2026 Season of performances and programming.

FY26CG-32

Young Actors Theatre Of
Tallahassee Inc.

2

\$106,361

97.33

Young Actors Theatre 25-26 Season of Shows and Touring Troupes

At Young Actors Theatre, we produce an annual season of high-quality shows for the general public that challenge our young performers and captivate multi-generational audiences. While our shows are performed by youth, they are not childish. With professional guidance and a rich history of excellence, our students create unforgettable productions, attracting and inspiring over 10,000 patrons with the magic of live theater. We also have three touring troupes that shine at festivals and major events in the area and beyond.

FY26CG-33

Theatre Tallahassee, Inc

2

\$53,234

95.33

2025-2026 Production Season

Theatre Tallahassee respectfully requests funding to support its 2025–2026 production season. The centerpiece of our organization, the production season is the core vehicle through which we fulfill our mission to enrich the community through high-quality theatrical experiences. Support from COCA will directly impact

our artistic development and marketing success. These funds will help ensure continued delivery of diverse, accessible, and compelling live theatre. The season serves as the foundation for all other programming, including education, community partnerships, and audience development. A successful season strengthens our capacity to engage new audiences, nurture talent, and contribute meaningfully to the cultural landscape.

FY26CG-34	Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Inc.	1	\$209,425
			100.00

Support for the Programs of the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra's 45th Anniversary Season

The Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra seeks funding to support a wide array of concert offerings, both classical and popular, in indoor and outdoor arenas, and geared toward diverse audiences of adults, children, families, and curious experience-seekers. Whether it be the music of Beethoven, Michael Jackson, or John Williams, the TSO offers something for everyone in settings that are welcoming and attractive to people throughout Leon County and beyond. Additionally, our education and engagement programs will provide one-of-a-kind opportunities for the citizens of our community by living by our mission to "engage, enrich, and inspire."

FY26CG-35	Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science, Inc.	1	\$350,000
			99.33

Tallahassee Museum General Programming

The Tallahassee Museum seeks grant funding to remain a vibrant educational, cultural, and economic hub for Leon County, serving as a gathering place to learn about our cultural and natural environments while strengthening community development and being recognized as a premier tourist destination. Funding will enable the Museum to serve the County's educational and cultural needs through a dynamic, diverse program of exhibits, programs, events, professional assistance, outreach services, and professionally maintained collections and facilities. These programs will sustain the Museum's educational, cultural, and economic benefits provided to all citizens of Leon County, regardless of background, age, or financial status.

FY26CG-36	Florida State University (Challenger Learning Center)	1	\$155,000
			94.00

Launch Boxes: Hands-On STEAM Adventures for Curious Minds

Launch Boxes: Hands-On STEAM Adventures for Curious Minds is a community outreach initiative from the Challenger Learning Center of Tallahassee. The program delivers curated STEAM kits to children in areas across North Florida. Each box contains reusable materials, activity guides, and engaging projects aligned with educational standards. Designed for learners ages 5–13, Launch Boxes bring high-quality, hands-on science, technology, engineering, art, and math experiences directly into homes and community spaces—empowering children to explore, create, and build confidence. Activities are designed to spark curiosity not just in students, but also in families learning and discovering together.

FY26CG-37		1	\$30,000
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FSU Board of Trustees
(Opening Nights)

93.33

FY26 Artist & Education Programming

Opening Nights requests grant funds to support its 2025-26 season of public and educational performances.

Total \$2,000,672

** Pending County approval and final eligibility determinations*

FY26 Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Awards

The Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Program is designed to increase the visibility and awareness of Leon County's arts and cultural organizations and their programming, to those outside of the County. Marketing initiatives should highlight our vibrant and diverse cultural community and seek to attract visitors. For the purposes of this grant, organizations will need to specify marketing and promotional initiatives which use media outlets or strategies that are not primarily focused on the local Tallahassee/Leon County market. Use of these grant funds should raise the overall awareness of Leon County as a desirable place to visit.

Application Summary	Award Summary*
37 applications received	33 applications funded at 100%
All applications reviewed by COCA Grants Manager	3 applicants funded at 90%
1 application deemed ineligible and withdrawn	0 applicants funded at 80%
36 applications reviewed by panel	0 applicants not funded
Tourism eligibility pending	36 awards totaling \$138,405
* All awards are pending County approval and final eligibility determinations	

FY26 Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant*			
Grant #	Organization	Group	Award & Score*
FY26CTMG-01	Arts and Cultural Experiences at Railroad Square	4	\$4,000 94.67

First Fridays at Railroad Square

First Fridays at Railroad Square is a free, monthly community festival held in Tallahassee's historic art district, featuring local artists and creative entrepreneurs. With music, culturally diverse food, street performances, and family-friendly activities, the event both features and draws a diverse demographic. Known for its vibrant, inclusive atmosphere, First Fridays offers a consistent, year-round opportunity for residents and tourists alike, even during the City's quieter seasons. Over 20 years strong, it is one of Tallahassee's most unique and longest-running monthly traditions, nationally recognized by Forbes, Huffington Post, Trip Advisor, Forbes, and ESPN's "3-Day Weekend" as a top local experience.

FY26CTMG-02	Ayoka Afrikan Drum and Dance, Inc.	4	\$4,000 94.67
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It's Ayoka for ME!

We request funding for two core facets of our "It's Ayoka for ME!" programming that share cultural traditions of Africa while fostering stronger and healthier communities locally: 1) Ongoing community drum and dance classes offered free of charge across Leon County and surrounding areas, and 2) the 2026 Ayoka Afrikan Drum and Dance Festival, featuring twenty five invited artists and class instruction in drum and dance traditions of Senegal, Guinea, Zimbabwe, Congo, Haiti, and Cuba.

FY26CTMG-03	Tallahassee Film Society	4	\$4,000 94.67
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Reels on the Rails©

Reels on the Rails® is the Tallahassee Film Society's year-round film series showcasing outstanding independent, documentary, and international films not otherwise shown in the region. The program fosters appreciation for film as a relevant art form while promoting cultural diversity and social awareness. Screenings feature global perspectives, including foreign-language films that introduce audiences to new cultures, histories, and ideas. Designed to reach historically underrepresented groups in art-house cinema, Reels on the Rails® offers accessible, inclusive programming in ADA-compliant venues. Post-film discussions and community engagement are central to the experience, creating space for reflection, conversation, and cultural connection.

FY26CTMG-04	Tallahassee Hispanic Theater	4	\$4,000 94.00
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9th Annual Micro Theater Festival

THT is requesting funding to produce the 9th Annual Micro Theater Festival, which will be celebrated during the Summer of 2026 at Goodwood Museum and Gardens. The past editions of the festival have been very successful and we are continuing to work on making it a Summer cultural landmark in Tallahassee that can attract visitors during a time of the year when the local cultural offer isn't very extensive.

FY26CTMG-05	Asian Coalition of Tallahassee, Inc.	4	\$4,000 93.33
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Experience Asia 2026

Asian Coalition of Tallahassee (ACT) projects go on all year with activities that embrace culture with projects that promote the Asian culture. Experience Asia, our signature event, is held at the end of September to commemorate the contributions of the Asian and Asian American groups in Tallahassee and the community at large. Our event ranks number 3 as one of the favorite events in the city. People are fascinated by the Asian culture and Experience Asia showcases Asian culture.

FY26CTMG-06	EnhanceAbility / Able Artists Gallery	4	\$4,000 92.00
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Able Artists Gallery General Programming

Our gallery, which showcases the works of local, regional, national, and international artists with disabilities, is seeking funding to expand our marketing, exhibitions, workshops, events, and outreach as we strive to facilitate a sense of hope, pride, and opportunity for all artists. We believe that the arts have the power to promote understanding, inspire change, and create a more inclusive and equitable society. We are committed to creating a welcoming and accessible space for all visitors and strive to have a greater impact on the community and tourism while serving as a hub for cultural and artistic activities.

FY26CTMG-07	Tallahassee Community Friends of Old Time Dance, Inc.	4	\$4,000 92.00
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Tallahassee Community Friends of Old Time Dance, Inc. General Programming

Tallahassee Community Friends of Old-Time Dance (TCFOOTD), Inc., promotes traditional folk dance and music traditions from New England, Ireland, Quebec, Scotland, England and Appalachia by holding contra dances one to two times per month. A contra dance is a communal dance where a caller, accompanied by a live string

band, guides dancers through a variety of folk dances. TCFOOTD welcomes dancers of all experience levels and all walks of life regardless of gender identity, marital status, physical ability, culture, age, race or religion. Contra dances are about building community: meeting new people and making new friends, set to music.

