

SPORTS EVENT GRANT FUNDING GUIDELINES

This funding is administered by the Clay County Tourist Development Council (TDC), an advisory council to the Clay County Board of County Commissioners.

- Approved by TDC on 7/17/2025
- Approved by the Clay County of County Commissioners on Applications received beginning 10/22/2014, and thereafter will be subject to these Guidelines and Applications.

SPORTS EVENT GUIDELINES

Funding is available for major Sports Events held in Clay County by organizations that attract large numbers of visitors from outside Clay County. An example would be a state, regional, national, or international sporting event.

Sports Event Grant Funding maximum award is \$25,000.

Applicant can apply for any or all of the following funding:

- Room night goal - Maximum award of \$10,000 based on \$20 per verified room night or zip code
- Venue Rental Expense – up to \$10,000
- Multi-Day Event - \$2,500
- Need period - Event occurs during Need Period (Jan, Feb, June, July, Aug, Sept, Nov, Dec) –\$2,500

Room Night Goal

Maximum award of \$10,000 based on \$20 per verified room night or zip code.

Room night minimum: At least 100 verified room nights or 50% of the registered participants are from zip codes, a minimum of a 2-hour drive from the event venue.

Venue Rental Expense

Maximum award of \$10,000 based on the total cost of the venue rental.

Multi-Day Event

\$2,500 award for events occurring over a multi-day period.

Need Period

\$2,500 award for events occurring during the Clay County Need Period (Jan, Feb, June, July, Aug, Sept, Nov, Dec)

For all grant categories:

1. Not applicable to events such as regularly scheduled local league play or traditional fundraising events with no unique destination features.
2. Funding is not intended to support administrative costs. Funding is intended to support marketing and promotional efforts, venue/site rentals and costs, bid fees, etc.

3. The Clay County Tourism logo block must appear prominently in all advertising and publicity (written or electronic) for the Event.

4. Overnight accommodations secured for the Event must be located within Clay County.

5. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for approved actual expenditures upon completion of the Event. Proof of payment must be provided. Proof of payment may be submitted in the form of a vendor receipt and a front and back copy of cleared check or credit card receipt. Cash receipts will not be accepted for reimbursements. Please note that payment must be made by the applicant.

6. For Sporting Events that attract overnight visitors held in Clay County, the need period is defined as January, February, June, July, August, September, November, or December.

7. Room night minimum: At least 100 verified room nights or 50% of the registered participants are from zip codes a minimum of a 2-hour drive from the event venue.

10. To be eligible for payment, Applicant must timely submit completed, signed, and verified Room Block Report(s)/Room Night Certification Form(s). Failure to submit completed Room Block Report (s)/Room Night Certification Form(s) will result in disqualification for support. Applicant must provide the written report including documentation of the actual room nights generated in comparison to the initial room night guarantee indicated in the application not more than 60 days after the Event/Project concludes. It is the responsibility of Applicant to provide proof of room nights generated and/or registration showing origin of registered participants. Applicant must also provide registration data showing where registered participants are from. This is not the responsibility of the Clay County Tourism Department. Clay County Tourism Department staff may confirm accuracy of the Room Night Verification Form or registration data at staff discretion. Any funds granted will be subject to audit by the Clay County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative the County may designate.

11. The TDC may lend assistance or administer funds approved in the form of advertising, public relations, promotions, or marketing programs through an outside vendor on behalf of Applicant.

12. Recognition of Clay County Tourism Department must be included where appropriate on all marketing materials, on Applicant's website & referred to in public relations activities. All printed materials with the Clay County logo must be presented with the reimbursement request.

13. Upon approval of funds, Applicant must provide at least four (4) media passes for use by TDC staff to attend and cover the Event for the TDC's marketing and public relations purposes.

14. Applicant is to have only one designated contact (Designee) for the duration of the Sports Event Funding process. Designee is responsible for turning in all application documents, as well as follow up paperwork needed prior to the Event/Project. Additionally, Designee will be responsible for executing the funding contract and providing a W-9 for Applicant. Funds will be released only to Designee upon completion of post-Event/Project documentation and room night certification. Should Designee change at any point during the process, written notification to the TDC office is required. Failure to provide notification will adversely affect funding.

