

**DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA, MODIFYING THE
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MARKETING GRANT
PROGRAM; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, the DeSoto County (“County”) Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) adopted Ordinance No. 2010-02 establishing the DeSoto County Tourist Development Council; and

WHEREAS, the Board adopted Ordinance No. 2010-15 implementing a 2% Tourist Development Tax and adopting a three-year Tourism Plan; and

WHEREAS, the voters of the County passed the Tourist Development Tax in the 2010 General election; and

WHEREAS, the Tourism Plan specifically allows for use of funds for the purpose of providing financial assistance to promote tourism events and attractions in the County; and

WHEREAS, in February 2013, the Board adopted Resolution 2013-10 creating the DeSoto County Tourism Development Marketing Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Board adopted Resolutions 2016-26 and 2022-25 to revise the Tourism Development Marketing Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the DeSoto County Tourist Development Council has reviewed the performance of the program and recommends several changes to increase access to and participation in the program; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds adoption of this Resolution is in the best interest of the residents of Desoto County, Florida

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA, AS
FOLLOWS:**

Section 1 – That the foregoing “WHEREAS” clauses are ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are hereby incorporated by reference as part of this Resolution.

Section 2 - That the DeSoto County Tourism Development Marketing Grant Program is hereby modified and reformed as reflected in Attachment I.

Section 3 - That this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 25th day of February 2025.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Mandy Hines
County Administrator

J.C. Deriso
Chairman

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:

Valerie Vicente
County Attorney

ATTACHMENT I

PURPOSE:

This document sets forth the guidelines and eligibility criteria for grant awards from Tourist Development Tax funds. Applications will be accepted annually from eligible organizations (also described herein as “applicants”) that will sponsor and promote tourism activities within DeSoto County, bring substantial numbers of tourists/visitors to the County and promote overnight bed stays within the County. The overall purpose of the program is to promote DeSoto County as a Tourist destination by assisting tourism events with effective marketing campaigns.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

1. The Organization must be an organization qualified to do business in Florida.
2. All events, performances, or programs must be open to the public.
3. Events may be a series of recurring similar events (such as a monthly market, a concert series, etc.)
4. Events cannot be unreasonably restrictive through admittance fees, public access or crowd capacity, which limits participation by visitors.
5. Events, performances or programs must take place in DeSoto County. If these events, performances, or programs are to be used for fund raising purposes, profits must go exclusively to programs that benefit DeSoto County residents and/or charities.
6. Tourism Development Marketing Grant funds require a 25% match from the Organization/grantee for marketing-related expenses. The County provides 75%

ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS:

Tourist development funds may be used for promotional or advertising expenses in conjunction with an event, activity or material to increase awareness of DeSoto County outside this area. The purpose is to increase the attendance at the event, with the goal of promoting overnight stays that generate bed taxes. There should be an emphasis on reaching people outside DeSoto County. This includes, but not limited to, internet, social media, print, television, radio and billboard advertising. This could also include printing or other promotional activity that could encourage visitors to return.

MAXIMUM AWARD:

Awards shall not exceed a maximum of \$3,000.00 per award. The applicant will be required to share in cost at a ratio of 25% of the award. Applicants shall indicate the amount of funding requested in their application based on ability and commitment to provide a 25% match, up to the maximum award. Applicants may request, or be offered an award of less than the maximum award.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Applications will be solicited on an annual basis through advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation at an appropriate time as determined by tourism development staff. The advertisement shall include, at a minimum, the following:

1. Amount of funding made available
2. Purpose of availability of funds
3. Location where applications may be obtained
4. Address to which applications must be submitted
5. Office Contact phone number

APPLICATION SCORING PROCESS:

All applications received by the deadline outlined in the public advertising shall be date/time stamped upon receipt and shall be provided to the Tourist Development Office. The Tourist Development Office will establish a Selection Committee from members of the Tourist Development Council and/or County Staff. The Selection Committee members shall be provided the applications and scoring sheets for independent review. The selection committee may request oral presentations from applicants in the application scoring process. The Selection Committee shall meet and make formal funding recommendations to be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration. Upon award, recipients (or “grantees”) will be notified by staff and presented with an award document (i.e., a grant agreement) for acceptance and signature and be available for media promotions or press releases as appropriate. Applications will be scored based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Factors	Possible Points	Score
Commitment to the expansion of tourism in DeSoto County	25	
Soundness of Project	20	
Quality and Uniqueness of Project	20	
Positive Economic Impact to DeSoto County	15	
Stability of Management and capacity	10	
Use of DeSoto County Vendors & Business Owners	10	
Total	100	

ADVERTISING GUIDELINES¹:

Promotional and advertising materials should be reviewed by DeSoto County Tourism staff prior to publishing and advertisement, to assure eligibility.

