

2025-

A Resolution Modifying the Tourism Development Marketing Grant.

**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 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; and

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

**WHEREAS**, the Board adopted Resolution 2016-26 to revise the Tourism Development Marketing Grant Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board adopted Resolution 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 1.

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

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this 14<sup>th</sup> Day of January, 2025

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Mandy Hines  
County Administrator

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J.C. Deriso  
Chairman

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Valerie Vicente  
County  
Attorney

## ATTACHMENT 1

### 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 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 launch 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 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. The County provides 75%

### ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS:

The following are examples of how tourist development funds may be used to promote tourism in the County:

1. Promotional or advertising expenses in conjunction with an event to increase the awareness of DeSoto County outside this area.
2. Out-of-county advertising and publicity of an event to increase participation, attendance and awareness including, but not limited to, internet, social media, print, television, audio advertising, and use of billboard advertising.

### 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 (fiscal year) 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 or email to which applications must be submitted
4. 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 will be notified by staff and presented with an award document 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 Proposed Project	20	
Quality and Uniqueness of proposed Project	20	
Positive Economic Impact to DeSoto County	15	
Stability of Management and capacity	10	
Use of DeSoto County Vendors & Business Owners	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

**ADVERTISING GUIDELINES:**

Promotional and advertising materials must be reviewed & approved by BOCC staff prior to publishing and advertisement in order to assure eligibility. Those that do not meet criteria, may not be eligible for reimbursement.

1. Grantee Website and Social Media Sites and Digital Advertisements - Your organization's event website and/or social media and organizational website and/or social media must provide a link to the DeSoto County TDC website at: [www.VisitDeSoto.com](http://www.VisitDeSoto.com).
2. Print/Digital - All grantees must show on printed materials (including advertising, flyers & posters): the Visit DeSoto logo and, space permitting, the Tourism Website: [www.VisitDeSoto.com](http://www.VisitDeSoto.com).
3. Audio - All audio advertising must include verbal "For more information on DeSoto County, FL go to [www.VisitDeSoto.com](http://www.VisitDeSoto.com)
4. 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](http://www.VisitDeSoto.com)

### 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 thirty (30) 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 (as outlined in the grant application):
  - A brief narration of the event(s). Include any media coverage received
  - An evaluation of the estimated economic impact the event(s) had on DeSoto County.
  - Include local attractions that were visited as part of the event, and local restaurants or businesses utilized as part of the event.
  - Photographs, if any, of the event.
  - Final estimated number of event participants.
    - 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 other transient rental facilities) and encourage overnight stays. After the event, the grantee will be required to request the hotel(s), RV parks and campgrounds provide information regarding the number of individuals residing at the establishment(s) as a result of the event.
  - o Event surveys - The organization should also provide volunteers to randomly survey event attendees to form a rational percentage of total attendance that became an overnight stay.
2. A financial statement listing all of the revenues received and expenses paid in the course of the event.

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.

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 office within thirty (30) days of the close of the event or series of events. Requests received after that date will 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.

If project budget has specific categories with set dollar limits, the Grantee is required to include a spreadsheet to show which category each invoice is being paid from and total of category before payment can be made to Grantee. 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.