



# **Tourism Enhancement Grants Program Manual 2024-2025**

OSCEOLA COUNTY  
**TOURISM ENHANCEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM**

**I. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND.**

Pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Osceola County ordinance, the Osceola County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created to serve as an advisory body to the Board of County Commissioners on the effective utilization of Tourist Development Tax funds.

Tourist Development Tax funds are collected from visitors occupying Osceola County lodging properties for six months or less. A primary use of TDT funds is to promote visits to and enjoyment of Osceola County among leisure, business, groups and sports travelers.

Since 1988, it has been the policy of the Board of County Commissioners to utilize Tourist Development Tax funds to help promote special events and activities that appeal tourists. Historically, the review and recommended funding for these events has been the responsibility of The Osceola County Tourist Development Council (TDC).

Experience Kissimmee, Osceola County's contracted destination marketing and sales organization, will establish the application period and process, verify eligibility of the requestors and adherence to established statutes and local policies before submitting requests to the TDC.

The TDC will review applications for "Tourism Enhancement Grants Program" funding and make funding recommendations to be included in the Experience Kissimmee budget.

**II. STATEMENT OF POLICIES.**

**Purpose:** The Tourism Enhancement Grants Program is intended to provide funding assistance to local government and nonprofit organizations conducting special events and projects that:

- increase room nights and revenue for Osceola County, or
- enhance Osceola County's appeal to visitors, or
- support the TDC mission to "Promote Tourism for Osceola County."

In addition to the stated purpose of the funds, eligibility guidelines and policies further stipulate that:

- Funds are to be used specifically for marketing and promoting an event to potential tourists beyond Osceola County.
- Grant funds are intended to supplement the sponsoring or hosting organization's marketing budget, not be the sole source of funding. Requesting organizations must also commit funds to the marketing and promotion of the event, program or activity.
- **Authorized use of funds includes:**
  - Print, Radio, Television, and, Digital and Paid Social;
  - Outdoor signage/banners;
  - Posters/flyers/brochures;
  - Professional artwork/Graphic Design;
  - Postage for direct mail of promotional material.

**Funding will not support:**

- Operating or administrative costs, including salaries;
  - Professional legal, medical, engineering, accounting, auditing, consultant, or tax service;
  - Real property;
  - Tangible property, including but not limited to copy machines, computer equipment, typewriters, and other office equipment, light fixtures, musical instruments, and other equipment and permanent collections;
  - Interest or reduction of deficits or loans;
  - Travel expenses;
  - Prize money, scholarships, awards, plaques, or certificates;
  - Promotional items (being sold or given away) including apparel, tote bags, etc.;
  - Sales tax;
  - Media receptions and social events.
- Funding shall not be used to support debt reduction, private entertainment (i.e., food, beverages), or projects with restricted access based on race, sex, national origin, age, or disability.
  - Logo recognition of Experience Kissimmee on appropriate printed material, online advertisements, and public relations activities.

- **Experience Kissimmee Logo:** <https://www.experiencekissimmee.com/partners/brand-resources>



**Tag Line:** Advertisements inside Central Florida should read, For visitor information visit [www.ExperienceKissimmee.com](http://www.ExperienceKissimmee.com)

**Website:** [www.ExperienceKissimmee.com](http://www.ExperienceKissimmee.com)

- Video or audio advertisements will include a logo or the following statement: “Brought to you in part by Experience Kissimmee”
  - **Radio:** (Event Message)... **“Brought to you by Experience Kissimmee”**
  - **Television/Digital Media:** The Experience Kissimmee Logo must be presented as a sponsor and/or host of the event/project.
- Organizations receiving Tourism Enhancement Grants funds will be subject to audit by Experience Kissimmee and/or Osceola County.

### III. GRANT FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

- A. No event will be approved for grant funding that exceeds 10 percent of the allocated Tourism Enhancement Grants Program budget. (For example, if the Tourism Enhancement Grants Program budget is \$200,000, the maximum amount to any single event is \$20,000.)
- B. Not-for-profit Florida corporations located in Osceola County for a minimum of two years at the time of the application deadline or units of local government in Osceola County are eligible to apply for Tourism Enhancement Grants funds. The Experience Kissimmee President/CEO, however, has the authority to waive the two-year requirement.
- C. Organizations must have a governing board and operate under a set of bylaws.
- D. To be considered for funding, the event must have as its primary purpose the attraction of tourists to generate overnight stays or a high-yield economic impact.
- E. TDT funds will not be granted for golf tournaments.
- F. Applications will be considered based on the following scoring criteria:

**a) ECONOMIC IMPACT - 30 PTS.**

How strong is the out-of-town day trip visitor impact to Osceola County? Not just the overnight visitors, but how will the event impact local stakeholders such as local attractions, restaurants, shops, gas, food, etc.