1. Grantee Website and/or Social Media Sites and Digital Advertisements - Your organization's website (if you have one), social media,) must provide a link to the DeSoto County TDC website at: www.VisitDeSoto.Com.
2. Print/Digital - All grantees must show on printed materials (including advertising, flyers & posters): The Visit DeSoto logo and the Tourism Website: www.VisitDeSoto.com.
Audio - All audio advertising must include verbal "For more information on DeSoto County, FL, go to www.VisitDeSoto.com"
3. Video - All video advertising must display video credit with the Visit DeSoto logo plus, "For more information on DeSoto County, FL, go to www.VisitDeSoto.com."

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¹ Promotional advertising materials that do not meet the criteria set forth herein shall not be eligible for reimbursement.

EVENT MONITORING:

Any member of the Tourist Development council, designated staff of the Board of County Commissioners or assigned volunteers may attend and/or monitor any and all events to ensure compliance with grant and reporting requirements. All grant recipients are required to maintain complete and accurate accounting and project records for the event. All funds granted shall be subject to audit by the Board of County Commissioners Administrative Services Department. All documentation submitted to the County shall become public record and governed as such by Chapter 119, Florida statutes.

All organizations must accomplish what is presented and set forth in the grant agreement. If for any reason the requirements of the grant agreement have not been met, the County has the right to withhold any payment and/or terminate the grant agreement.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

1. Final Status Report: Within ninety (90) days of the completion of the activity/activities or event/series of events that promote tourism within DeSoto County, the grantee must summarize its efforts by providing the following information:
 - A brief narration of the event(s) or material (such as a brochure or website). Include any media coverage received.
 - An evaluation of the estimated economic impact the event(s)/material had on DeSoto County.
 - Includes local attractions that were visited as part of the event, and local restaurants or businesses utilized as part of the event or material
 - Photographs, if any, of the event. Can provide a link to photos on Social Media and or web.
 - Final estimated number of event participants, if applicable
 - Room Night Certification Form - the organization must make every effort to obtain the number of overnight stays from local hotels within the County that housed those attending the event. This means that the grantee should make available a list of County hotels and RV/campgrounds (and other transient rental facilities) and encourage overnight stays. After the event, the grantee may be required to request proof of overnight stays.
 - Event or location surveys - The organization should allow the Tourist Development Office to make surveys of attendees. The organization is encouraged to make all attempts to collect basic demographic data about the attendees and make that available to the Tourist Development office.

2. A financial statement listing all the major revenues received and expenses paid in the course of the event or creation of material.

NOTE: IF THE EVENT RESULTS IN NO OVERNIGHT STAYS, OR FEW OVERNIGHT STAYS, THE GRANTEE MUST DOCUMENT ITS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE OVERNIGHT STAYS AND GENERAL TOURISM WITHIN DESOTO COUNTY.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS:

A Request for Funds Form must be completed on a reimbursement basis only and made after proof of paid invoices are presented and submitted to the Economic and Tourist Development Department for interim draws and for final payment. Reimbursement of funds must stay within the confines of the Project Expenses outlined in your award document. Payment is on a reimbursement basis and proof of paid invoices, tear sheets of ads, copies of programs, schedule of the airing of audio and video advertisements), must be provided prior to payment of grant funds to the organization. Grantee is required to submit verification in writing that all subcontractors and vendors have been paid for work and materials previously performed or received prior to receipt of any further payments.

Organization representative must complete final report and submit reimbursement requests to the Economic Development and Tourism office within ninety (90) days of the close of the event or series of events or release of material. Requests received after that may not be reimbursed. This is your responsibility, and no reminder notices will be sent from the Economic and Tourist Development Office or the Tourist Development Council.

No advanced payment of expenses by the County is authorized.

*Reimbursement process subject to change to maintain compliance with County policy and/or auditor advice or requirements.

If Tourist Development Tax funds become inadequate to fund all or part of a Tourist Development grant, the County reserves the right to reduce funding to a grantee accordingly.

There are no guarantees that all applicants will be awarded funding even though a project may qualify. Limited funds may not allow all projects to receive assistance. All decisions regarding the award of grant funds are at the sole discretion of the Board of County Commissioners following recommendations of the Tourist Development Council.