FY26CTMG-08	621 Gallery	4	\$4,000
			91.33

General Programing

621 Gallery offers unique and contemporary exhibition season programming and outreach which is extended through special annual events and festivals. The gallery strives to provide a platform for local, regional & national emerging to mid-career artists. These include artist talks, workshops, open studio hours and more. Visiting artists stay at hotels in the area for the installation & de-installation of their exhibit. These exhibitions & programs draw a large range of local patrons, in addition to numerous weekly visits from tourists staying in local hotels.

FY26CTMG-09	Big Bend Filipino-American Association, Inc.	4	\$500
			90.67

Big Bend Filipino-American Association General Programming

The Big Bend Filipino-American Association, Inc. (BBFAA) is requesting Cultural Grant funding and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant funding for the 2025 to 2026 fiscal year. BBFAA is a non-profit organization with the goal of fostering cultural and social ties between the Filipinos and the community at large while generating resources towards charity and humanitarian causes.

FY26CTMG-10	SPEBSQSA Chapter PO24, Inc.	4	\$3,780
			90.67

Barbershop Harmony Public Performances

During two distinct periods of the year - the Christmas Holiday season and in early summer - our chorus will present high quality public performances of choral music arranged in the distinctive 4-part acapella style known as barbershop harmony.

FY26CTMG-11	Tallahassee Civic Chorale, Inc.	4	\$4,000
			90.67

Tallahassee Civic Chorale 40th Anniversary season

The 40th concert season will consist of three concerts, each celebrating some aspect of the Chorale, using its repertoire and place in the cultural life of North Florida.

FY26CTMG-12	Embrace World Cultures Inc	4	\$4,000
			90.00

CrystalFire World Dance and Wellness Conference

The CrystalFire World Dance and Wellness Conference is a four-day cultural event that brings internationally acclaimed artists, educators, and audiences to Leon County for an immersive experience in global dance, music, and holistic wellness. Designed to promote cross-cultural understanding and artistic excellence, the conference offers workshops, public showcases, and community engagement opportunities. It serves as a

unique platform for education, inclusion, and cultural tourism—positioning Tallahassee as a vibrant hub for the arts. CrystalFire supports local economic development while addressing the community's need for diverse, high-quality cultural programming that uplifts underrepresented voices and fosters global connection through the performing arts.

FY26CTMG-13	Tallahassee Historical Society, Inc.	4	\$3,600
			81.33

Tallahassee Historical Society Inc

The Tallahassee Historical Society's programs focus on preserving, educating, and fostering an appreciation for the history of Tallahassee, Leon County, and surrounding areas. They offer monthly meetings with guest speakers, participate in local events, and support various historical preservation projects. The society presents programs and lectures on various historical topics, including local and state history, architecture, archeology, and preservation. The society actively supports and participates in projects related to preserving historic buildings, cemeteries, and other historical sites. They participate in local historical events. The society publishes a historical journal called "Apalachee" and other publications to disseminate historical information.

FY26CTMG-14	Theater with a Mission Inc	3	\$4,000
			97.33

Loco for Love Festival 2026

Theater with a Mission (TWAM) creates once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to experience Florida during the American Revolution. At a historic site unique to Leon County, Loco for Love Festival 2026 musters experts from all over the nation to lead workshops in songs, dances, games, and foods from 1776. Performers from all over the South re-create Revolutionary stories, military drills, and debates. TWAM's new play "Family Feud 1776" invites audiences to become residents of Florida 250 years ago, watch competing versions of Romeo and Juliet (Shakespeare's tragedy and Lope de Vega's comedy), and plot to support the Patriot Montagues or the Loyalist Capulets.

FY26CTMG-15	Pas de Vie, Inc.	3	\$4,000
			96.67

Pas de Vie Ballet 2025-26 Performance Season

"The Arts Live Here" is a familiar saying in the Tallahassee arts and cultural community. After more than 37 years of performances, Pas de Vie is proud to be part of Tallahassee's cultural tradition. Our annual performance season includes special school performances of The Nutcracker and Peter & the Wolf, and full performances of The Nutcracker and Spotlight on Dance. These events have seen an increased number of attendees from outside of Leon County and we hope to continue to draw additional visitors to our community to enjoy our performances and everything Tallahassee and Leon County have to offer visitors.

FY26CTMG-16	Southern Shakespeare Company	3	\$4,000
			96.67

A Walking Midsummer

This innovative production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream will take place on the grounds of the beautiful Tallahassee Museum and actors will perform scenes from the play in various locations throughout. Audiences will travel down Tallahassee Museum's wooded trails, ambling boardwalks, and through their animal exhibits, all while taking in scenes from A Midsummer Night's Dream. Featuring the fairy King and

Queen on ziplines, custom drinks and snacks from local vendors, and family-friendly pre-show activities, this event is sure to be utterly magical and truly unforgettable.

FY26CTMG-17	Mickee Faust Alternative Performance Club, Inc	3	\$4,000
			96.00

Support for Mickee Faust's 39th Season

Mickee Faust Club's 39th year of programming: Fall's "Faust of Horrors," "Faust Springs Into Spring" and Community Collaborations.

FY26CTMG-18	The Tallahassee Community Chorus	3	\$4,000
			96.00

2025-2026 Concert Season

The Tallahassee Community Chorus seeks grant funding to support its 2025-2026 concert season, its 38th season of filling Tallahassee and the surrounding areas with song! The Chorus presents three major choral works with orchestra each season and draws in-person audiences from across Florida, South Georgia, and South Alabama, as well as online audiences from across the globe. Alongside our musical programming, the Chorus offers non-auditioned singing opportunities to community members, educational and singing opportunities for students, and provides graduate students with conducting and internship experiences.

FY26CTMG-19	Institute for Music Business LLC	3	\$4,000
			94.67

Music, Money and Mindset Program

The Institute for Music Business (IMB) empowers youth, young adults and lifelong learners across Leon, Gadsden, Jefferson, Wakulla, and Taylor counties through immersive summer career camps and mentorship programs focused on music, media, and workforce readiness. On evenings and weekends, students engage in college tours, studio tours, songwriting, production, business training, and real-world experiences. IMB also provides vocational rehabilitation, career pathways training for youth (14-21) with disabilities, including foster youth through the Music for Life program. Funding will support marketing efforts to expand awareness and attract youth from across Florida and beyond, building a creative pipeline to postsecondary success.

FY26CTMG-20	Making Light Productions, Inc.	3	\$4,000
			93.33

Making Light Productions Theatre Program

Making Light Productions is seeking an \$80,000 grant to support our inclusive and award-winning theatre program. Annually, we stage over 28 productions with 76 performances, emphasizing cultural value and artistic excellence. Our educational initiatives welcome children, teens, and adults of all abilities, showcasing musicals and plays at the Making Light Theatre. We embrace neurodiverse casting, necessitating additional staff to assist with physical and cognitive challenges, ensuring comprehensive support for all students. Our program uniquely attracts regional families and offers performance and crew opportunities to neurodivergent adults through our Tallahassee Children's Theatre at MLP.

FY26CTMG-21	Tallahassee Bach Parley, Inc.	3	\$4,000
			93.33

Bach Parley Concert Series

Tallahassee Bach Parley concerts showcase local professional musicians alongside guest artists from out of town, performing Baroque music on period instruments. This unique programming appeals to a broad audience and highlights Leon County as a tourist destination, as the nearest similar organization is in Atlanta, GA. Bach Parley concerts are free and open to the public, with a suggested donation of \$10. However, it is not required, making it accessible for community members of all income levels to attend.

FY26CTMG-22	Choice Impact	3	\$4,000
	Community Development Corporation		92.00

Arts-in-the-Heart Concert Series present Javacya Elite Chamber Orchestra and Special Guests

Now entering its ninth season in 2026, the Arts-In-The-Heart Concert Series was founded by the 45-year-old Javacya Arts Conservatory as an extension of its esteemed educational platform supporting the Javacya Elite Chamber Orchestra. Known for bold programming and artistic excellence, the series features newly commissioned works and acclaimed performers such as violinist Rachel Barton Pine, cellist Dr. Khari Joyner, and vocalist Darryl Tookes. Through solo recitals, chamber ensembles, and orchestral collaborations, Arts-In-The-Heart offers audiences fresh, compelling compositions and masterful interpretations, serving as a vital platform for both emerging and established voices in classical music.