**b) ROOM NIGHTS GENERATION - 20 PTS.**

1. Does the nature and quality of the event/activity have the potential to attract overnight visitors to Osceola County?
2. Has a host hotel or accommodation partnership(s) been established?
3. Does the event/organization provide a history of room nights/overnight visitors?
4. Does the room night history show signs of growth or consistency?
5. If a new event, how strong/accurate are the estimates of overnight visitors?
6. Are they hotel room numbers validated by the property's sales manager, booking engine or survey?
7. How unique is this event? Has it created a schedule to lure overnight visitors?
8. Is the event scheduled during the off-season (August through November)?
9. Is this a multi-day event?

**c) ATTENDANCE -20 PTS.**

**d) MARKETING PLAN- 20 PTS.**

1. Is there an itemized marketing/ad budget for the event?
2. How exactly will the grant requested be used?
3. How does it compare to past years?
4. Does the event provide co-op advertising opportunities with other events or with local tourism providers?
5. How creative is the marketing plan? Is it evolving with the room night numbers?
6. How much pre-event publicity and media exposure is anticipated?
7. Is this a new event?

8. Does the event provide opportunities for state, regional, national and/or international exposure?
9. Does the event/organization have advertising planned for outside a 50-mile radius of Osceola County?
10. Do the advertising plans reach potential visitors in targeted metropolitan areas?
11. Does the advertising reach specific special interest groups?

e) **ORGANIZATION STABILITY - 10 PTS.**

1. What is the background and experience of the sponsoring organization?
2. Is this event for charity or raising funds for a specific organization?
3. Are there net revenues to the sponsoring organization from the event?
4. Evidence of staff and volunteer capability and qualifications.
5. Does the organization have a successful history of service in Osceola County?

G. Recommended funding will be determined based on the potential of the event/project to attract tourists and the applicable marketing plan detail, and not by the amount requested.

H. Grant scoring scales may vary from year-to-year based on TDT collections and Tourist Development Council recommendations.

I. Applicants are not guaranteed yearly grant funding and funding amounts may vary from year-to-year.

**IV. MANDATORY SEMINAR.** All grant recipients will be required to attend a workshop that delineates the contractual obligations, funding restrictions and post-event reporting requirements. Failure to attend the workshop may negate issuance of funds. Experience Kissimmee will host the workshop at its 215 Celebration Place, Suite 200, Kissimmee location.

**V. INDEMNIFICATION.** Proof of liability insurance **MUST** be provided by the host organization, naming Experience Kissimmee as additional insured, the amount of which will be determined prior to issuance of Tourism Enhancement Grants funds.

The GRANTEE agrees to be liable for any and all damages, losses and expenses incurred by the Experience Kissimmee caused by the acts and/or omissions of the GRANTEE or any of its employees, agents, sub-contractors, representatives, volunteers or the like. The GRANTEE agrees to indemnify, defend and hold the Experience Kissimmee harmless for any and all claims, suits, judgments or damages, losses and expenses, including but not limited to, court costs, expert witnesses, consultation services and attorney's fees, arising from any and all acts and/or omissions of the GRANTEE, or any of its employees, agents, sub-contractors, representatives, volunteers or the like.

**VI. EVENT/PROJECT VIABILITY AND REPORTING.** Upon approval by the Experience Kissimmee Board of Directors, organizations enter into a contract with Experience Kissimmee. Included in the contract are reporting requirements to validate that the funds were used appropriately and in accordance with established statutes, policies, and rules.

A **Grant Financial Report** that includes several forms is **due no later than 45 days after the event/project** is completed. Event Requestors will be required to sign and authenticate that the Grant Financial Report is accurate as submitted.

Experience Kissimmee will review those forms to assess whether the organization adhered to requirements. Unauthorized or unsubstantiated items will be rejected and the organization will be required to provide more information to validate proper expenditure of funds. Organizations are required to pay back any unapproved or invalid expenditures.

Organizations that fail to comply with the reporting requirements may not be eligible to receive funding for future events.