FY26CTMG-23	John Gilmore Riley	3	\$4,000
	Center/Museum of African American History and Culture Inc.		91.33

John Gilmore Riley Center General Programming

The four-year exhibition and lecture series (2024-2027): "African Americans in Tallahassee: From the Antebellum Period to the Civil Rights Era."

FY26CTMG-24	The Artist Series of	3	\$4,000
	Tallahassee, Inc.		91.33

The Artist Series of Tallahassee Concert Season Tourism/Marketing FY26

The Artist Series of Tallahassee will present a public, five-concert series, featuring world renowned classical music ensembles and soloists, encouraging tourists and locals to explore all that Tallahassee has to offer through the Arts. Programs of The Artist Series contribute to Tallahassee's thriving cultural scene and help attract visitors who shop, dine, and book lodging in Tallahassee and Leon County. The Artist Series impacts tourism and stimulates the local economy by presenting a high quality arts experience performed by world class artists not typically appearing outside of major markets.

FY26CTMG-25	Strikers Youth Arts	3	\$4,000
	Project, Inc		90.67

Capital City Dance Festival

Capital City Dance Festival: The three-day festival will highlight different genres of dance from master instructors from around the country. People will have the opportunity to take master classes in Hip Hop, Jazz, Contemporary, Urban Soul, Drill, and Heels, and much more! The festival will end with a culminating performance by the master instructors, visiting dance companies, and festival participants. We anticipate up

to 2200 people in attendance at the festival whether in-person or virtually and we believe at minimum, 15% of our participants will be from out-of-town. This will bring tourism into the Capital City.

FY26CTMG-26	DJ DEMP Foundation	3	\$3,600
			88.67

DJ DEMP General Programming

Our programs fulfill the Cultural Grant's objectives by: Offering culturally relevant arts and educational experiences rooted in Southern hip-hop, music history, and live performance. These programs are developed with exemplary educational standards, providing meaningful exposure to music as a cultural art form. Creating educational opportunities for youth through outreach, performances, and interactive community events where students learn to build emotional resilience, creative expression, and confidence through music and storytelling. Serving a diverse population and support creative expression through performing arts. We attract visitors through our signature, high-impact programs which regularly draw attendees and performers from across Florida and adjoining states.

FY26CTMG-27	Tallahassee Youth Orchestras Inc	3	\$2,925
			88.67

Tallahassee Youth Orchestras General Programming

Tallahassee Youth Orchestras provides the only full-orchestra experience for students in the region. We offer ensembles appropriate to all levels of young musicians, with a need-based scholarship program to ensure all can afford to participate. We present four concerts each season in FSU concert halls, two additional performances featuring smaller ensembles in community locations, and travel to Jackson County for a residency each August. Our high-quality performances feature low ticket prices, making live music accessible. Our Community Orchestra provides free performances in support of civic events. We provide educational outreach programs that reach over 550 students every year.

FY26CTMG-28	LeMoyne Art Foundation, Inc.	2	\$4,000
			98.67

LeMoyne Arts Programs, Exhibits, and Related Events

LeMoyne Arts seeks grant support for our gallery exhibits, exhibit-related events and hands on art making workshops from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026. This includes 11 rotating exhibits and at least 24 supporting events and workshops associated with the exhibits.

FY26CTMG-29	Goodwood Museum and Gardens, Inc	2	\$4,000
			98.00

Goodwood Museum and Gardens General Programming

Goodwood Museum & Gardens seeks funding for cultural programming set amidst historic architecture and heirloom gardens. The 21-acre property is an intact cultural landscape with 16 historic structures and gardens reflecting 200 years of history. Programming includes music, theater and visual arts, exhibits featuring historic collections and new research, and educational offerings for all ages. Goodwood has local, national and international appeal, welcoming approximately 50,000 visitors from 46 states and 20 countries in the past twelve months alone. Moreover, through strategic partnerships, creativity and well-being intersect at Goodwood, contributing to a vibrant, healthy community with a high quality of life.

FY26CTMG-30	Tallahassee Ballet	2	\$4,000
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98.00

The Tallahassee Ballet's 2025-2026 Season Performances and Programming

The Tallahassee Ballet (TTB) is seeking funding to support its 2025–2026 Season of performances and programming.

FY26CTMG-31	Young Actors Theatre Of Tallahassee Inc.	2	\$4,000
			97.33

Young Actors Theatre 25-26 Season of Shows and Touring Troupes

At Young Actors Theatre, we produce an annual season of high-quality shows for the general public that challenge our young performers and captivate multi-generational audiences. While our shows are performed by youth, they are not childish. With professional guidance and a rich history of excellence, our students create unforgettable productions, attracting and inspiring over 10,000 patrons with the magic of live theater. We also have three touring troupes that shine at festivals and major events in the area and beyond.

FY26CTMG-32	Theatre Tallahassee, Inc	2	\$4,000
			95.33

2025-2026 Production Season

Theatre Tallahassee respectfully requests funding to support its 2025–2026 production season. The centerpiece of our organization, the production season is the core vehicle through which we fulfill our mission to enrich the community through high-quality theatrical experiences. Support from COCA will directly impact our artistic development and marketing success. These funds will help ensure continued delivery of diverse, accessible, and compelling live theatre. The season serves as the foundation for all other programming, including education, community partnerships, and audience development. A successful season strengthens our capacity to engage new audiences, nurture talent, and contribute meaningfully to the cultural landscape.

FY26CTMG-33	Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Inc.	1	\$4,000
			100.00

Support for the Programs of the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra's 45th Anniversary Season

The Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra seeks funding to support a wide array of concert offerings, both classical and popular, in indoor and outdoor arenas, and geared toward diverse audiences of adults, children, families, and curious experience-seekers. Whether it be the music of Beethoven, Michael Jackson, or John Williams, the TSO offers something for everyone in settings that are welcoming and attractive to people throughout Leon County and beyond. Additionally, our education and engagement programs will provide one-of-a-kind opportunities for the citizens of our community by living by our mission to "engage, enrich, and inspire."

FY26CTMG-34	Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science, Inc.	1	\$4,000
			99.33

Tallahassee Museum General Programming

The Tallahassee Museum seeks grant funding to remain a vibrant educational, cultural, and economic hub for Leon County, serving as a gathering place to learn about our cultural and natural environments while strengthening community development and being recognized as a premier tourist destination. Funding will enable the Museum to serve the County's educational and cultural needs through a dynamic, diverse program of exhibits, programs, events, professional assistance, outreach services, and professionally maintained

collections and facilities. These programs will sustain the Museum's educational, cultural, and economic benefits provided to all citizens of Leon County, regardless of background, age, or financial status.

FY26CTMG-35	Florida State University (Challenger Learning Center)	1	\$4,000 94.00
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Launch Boxes: Hands-On STEAM Adventures for Curious Minds

Launch Boxes: Hands-On STEAM Adventures for Curious Minds is a community outreach initiative from the Challenger Learning Center of Tallahassee. The program delivers curated STEAM kits to children in areas across North Florida. Each box contains reusable materials, activity guides, and engaging projects aligned with educational standards. Designed for learners ages 5–13, Launch Boxes bring high-quality, hands-on science, technology, engineering, art, and math experiences directly into homes and community spaces—empowering children to explore, create, and build confidence. Activities are designed to spark curiosity not just in students, but also in families learning and discovering together.

FY26CTMG-36	FSU Board of Trustees (Opening Nights)	1	\$4,000 93.33
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FY26 Artist & Education Programming

Opening Nights requests grant funds to support its 2025-26 season of public and educational performances.

			Total \$138,405
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** Pending County approval and final eligibility determinations*



COUNCIL ON CULTURE & ARTS | TALLAHASSEE/LEON COUNTY

FY26 Grant Guidelines

Cultural Grant

Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Local Community Grant

COCA provided the FY26 guidelines to the County for a courtesy review, but no feedback was received.

The County is currently drafting a new contract agreement with COCA, which may impact COCA's use of the Tourist Development Tax.

Therefore, the FY26 guidelines are subject to change.

COCA will continue to work with the County to forward programs as outlined in these guidelines.



Visit
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Pretty. Unexpected.



**CITY OF
TALLAHASSEE**

Administered by the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA), on behalf of Leon County & the City of Tallahassee

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Grant Programs Calendar

Date	Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant	Local Community Grant (Formerly Cultural Grant (Community), City Grant)
Friday, April 24, 2025	Grant Application & Guidelines available, Application Portal Opens	
Friday, May 9, 2025	Grant Application Webinars 11:00 a.m. – new applicants 2:00 p.m. – returning applicants	
Friday, June 6, 2025	Last day for grantee consultations	
Wednesday, June 18, 2025 (11:59 PM)	FY26 Application Deadline	
Thursday, June 19 – Wednesday, June 25, 2025	COCA Staff Eligibility Review	
Thursday, June 26 – Friday July 11, 2025	County TDT Eligibility Verification	The TDT review process is not applicable to Local Community Grants.
Wednesday, July 23, 2025	Applicant Revisions Deadline (If Necessary)	
Tuesday, July 29, 2025	Secondary County TDT Eligibility Verification Results	
Friday, August 1, 2025	Panelist training for TDT-funded grant panelists	
Tuesday, September 2, 2025	Panel Review Meeting for TDT-funded grants	
Thursday, September 4, 2025	COCA Board Reviews & Approves FY26 TDT-Funded Grant Recommendations	
Thursday, September 11, 2025*	TDC Reviews & Approves FY26 TDT Funding Recommendations	
Tuesday, September 30, 2025	City & County Budgets Finalized	
Wednesday, October 1, 2025	Grant Period Begins	
Friday, October 31, 2025	FY25 Final Reports due; applicants who were funded in FY25 must have their final report submitted and approved before their FY26 contract can be executed	

November 2025	First Payment disbursed upon execution of contract; grant awards \$10,000 and below will be distributed in one payment; grant awards above \$10,000 will be split into two payments	
Monday, January 5, 2026	The Local Community Grant panel is not applicable to the Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant.	Panelist training for Local Community Grant
Thursday, February 5, 2026		Panel Review Meeting for Local Community Grant panelists
March 19, 2026* <i>Date subject to change; check Public Notices for up-to-date information</i>		COCA Executive Committee Reviews & Approves FY26 Local Community Grant Recommendations
Tuesday, May 1, 2026	Mid-year reports due; second payment of awards greater than \$10,000 will be distributed upon approval of Mid-year Report	
Wednesday, September 30, 2026	Grant Period Ends	
Saturday, October 31, 2026	FY26 Final Reports Due	

About COCA

COCA, the Council on Culture & Arts, is a non-profit organization that serves as the facilitator and voice for the arts and cultural industry in Florida's capital area. Designated to serve as the local arts agency for Tallahassee and Leon County, COCA is the capital area's only umbrella agency for arts and culture, and works with and for those who produce, invest in, and enjoy the arts and culture in the area.

COCA's mission is to serve and support the community by promoting and advocating for arts and culture in Florida's capital region. We play a dual role: providing resources and promoting the arts and culture to citizens and visitors. COCA is not a government entity but works together with City, County, state, and local school districts as their cultural industry partner. COCA designs and administers grant programs under contract with the City and County and in annual collaboration with a community task force and citizen review panel.

Visit COCA online at www.TallahasseeArts.org. Make sure you sign up for the COCA Classifieds email, which goes out on Thursdays to over 9,000 subscribers. Learn about funding sources, professional development, calls to artists of all disciplines, job opportunities, and more.

Grantees will also want to check out COCA's Marketing Resources and Media Guide at <https://www.tallahasseearts.org/services/marketing-assistance/>.

Do not forget to post your events on www.TallahasseeArts.org for inclusion in our Tallahassee Arts Guide "This Week" email of arts, culture, and heritage events that is sent to over 14,000 weekly recipients. We also produce a monthly art education e-newsletter. Sign up for all of COCA's e-newsletters at <https://www.tallahasseearts.org/services/newsletters/>.

COCA Grant Programs

COCA currently offers three grant programs (outside of arts education grants): the Cultural Grant, the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant and the Local Community Grant. In a given fiscal year, an eligible organization may apply for:

- One Cultural Grant,
- One Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant, and
- One Local Community Grant.

These three grant programs share one application and one due date. However, two panels will be held. See page 20 for more information.

Cultural Grant

The Cultural Grant funds programming expenses for programs bringing out-of-county visitors to Tallahassee/Leon County. Applicant programming must have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists and must meet at least one of the following goals:

- 1. Offer arts, history, or cultural programs with exemplary standards and objectives.**
The grant program seeks to fund programming that enriches the community with attention to the highest standards and objectives within a cultural discipline.
- 2. Provide educational opportunities in arts, culture, and/or history for young people or adults.**
The grant program seeks to fund programming that features learning opportunities for young and/or life-long learners.
- 3. Serves a special or diverse population or need, fills a unique niche, or engages the community in the creative or artistic process.**
The grant program seeks to fund programming that offers a unique service in arts, culture, and history not otherwise provided in the community; programs that provide distinctive arts, history, and cultural offerings; programs that highlight cultural diversity and/or access for persons with disabilities; programs that bring arts, cultural and historic exhibits, or events to underserved areas; programs that engage members of the community in the creative and/or artistic process.

Where do the Funds Come from?

The Cultural Grant is funded by Leon County's Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue. Grants funded using TDT funds are subject to compliance with Florida Statute 125.0104, pursuant to which, TDT revenue may be used to "promote and advertise tourism in [Florida] and nationally and internationally" on the condition that:

*"...if tax revenues are expended for an activity, service, venue, or event, the activity, service, venue, or 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.**"*

Certain definitions set out in § 125.0104, Fla. Stat., are included below to assist in ensuring eligibility:

- “Promotion” means marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities.
- “Tourist” means a person who participates in trade or recreational activities outside the county of his/her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations.

Other authorized uses of Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Revenue include:

- Publicly owned and operated convention centers, sports arenas, auditoriums
- Auditoriums publicly owned and operated by a nonprofit.
- Aquariums or museums or zoological parks publicly owned/operated or owned/operated by a nonprofit.

Therefore, all applicants to the Cultural Grant must:

- Have demonstrated efforts to enhance Leon County’s tourism impact; and
- Show evidence of out-of-county marketing and promotion and track out-of-county visitors.

In addition to COCA’s review process, COCA and Leon County will review all Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications to verify eligibility and compliance with § 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes prior to scoring. See page 19-20 for more information.

Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

The Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant (CTMG) funds expenses related to marketing to out-of-county visitors. Examples of eligible opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- Media placement and production (print, online, broadcast & radio)
- Printed materials
- Tradeshow registration fees and booth rentals
- Video/CD-ROM/DVD production
- Public relations/media communications
- Promotional items
- Website development
- Graphic design
- Marketing personnel (for marketing to tourists)

Where do the Funds Come From?

The Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant is funded by Leon County’s Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue. Grants funded using TDT funds are subject to compliance with Florida Statute 125.0104, pursuant to which, TDT revenue may be used to “promote and advertise tourism in [Florida] and nationally and internationally” on the condition that:

*“...if tax revenues are expended for an activity, service, venue, or event, the activity, service, venue, or 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.**”*

Certain definitions set out in § 125.0104, Fla. Stat., are included below to assist in ensuring eligibility:

- “Promotion” means marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities.
- “Tourist” means a person who participates in trade or recreational activities outside the county of his/her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations.

Other authorized uses of Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Revenue include:

- Publicly owned and operated convention centers, sports arenas, auditoriums
- Auditoriums publicly owned and operated by a nonprofit.
- Aquariums or museums or zoological parks publicly owned/operated or owned/operated by a nonprofit.

Therefore, all applicants to the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant must:

- Have demonstrated efforts to enhance Leon County’s tourism impact; and
- Show evidence of out-of-county marketing and promotion and track out-of-county visitors.

In addition to COCA’s review process, COCA and Leon County will review all Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications to verify eligibility and compliance with § 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes prior to scoring. See page 19-20 for more information.

Local Community Grant (Formerly known as Cultural Grant (Community), City Grant)

The Local Community Grant funds programming expenses for programs that serve residents of Tallahassee/Leon County. Applicant programming must meet at least one of the following goals:

- 1. Offer arts, history, or cultural programs with exemplary standards and objectives.**
The grant program seeks to fund programming that enriches the community with attention to the highest standards and objectives within a cultural discipline.
- 2. Provide educational opportunities in arts, culture, and/or history for young people or adults.**
The grant program seeks to fund programming that features learning opportunities for young and/or life-long learners.
- 3. Serve a special or diverse population or need, fills a unique niche, or engages the community in the creative or artistic process.**
The grant program seeks to fund programming that offers a unique service in arts, culture, and history not otherwise provided in the community; programs that provide distinctive arts, history, and cultural offerings; programs that highlight cultural diversity and/or access for persons with disabilities; programs that bring arts, cultural and historic exhibits, or events to

underserved areas; programs that engage members of the community in the creative and/or artistic process.