Among the required items are:

- **Actual Event/Project Budget Report** that compares their projected expenses to actual expenses.
- **Vendor Catalog**, a listing of local vendors with whom they contracted to produce promotional materials, date purchased, and amount paid, etc.
- **Copy/sample of all materials** purchased with grant funds (i.e., Print Ads, tear sheets, Radio Copy, Brochures, Flyers, Posters, Banner Samples, etc.).
- **Copy of all invoices** for materials or services for which Grant Funds were used.
- **Attendee Survey summary and Marketing Report**, including how the funds were used to promote the event and the key takeaway discoveries. For example, the number and/or percentage of attendees who were tourists, where they came from and how they learned of the event, actual attendees, room night generation, economic impact, publicity, etc. Note that Grants recipients are required to provide survey data for 10 percent of the attendees or 400, whichever is less.

Information and materials that verify expenditures are subject to audit by Experience Kissimmee and/or Osceola County.

**2024-2025 ACTUAL EVENT/PROJECT BUDGET REPORT:**

*This Form is Due No Later Than 45 Days Post Event/Project*

Event/Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Event \_\_\_\_\_

Attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Room Nights: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Funds

Received: \_\_\_\_\_ \$

Funds Used: \_\_\_\_\_ \$

<b>LIST ALL REVENUE</b>	<b>2024-2025 List Projected Revenue &amp; Expenses (Transfer from application)</b>	<b>2024-2025 List Actual Revenue &amp; Expenses</b>
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Tourism Enhancement Grant Funds	\$	\$
Admissions	\$	\$
Concessions	\$	\$
Sponsorships	\$	\$
Booth Space	\$	\$
Advertising Revenue	\$	\$
Sale of Promotional Items	\$	\$
In-Kind Revenue	\$	\$
<b>Other:</b> (Government funding, Other Grants, Sponsorships, Etc.)	\$	\$
<b>Total Revenue</b> (Including Grant Funds)	\$	\$

**LIST ALL EXPENSES**

Administrative	\$	\$
Advertising/Promotions	\$	\$
Printing	\$	\$
Promotional Items	\$	\$
Concessions	\$	\$
Awards	\$	\$
Travel	\$	\$
Talent	\$	\$
In-Kind Expense	\$	\$
Other:	\$	\$
	\$	\$
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$	\$

**NET PROFIT/LOSS**

	\$	\$
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**I certify that the marketing and financial reports are a true and accurate reflection of the expenditure of Tourist Development Tax funds.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2024-2025 VENDOR CATALOG:

*This Form is Due No Later Than 45 Days Post Event/Project*

**\*\*All vendors must have an invoice, check number and amount\*\***

Vendor	Description of Item	Date Material Ran/Printed	Invoice Number	Check Number	Amount
					\$
					\$
					\$
					\$
					\$
					\$
					\$
					\$
					\$
					\$
					\$



## VENDOR CATALOG EXAMPLE

\*\*All vendors must have an invoice, check number and amount\*\*

Vendor	Description of Item	Date Material Ran/Printed	Invoice Number	Check Number	Amount
ABC Newspaper	Print Ad	1/1/08 – 1/7/08	5G23655	123456	\$500.00
DFG Newspaper	Print Ad	1/7/08 – 1/28/08	158692154	546294	\$750.00
Monthly Magazine	Print Ad	2/1/08 – 2/28/08	13567	45312	\$1,500.00
Public Radio	Radio Spots	1/1/08 – 1/31/08	1549256	45612	\$5,000.00
Traffic Radio	Radio Spots	1/1/08 – 1/31/08	589745625	456128	\$4,575.00
Printing USA	Flyers & Posters	1/9/08 – 1/11/08	5298354	451236	\$650.00
Graphic Company	Ad and poster design	1/9/08 – 1/22/08	7598123654	45126	\$2,000.00

**EXHIBIT "A"**  
**ATTENDEE/PARTICIPANT SURVEY**

The following information will assist **Experience Kissimmee**, Osceola County's tourism marketing agency, in improving promotions and special events. Please take a few minutes and complete this survey. Your name and information will not be used for any solicitations. Thank you for your assistance.



**Special Event Attendee Survey**

*Please Print*

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Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

City of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female

Number of Travelers in your party: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be staying overnight in the Osceola County area during this trip?  Yes  No

If yes, how many nights will you stay? 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10+

What type of lodging will you stay in? (Check one)  Hotel/Motel  Vacation Rental

Campground  Family/Friends  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Event Information**

Event Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn of this event? (Check all that apply)

- Family/Friends.  Newspaper  Radio  
 Billboard/Magazine  Television  Internet  Social Media  Other

Do you plan to attend this event next year? \_\_\_\_\_