Where do the Funds Come From?

COCA is contracted by the City and County for the management of its grant programs. Currently COCA works with the City and County to use its General Revenue funds to support community art programs. COCA has also received support from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for this program. All Local Community grants are contingent on funding and cannot be considered final until the County's and City's budgets have been approved and revenues received. Additional support from the NEA is contingent on annual approval, award amount and availability of funds.

Because the Local Community Grant is not funded by the Tourist Development Tax, applicants to this program are not required to market or appeal to out-of-county visitors.

Eligibility

All applicants to COCA grant programs must meet the following basic eligibility. Individual grant programs have additional eligibility requirements.

1. Applicants must be one of the following:

- a. A not-for-profit Florida corporation with at least 60% of your operating cash budget originating from earned income and classified by the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) as a 50113, sub-class "public charity".**

COCA staff will confirm your not-for-profit status with the IRS and/or the Florida Division of Corporations. If we cannot confirm your status, you will be asked to provide proof of current not-for-profit status.

"Operating cash" refers to expenses related to day-to-day operations. It includes programs, overhead and administrative costs. It does not include capital campaigns, endowment funds, cash reserves or contingency funds.

"Earned income" includes admissions, contract services, corporate contributions, foundation grants, competitive government grants from federal, state, city, or county operations, including Leon County Tourist Development Council and Community Human Services Partnership grants. It does not include operating cash from government sources, such as government-paid staff, expenses and contracts.

The application will help you determine what percentage of your operating cash originates from earned income.

- b. A state partner (i.e., a department, museum, or other organization working under the FEID number of a part of the State of Florida, Florida State University, Florida A&M University, or Tallahassee State College).**

State partner organizations are required to provide a letter of support from the Agency Head, Division Director, Dean, Department Chair or University Supervising Official.

State partners fall into two categories: "General/Educational" and "Destination." The category will determine how much funding you can request (see page 14).

- i. **General/Educational State Partners** can apply for programs that demonstrate efforts to enhance Leon County tourism and that create broader public access, benefit, and participation in arts and cultural events in our community. Public education programs must be presented to the public and may not be primarily for university-enrolled students.
- ii. **Destination State Partners** have permanent facilities and/or sites that are open to the public at least 180 days per year, with regular programming directed to the public and tourists and a documented impact on tourist visitation.

Please note: an organization whose primary purpose is to channel resources (financial, human, or other) to an affiliated organization is not eligible to apply if the affiliated organization submits its own application. This prohibition applies even if each organization has its own 501-(C)(3) status. For example, the "Angels for The Theatre" may not apply if the "The Theatre" applies.

Fundraising organizations affiliated with state supported cultural organizations, such as Friends of, Foundations, Citizens Support Organizations, and K-12 schools themselves are not eligible to apply for this grant. Instead, the state-supported cultural organization itself, including college or university schools, departments, or other officially recognized entities, may be eligible to apply for a grant under the special designation of State Partner (see above).

2. Applicant's mission must be to produce or promote arts and/or history programming.

The broad range of activities funded by this grant includes visual, performing, and literary arts, arts education, historic destinations or programming, media arts, and museums.

(To be an eligible museum, the organization must be open to the public for at least 180 days each year, own or utilize works of art, historical artifacts, or other tangible objects, whether animate or inanimate; care for these works of art, historical artifacts, or other tangible objects; exhibit these works of art, historical artifacts, or other tangible objects to the public on a regular schedule.)

Even if an organization presents occasional arts or history programming, if its mission is not primarily arts and/or history, then funding should be sought elsewhere. This includes organizations with civic, educational, social service, environmental, health-related, religious, political, journalistic, athletic, or multifaceted missions.

3. Applicant must have completed at least one fiscal year of programming in your discipline.

“Programming” refers to public events and activities, not simply fundraising activities.

4. **Applicant must present or produce programs/activities/events in Tallahassee/Leon County.**
Applicants must have a formal, registered business address within the City of Tallahassee or Leon County.
5. **Applicant must have a professional staff.**
May be paid or volunteer, if staff members are qualified, competent, and regularly available during normal business hours to administer a grant.
6. **Applicant must have a governing Board of Directors that meets regularly and operates under a set of by-laws.**
7. **Applicant must be able to demonstrate the receipt of community support through subscriptions, memberships, earned income, foundation grants, and/or other private fundraising (including in-kind support).**
8. **Applicant must produce arts or cultural programs that are regularly available to the public throughout the year.**
An organization whose mission is to produce seasonal events or festivals does not qualify for COCA funding.
9. **Applicant must have documented statistics on attendance and participation for your programs and/or facility (paid or free) that represent a broad community impact.**
10. **Applicant must be committed to and have a plan in place to provide for accessibility for people with disabilities, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Eligibility

1. **In addition to arts and culture, applicant must 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.**
2. **Applicant must clearly identify public relations/promotional/marketing tactics used to reach visitors outside Leon County.**
3. **Applicant must have a marketing plan that clearly indicates out-of-market advertising or promotion.**
4. **Applicant must track and report the number of Out-of-County visitors served by programs.**

NOTE: No program may receive grant funding from both the County Tourism Event Grant Program and the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA).

Local Community Grant Eligibility

1. Applicant must track and report the number of residents served by programs.

NOTE: No program may receive grant funding from both the Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP) or the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA).

Local Community Grants will be scored based on how well the application aligns with one or more of the following City priorities:

- **Economic Development** – According to the [Arts & Economic Prosperity 6](#) study conducted by COCA with Americans for the Arts in 2022 & 2023, the nonprofit arts and culture sector is a significant industry in Leon County—one that generates \$203.9 million in total economic activity. This spending—\$118 million by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and an additional \$85.8 million in event-related spending by their audiences—supports 2,930 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$94.4 million in household income to residents, and delivers \$33.2 million in government revenue.
- **Impact on Poverty** – The Florida Chamber’s [Florida Prosperity Project](#) has defined the Root Causes of Poverty. Several of them are impacted directly by arts and culture:
 - **Lack of employment opportunities** – According to a report from the [National Governors Association](#), at-risk youth most likely to suffer from limited lifetime productivity, the arts contribute to lower recidivism rates; increased self-esteem; the acquisition of job skills; and the development of much needed creative thinking, problem solving and communications skills. Involvement in the arts is one avenue by which at-risk youth can acquire the various competencies necessary to become economically self-sufficient over the long term, rather than becoming a financial strain on their states and communities.
 - **Inequities in education & workforce development**– According to Americans for the Arts’ Arts + Social Impact Explorer, employers rank study in the arts as second (following self-employment experience) as an indicator of the kind of creativity they are looking for in employees.
 - **Unsafe environments** – According to the University of Pennsylvania’s [Social Impact of the Arts Project](#), lower- income neighborhoods with higher cultural assets show less child abuse and neglect investigations (14 percent), obesity (5 percent), and serious crime (18 percent). Kids from those communities also scored 18 percent higher in English Language Arts and Math exams than their peers.
 - **Lack of recognition and access within a community** - According to Americans for the Arts’ [Arts & Social Impact Explorer](#), a variety of research shows that common cultural history, whether hip hop, community murals, or immigrant heritage and craft, can provide unity in community dialogues about housing preservation that celebrates an area’s unique culture and reflects the needs and values of all who live there.

- **Public Safety** – According to Americans for the Arts’ Arts & Social Impact Explore, arts participation correlates with lower rates of juvenile delinquency and truancy, and cultural resources are linked to better health, schooling, and security. The arts also help maintain racial and economic diversity and lower rates of racial harassment.
- **Quality of Life** - According to the [Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America](#) initiative, the arts can be especially beneficial for public health in five key areas: collective trauma, racism, mental health, social exclusion and isolation, and chronic disease.

Calculating Your Request

All three grant programs have different maximum requests. Organizations are encouraged to request an award amount appropriate for the scope of your proposal. In some cases, this may be less than your maximum allowable request. Use your best judgment to ensure that your request is competitive.

Cultural Grant

There is a maximum allowable request for every applicant based on the allowable operating income in your last completed fiscal year. How much an organization can request depends on two things: the type of organization and the size of the organization.

Nonprofits

Your funding request is based on “allowable operating income” in your most recently completed fiscal year for which you submitted a 990/990-N. Your “allowable operating income” includes:

- Programming expenses
- Overhead expenses
- Administrative expenses
- In-kind income; if your in-kind income is greater than 15% of your cash expenses, you are capped at 15% in-kind.

“Allowable operating income” does not include capital campaigns, endowment funds, cash reserves or contingency funds.

The application will assist you in calculating your allowable operating income.

Allowable Operating Income	Group #	Max % of Operating Income	Maximum Request
\$0 - \$74,999	4	50%	\$28,000
\$75,000 - \$499,999	3	20%	\$80,000
\$500,000 - \$1,499,999	2	10%	\$160,000
\$1,500,000 +	1	10%	\$350,000

State Partners

If your organization is a department, museum, or other organization working under the FEID number of a part of the State of Florida, Florida State University, Florida A&M University, or Tallahassee State College; you may be eligible to apply as a State Partner.

NOTE: No more than 15% of the total funds for COCA's Cultural Grant Program each year will be awarded to State Partner applicants.

There are two categories of State Partners: "General/Educational" and "Destination."

General/Educational

General or Educational Partners can apply for programs that demonstrate efforts to enhance Leon County tourism and that create broader public access, benefit, and participation in arts and cultural events in our community. Public education programs must be presented to the public and may not be primarily for university-enrolled students. Applicants will apply to Group 4 and may request up to a maximum of \$30,000 in grant funding.

Destination

A Destination is a permanent facility and/or site that is open to the public at least 180 days per year that has regular programming directed to the public and tourists and has a documented impact on tourist visitation.

If the applicant is eligible to apply as a State Partner Destination as defined above and has less than 60% of its annual operating cash budget originating from earned income, applicants may request up to \$30,000.

An eligible State Partner Destination that has **more than 60%** of its operating cash budget originating from earned income, use the chart below to find your appropriate request. **The application will assist you in calculating your allowable operating income.**

Earned Income of the specific department, division or program applying for the grant	Group #	Max % of Operating Income	Maximum Request
\$0 - \$74,999	4	50%	\$28,000
\$75,000 - \$499,999	3	20%	\$80,000
\$500,000 - \$1,499,999	2	10%	\$160,000
\$1,500,000 +	1	10%	\$350,000

Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Eligible applicants may request up to \$4,000 to support out-of-county marketing and promotion of programs to ensure compliance with Florida Statute 125.0104.

Local Community Grant

Eligible applicants may request up to \$10,000 to support local arts programs.

How Can Grant Funds Be Spent?

All funds must be spent within the grant activity period of October 1 through September 30. Funds that are not spent within this period (or for the specific programs and expenses described in your application) are subject to repayment.

Applicants will detail how grant funds, if awarded, will be used to support and/or promote one of the organization's programs, publications, events, or other public activities.

All events and activities funded by this grant must be for the public and not be intended for an exclusive target group only. Any fees charged to participate should be reasonable and not so high as to effectively exclude a large group of people.

Allowable Expenses

All grant fund expenses must be directly related to programs. Tourism funding must include the promotion of activities, services, venues, or events with the attraction of tourists as one of the main purposes of such programming and/or promotion.

Cultural Grant

Examples of expenses that may be allowable so long as they specifically fulfill that statutory purpose include, but are not limited to:

Personnel: Administrative, Artistic/Programmatic, and Technical/Production – May be used to fund a portion of staff salaries as directly related to programming and/or promotion of tourist related activities/events/programs. May include artistic director, curator, marketing staff, etc.

Outside Fees & Services: Artistic – Payments to firms or persons for the services of individuals who are not normally considered employees of applicant but consultants or employees of other organizations whose services are specifically identified with the project. Include artistic directors, directors, conductors, curators, dance masters, composers, choreographers, designers, actors, dancers, singers, musicians, teachers, instructors, etc. serving in non-employee/non-staff capacities.

Outside Fees & Services: Other – Payments to firms or persons for services of individuals who are not normally considered employees of "applicant," but consultants or the employees of other organizations, whose services are specifically identified with the project.

Exhibit/Production/Event Expenses – Costs directly related to the production of the event. Includes exhibit rentals; royalties; printing and graphic design; exhibit costs; sets and costumes; lumber, supplies and equipment; postage and freight.

Educational Programs & Materials – Costs directly related to educational programs, including materials.

Project Space Rental – Payment specifically identified with the project for rental of rehearsal, theatre, hall, gallery, and other such spaces. If the applicant owns the building, space rental expenses are not allowed.

Travel – Limited to travel costs to individuals providing outside contractual service. This may include contracted artists or technicians. Include housing costs for these individuals in this category. Travel expenses for ongoing personnel is not allowed.

Marketing/Promotion – Costs for marketing/publicity/promotion specifically identified with the project. Do not include payments to individuals or firms defined as “personnel” or “outside professional services.” Include costs for newspaper, radio, and television advertising; printing, and mailing of brochures, flyers, and posters; space rental when directly connected to promotion, publicity, or advertising. Items purchased for merchandising or resale are not allowable.

Project Materials and Supplies – Project Materials and Supplies – All eligible expenses not entered in other categories and specifically identified with the project. Include consumable office supplies, postage, equipment rentals/purchase, supplies/materials, and event-specific insurance. Note: General liability and workers’ compensation insurance are not allowable under this category.

Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

The Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant can only be used for marketing expenses. Examples of eligible opportunities may include, but are not limited to

- Media placement and production (print, online, broadcast & radio)
- Printed materials
- Tradeshow registration fees and booth rentals
- Video/CD-ROM/DVD production
- Public relations/media communications
- Promotional items
- Website development
- Graphic design
- Marketing personnel (for marketing to tourists)

Local Community Grant

Examples of expenses that may be allowable so long as they specifically fulfill that statutory purpose include, but are not limited to:

Personnel: Administrative, Artistic/Programmatic, and Technical/Production – May be used to fund a portion of staff salaries as directly related to programming and/or promotion of tourist related activities/events/programs. May include artistic director, curator, marketing staff, etc.

Outside Fees & Services: Artistic – Payments to firms or persons for the services of individuals who are not normally considered employees of applicant but consultants or employees of other organizations whose services are specifically identified with the project. Include artistic directors, directors,

conductors, curators, dance masters, composers, choreographers, designers, actors, dancers, singers, musicians, teachers, instructors, etc. serving in non-employee/non-staff capacities.

Outside Fees & Services: Other – Payments to firms or persons for services of individuals who are not normally considered employees of “applicant,” but consultants or the employees of other organizations, whose services are specifically identified with the project.

Exhibit/Production/Event Expenses – Costs directly related to the production of the event. Includes exhibit rentals; royalties; printing and graphic design; exhibit costs; sets and costumes; lumber, supplies and equipment; postage and freight.

Educational Programs & Materials – Costs directly related to educational programs, including materials.

Project Space Rental – Payment specifically identified with the project for rental of rehearsal, theatre, hall, gallery, and other such spaces. If the applicant owns the building, space rental expenses are not allowed.

Travel – Limited to travel costs to individuals providing outside contractual service. This may include contracted artists or technicians. Include housing costs for these individuals in this category. Travel expenses for ongoing personnel is not allowed.

Marketing/Promotion – Costs for marketing/publicity/promotion specifically identified with the project. Do not include payments to individuals or firms defined as “personnel” or “outside professional services.” Include costs for newspaper, radio, and television advertising; printing, and mailing of brochures, flyers, and posters; space rental when directly connected to promotion, publicity, or advertising. Items purchased for merchandising or resale are not allowable.

Project Materials and Supplies – All eligible expenses not entered in other categories and specifically identified with the project. Include consumable office supplies, postage, equipment rentals/purchase, supplies/materials, and event-specific insurance. Note: General liability and workers’ compensation insurance are not allowable under this category.

Non-Allowable Expenses

Grant funds may not be used for general overhead that is unrelated to programming and/or promotion (i.e., financial audit, board retreats, decorating the facility, etc.)

Grant funds may not be used for capital expenses. For the purposes of this grant, capital expenses include building projects, acquisitions, renovations, land acquisition, and other permanent improvements to physical plants (i.e., new roof, air conditioning systems, security fence, lighting grids). Capital expenses also include the purchase of equipment that is not related to the production of events or exhibits.

For example, a projector for closed captioning, stage lights, film projector, artwork for a permanent collection, or interpretive items for an exhibit are allowable. A copy machine or a delivery van is not.

Other non-allowable expenses include:

- Expenses incurred or obligated outside of the grant period

- Any costs not directly related to programming and promotion
- Bad debts, contingencies, fines and penalties, interest, and other financial costs
- Mortgage payments
- Operation of privately-owned facilities (i.e., studios, homes)
- Private or exclusive entertainment (i.e., parties, receptions or benefits that are not open and accessible to the public)
- Food and beverages (including alcohol)
- Cash reserves
- Contributions and donations
- Endowment
- Fellowships/scholarships
- Fundraising
- Re-granting
- Third-party grant administration (indirect costs)
- Attendance at conferences and seminars
- Staff Travel
- Plaques and awards
- Religious programs
- Lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state, or local legislation or any other expenditure not authorized by Chapter 112 of the Florida Statutes
- The City of Tallahassee and Leon County discourage line-item requests if you are eligible to apply to this grant program or others.
- No program may receive TDT grant funding from both the County Tourism Event Grant Program and the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA).
- No program may receive Local Community Grant funding from the Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP), the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA).

How Do I Apply?

	Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant	Local Community Grant (Formerly Cultural Grant (Community), City Grant)	
1.	Navigate to https://tallahasseearts.submittable.com/		
2.	Next to “FY26 COCA Grant Programs,” click “submit.”		
3.	Create a Submittable account, or log in to your Submittable account, and confirm your address.		
4.	Fill out the following form, “FY26 COCA Grant Programs – Grant Selection.”		
5.	Based on your answer to the question, “Please select the grant programs from which you would like to request funding,” you will receive the following forms within 24 business hours of your submission:		
	All applicants will receive the “Basic Eligibility” form.	If you indicated that you wish to request either the Cultural Grant or the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant, you will receive the form “FY26 COCA Grant Programs – CG + CTMG.”	If you indicated that you wish to request the Local Community Grant, you will receive the form “FY26 COCA Grant Programs – LCG.”
6.	All relevant forms (Basic Eligibility, CG + CTMG, LCG) must be submitted by: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 11:59 p.m.		

COCA offers technical assistance to all interested applicants. If you would like to have your draft application reviewed before submission, please do so at least one week before the deadline. New applicants are strongly encouraged to set up a consultation.

Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances. If you have difficulties with the submission of an electronic application, please email us.

Please email Summer Callahan, Grants Manager at summer@tallahasseearts.org to discuss eligibility requirements, schedule a technical consultation, or ask questions about completing your application.

How Are Applications Reviewed?

COCA staff will review all applications to confirm eligibility to the goals of the COCA grant program and for TDT applicants, to the Tourism Statute 125.0104 F.S.

All Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Grant applications will be provided to the Director of Tourism to verify eligibility to the Tourism Statute 125.0104 F.S. If the County determines that the application is ineligible, the rationale will be provided to COCA in writing on or before July 11 and transmitted to the applicant by COCA.

The applicant will then have until July 23 to revise and submit their application. The revised application that will be transmitted by COCA to the County.

The County will review the revised applications and provide a written decision on the eligibility of the same to COCA on or before July 29. If the County does not inform COCA of the ineligibility of any specific application(s) and the rationale for such decision by July 24, then such application may be presumed eligible and proceed to evaluation by the grant scoring panel.* Any applications deemed ineligible by COCA and/or the County as described above will not proceed to the scoring panel, and such decisions are final and unappealable.

Applications to the Local Community Grant Program are not subject to review by Leon County.

*Both COCA and the County are committed to ensuring that they meet the deadlines provided in these guidelines. However, neither body has the authority to waive the requirements of the Tourism Statute cited above. Therefore, applicants should be aware that, if unforeseen emergencies delay the eligibility review pertaining to the Tourism Statute, submission of applications to the grant scoring panel may be delayed and no presumptions of eligibility shall apply pending the completion of that eligibility review. In such an event, COCA will undertake to keep applicants as informed as possible of the status of any delays.

Panel Review Process

For FY26 applicants, two panels will be held.

	Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant	Local Community Grant (Formerly Cultural Grant (Community), City Grant)
Panel Review Meeting	Tuesday, September 2, 2025	Thursday, February 5, 2026
COCA Board of Directors or Executive Committee Reviews & Approves Funding Recommendations	Thursday, September 4, 2025	March 19, 2026* <i>Date subject to change; check Public Notices for up-to-date information</i>
TDC Reviews & Approves FY26 TDT Funding Recommendations	Thursday, September 11, 2025	Not applicable; the Local Community Grant is not subject to TDC review

COCA uses a citizen review panel process, like both the Florida Division of Arts & Culture (DAC) and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant programs, to make recommendations for funding. Panels are composed of non-profit businesspeople, tourism professionals, community leaders, artists, educators, experts in cultural disciplines and others as deemed appropriate for review criteria. COCA accepts nominations for panelists year-round by COCA. You can nominate a panelist here: <https://www.tallahasseearts.org/services/grant-programs/grant-panelist-nomination-form/>.

In appointing panel members, COCA considers geographic representation, minority representation, professional acumen, objectivity, and diverse aesthetic, institutional, and cultural viewpoints. All panelists must comply with the Standards of Conduct for Public Officers and Employees of Agencies as set forth in F.S. Section 286.012.

Panelists must recuse themselves from the discussion and scoring of any application from an organization in which they:

- serve as a board or staff member.
- serve as a key volunteer.
- serve as a paid consultant.
- have any other formal association or other experience which will give the appearance of a conflict.

Staff and Board members of COCA (as well as their spouses) and/or any applicant organization will be ineligible to serve as a voting panelist for the Cultural Grant Program.

Applicants attending panel meetings will be available to answer questions asked by panel members but may not elaborate on their grant beyond those questions. Applicants may respond to all questions and comments from panel members during the review meeting. All panel proceedings are open to the public.

A member of the COCA Board of Directors will chair each panel meeting but does not review or score the applications. Members of COCA's staff will be present to provide technical assistance.

COCA staff will report the panel's recommendations to the COCA Board of Directors for review and approval. All TDT- funded grants (Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant) will be forwarded to the Tourist Development Council (TDC) for review and approval.

The COCA Board is authorized to amend such recommendations based on current information not made available to the panel. Examples of the types of current information that may prompt such amendment include, but are not limited to:

- a panelist conflict of interest not disclosed at the panel meeting.
- misinformation presented at the panel meeting by someone other than a designated applicant representative.
- COCA staff error discovered after the panel meeting.
- bankruptcy or other fiscal concerns.
- or changes in the applicant's staff or operations that would impair implementation of the proposed grant activity.

COCA will notify applicants of the outcome of the grants review and approval process. No award is final, however, until the City and County Commissions approve their annual budgets. Funding for this grant program is contingent upon City and County budgets and tax collections.

Scoring Criteria

The scoring criteria for each grant program is based on the type of funding that grant program receives.

Cultural Grant + Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications will be scored on the following criteria:

- **Organizational Capacity (up to 20 points)**
 - The organization's planning shows realistic and appropriate future programming plans.

- This organization's artistic, education, and/or administrative personnel (paid or volunteer) can conduct its programs effectively.
- The applicant has demonstrated support for the organization through other sources of funding, volunteer efforts, program partnerships, and documented participation data.
- The applicant exhibits sound fiscal management and administration as evidenced by the grant's narrative and the organization's past and current operating budgets.
- **Program Evaluation (up to 20 points)**
 - This program reflects the mission of the organization, and the scope of this program is feasible to implement in timeline provided and resources allocated (facilities, staff/volunteers, funding, etc.).
 - This program serves an appropriate number of people for the amount requested (considering special, diverse, underserved population it targets or unique niche it fills).
 - There are clearly articulated goals and useful methods of evaluating and documenting the success of this program (that extends beyond attendance figures).
 - Whether serving a large constituency, a special or diverse population or fulfilling a unique niche, this program's impact on and/or service to the community is an effective use of public funding.
- **Tourism Impact (up to 10 points)**
 - The application indicates the project is for a tourist-related business or activity and clearly conveys it has the attraction of tourists as a main purpose.
 - The application clearly identifies PR/promotional/marketing tactics to reach visitors from clearly identified geographic markets outside Leon County.

Local Community Grant

The Local Community Grant applications will be scored on the following criteria:

- **Organizational Capacity (up to 20 points)**
 - The organization's planning shows realistic and appropriate future programming plans.
 - This organization's artistic, education, and/or administrative personnel (paid or volunteer) can conduct its programs effectively.
 - The applicant has demonstrated support for the organization through other sources of funding, volunteer efforts, program partnerships, and documented participation data.
 - The applicant exhibits sound fiscal management and administration as evidenced by the grant's narrative and the organization's past and current operating budgets.
- **Program Evaluation (up to 20 points)**
 - This program reflects the mission of the organization, and the scope of this program is feasible to implement in timeline provided and resources allocated (facilities, staff/volunteers, funding, etc.).
 - This program serves an appropriate number of people for the amount requested (considering special, diverse, underserved population it targets or unique niche it fills).
 - There are clearly articulated goals and useful methods of evaluating and documenting the success of this program (that extends beyond attendance figures).

- Whether serving a large constituency, a special or diverse population or fulfilling a unique niche, this program's impact on and/or service to the community is an effective use of public funding.
- **Community Impact (up to 10 points)**
 - The application aligns with one or more of the following City Priorities (see pages 12-13 for more information):
 - Economic Development
 - Impact on Poverty (lack of employment opportunities, unsafe environments, lack of recognition and access within a community)
 - Public Safety
 - Quality of Life

Funding Formula

The final score will be calculated by taking the average score of the panelists, dividing it by the total possible score (this number will vary based on the total number of programs the applicant has applied to), then multiplying by 100 (final score = average score/total possible points x 100). Below are examples of the funding formulas used to determine the potential maximum funding for requests. Keep in mind, these formulas are guidelines, not guarantees. COCA's Board of Directors has sole and final discretion to set funding formulas to be applied consistently based on the grant panel scoring.

Final Score	Maximum Funding
90 – 100	100% of request
80 – 89.99	90% of request
70 – 79.99	80% of request

Applications scoring less than 70 will not be eligible for funding. When determining the final scores for funding purposes, numbers will be rounded to two decimal places only and not to the whole number. For example, 89.99 will not be rounded to 90.

Reconsideration of Scoring Request

Any applicant wishing to request reconsideration of its score must submit a written and signed request for reconsideration to the COCA Board of Directors within 72 hours (3 business days) after the verified scores are announced via email by COCA Staff. Timely requests for reconsideration will be forwarded by the Chair of COCA's Board of Directors to the full scoring panel, which will review the request(s) and announce its final, unappealable decision at a public meeting within approximately seven (7) days, but no more than fourteen (14) days, following the submission of the request. In addition, suggestions regarding the grant program's policies and guidelines are welcomed year-round. The grant program is reviewed annually with the collaboration of a public task force and all applicants are encouraged to participate in the process.

Funding Order

The funding order is determined by the type of funding that grant program receives. Grant programs funded by the Tourist Development Tax (the Cultural Grant and the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant) will be ranked together. The Local Community Grant will be ranked separately.

Cultural Grant + Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Each Group will be ranked by score from the highest score to the lowest score. Funds will be distributed in the following order:

Group 4; Group 3; Group 2; Group 1

Note: No more than 15% of the total Grant allocation may be awarded to State Partner Organizations

Local Community Grant

Priority funding will be given in this order the highest to the lowest score:

1. Organizations not awarded funding from the Cultural Grant or Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant;
2. Minority organizations* and underserved organizations+ who received TDT funding;
3. The remaining organizations will be ranked in order of score and funding will continue until the funds are exhausted.

If there are more funds available than the total request, any remaining funds will be reallocated to the next fiscal year.

*For this program, a minority organization is composed of at least 51% persons who are Asian-Indian, Asian-Pacific, Black, Hispanic, and Native American. This includes staff, board, artists, and volunteers. Gender is not considered a minority for the purposes of this program.

+For this program, an organization is underserved if it has an annual operating budget of \$150,000 or less.

After Award Approval

Once COCA has received a signed contract from an approved applicant, processing of the grant award begins. The award is paid out in installments after receipt of the signed grant contract.

Grantees who have not executed their grant contract within 90 days of receipt risk forfeiture of grant funds.

Grant Period

All grant funds must be spent between 10/1/2025 and 9/30/2026. There can be only one application per grant program and grant period for funds to benefit any single organization.

Non-Discrimination

By submitting this application, applicants agree they do not discriminate:

- On the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.).
- On the grounds of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA") (42 U.S.C. 12101-12213).
- Based on age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.).
- Based on sex, in any education program or activity, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.).
- Based on sexual orientation or gender identity in accordance with the City of Tallahassee's Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies and Procedures. Should there be a discrimination concern regarding a grantee, a copy of COCA's Civil Rights Complaint Policy is available upon request.

For further information and copies of the non-discrimination regulations identified above, contact the National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Civil Rights at 202/682- 5454 or 202/682-5695 Voice/T.T., or link to them through their web site at www.arts.gov. COCA will also gladly help with accessibility planning. Email COCA's accessibility coordinator Samantha Sumler to arrange a consultation at samantha@tallahasseearts.org.

Should there be a discrimination concern regarding a grantee, a copy of COCA's Civil Rights Complaint Policy is available upon request.

Intellectual Property Rights

It is the responsibility of applicants to hold the rights for any intellectual property (scripts, images, music, etc.) used in programs funded by this grant.

Funding Recognition

COCA grantees are required to include the COCA logo, the combined Leon County-Visit Tallahassee logo, and the City of Tallahassee logo on grant-related visual marketing materials (online, print, and media) developed for the funded program. To download logos, visit <https://www.tallahasseearts.org/services/grant-programs/#logos>

Whenever you include online funding recognition (on your organization's website and email marketing for example), the combined Leon County-Visit Tallahassee logo should be linked to www.VisitTallahassee.com the City of Tallahassee logo should be linked to www.Talgov.com, and the COCA logo should be linked to www.TallahasseeArts.org as much as possible. If you are awarded a Local Community Grant, you may also need to include the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) logo. Grant-related marketing materials MUST be submitted to Communications & Marketing Manager, Samantha Sumler, at samantha@tallahasseearts.org for approval prior to the publication, dissemination, or release of marketing materials.

Grantees are encouraged to submit their marketing materials before a new fiscal year begins, as they may be able to get annual approval for certain types of collateral (such as posters or emails), if the subsequent logo use is identical.

Please note: Grantees that have been funded for the current fiscal year and anticipate funding for the subsequent fiscal year are encouraged to continue following the recognition policy described above when promoting their upcoming season or programs for a new fiscal year. Inclusion of logos is necessary when recognizing support of sponsors and should appear on most if not all marketing materials.

Wherever other sponsors for your grant program are included, COCA, Leon County-Visit Tallahassee, the City of Tallahassee, and when applicable, the National Endowment for the Arts logos should also be included. For ease of use, a “combination logo” of COCA/City/County/Visit Tallahassee may be used on all print media. However, the combination logo may not be used for online funding recognition, as online funding recognition must include individual logos with hyperlinks to the appropriate agency.

If COCA notifies a grantee of a failure to properly acknowledge COCA, Leon County-Visit Tallahassee, City of Tallahassee, and when applicable, the National Endowment for the Arts, in any of their grant-related marketing/promotional materials during the grant cycle, and the grantee fails to correct the issue, that grantee will have 5 points deducted from the next grant application the organization submits to COCA. Our government partners are dedicated to supporting worthwhile local events through grant programs and other promotional opportunities but reserve the right to reduce or eliminate grant funding for organizations that do not comply with grant recognition policies.

Grantees are required to submit copies of proof of grant acknowledgment at the time of the final report.

Changes to Programs

Grant funds may be used only for those programs or purposes specified in the application, reviewed by the grant panel, and approved by the COCA Board and the Tourism Development Council (TDC). Any significant changes in a grantee organization or its programs (i.e., budget, schedule, scope, personnel, etc.) must be submitted as a proposed amendment at the time the changes take place, and approved in advance in writing to COCA, before grant funds may be utilized by grantee. Contact the Grants Manager to request an amendment form.

Grant Reports

Each grant recipient will be required to submit one interim report and one final report of all funds disbursed to their organization using forms located in the Submittable platform. The report will include Programming Documentation, Expenditure Log, and, upon request, Proof of Payment. The report will also include proof of Logo Recognition. Grantees are also required to report the estimated number of visitors or potential visitors served by the project or program. See pages 4-5 for specific deadlines. Grant Report Forms will be completed in COCA’s online grant portal –

<https://tallahasseearts.submittable.com/>

An applicant must demonstrate that they:

- implemented the program(s) for which they received funding.

- spent the grant funds on allowable expenses and as indicated in their application.
- spent all grant funds within the grant activity period.

Failure to do so, or failure to do so in a timely manner, will require the applicant to fully repay any funds received and become ineligible for future funding.

Grantees who fail to submit reports at the appropriate deadline may be ineligible for the following grant cycle of the Cultural Grant, Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant and/or Local Community Grant.

In extreme/unusual circumstances, an organization may request an extension from COCA. However, an extension will delay any grant funds awarded in the following fiscal year.