15. By submission of an application, the Applicant grants Clay County and all of its employees, officers, contractors, subcontractors, volunteers, and agents (collectively referred to in this paragraph as "Clay County representatives"), the right to use and reproduce any and all photographs, digital images, videos or recordings made at or made in relation to the Event, including those of Applicant's employees, volunteers, invitees, and those that contain Applicant's name, artwork, logo or trademark, for use by Clay County, and the right to copyright and/or use, reuse and/or publish, republish photographic pictures, digital images, videotapes or recordings. Applicant affirms that Applicant is the legal owner of any artwork, logo or trademark used by Applicant and acknowledges that Clay County is relying on this representation and to the extent there is any claim by any third party against Clay County or its representatives, Applicant will indemnify and hold Clay County and its representatives harmless as to any such claim or damages arising from such claim. Applicant is required to grant Clay County permission for the photographs, digital images, video, or recordings to be used in their entirety and/or edited versions as deemed necessary by Clay County.

Applicant accepts and understands those items will become the property of Clay County and all rights to inspect or approve those items, as well as any royalties or other such compensation are waived. Applicant further grants Clay County permission to use the photographs, digital images, videos, or recordings at any time in the future without provision of notice. Clay County's use may include use for trade, commercial and advertising purposes, to promote the product or service of Clay County, and to simply report happenings in Clay County, and may include the use of items on Clay County websites.

SPORTS EVENT FUNDING REQUEST LEVELS

There is a maximum funding level of \$25,000. The guaranteed number of room nights stated by the Applicant does not guarantee the level of funding at which the Event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on the TDC's sole and absolute discretion. The TDC has the right to place the application at a lower funding level with providing justification for its decision. All requests will be submitted as a recommendation by the TDC to the Clay County Board of County Commissioners which makes the final decision. Following approval by the Board of County Commissioners, Applicant must sign a Grant Agreement to be signed by the County Manager.

Exceptions for extraordinary circumstances

While it is not possible to legislate for the unknown, it is possible to identify and anticipate the potential for exceptional circumstances. The TDC may recommend increasing funding in extraordinary circumstances. These extraordinary circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for consideration and recommendation to the Clay County Board of County Commissioners for final approval.

The TDC will reimburse for actual, verified room nights only. For example:

If the TDC approved a grant for \$20,000 for an event that guaranteed 500 room nights and the event actually only generated 90 total room nights, the TDC would determine the total reimbursement to be no greater than \$15,000 dependent on permissible reimbursable expenses.

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

The following is a list of how Tourist Development Funds will be used to promote tourism for Clay County.

1. Out-of-County Advertising Expenses

Advertising and publicity outside Clay County to increase participation, attendance, and awareness of the Event and generate hotel room nights. The Clay County Tourism logo must appear in or with the ad, which must be pre-approved by TDC staff. Advertising examples include:

- Digital Online Advertising: geofencing, social media, retargeting, SEO/SEM, display ads, targeted email campaigns, digital content creation via online storytelling, etc.
- Print: advertising, direct mail, flyers/posters, etc.
- Radio & TV Advertisements placed outside Clay County
- Public Relations/Media Events
- Targeted Audience Outreach, such as trade show booth rental

2. Promotional Items/Shirts

Must be tied to a direct “experience” with the Event (i.e., themed reception, activity, etc.). The Clay County logo must be included on the shirt or promotional item, and the item with the logo must be pre-approved by TDC staff before it qualifies for reimbursement. Please consult the TDC staff regarding any ideas regarding direct experience.

3. Hosting, Bid, Facility or Event Fees

- Bid or Hosting Fee (Must be considered an authorized use as determined by the Florida Statute 125.0104).
- A/V equipment rental, MOT fees, entertainment (for events open to public; an event that is not for conference attendees only)
- Necessary Event-related operational expenses, as approved per Florida Statute 125.0104 and indicated in the final motion to approve funding.
- Event fees will only be funded with a robust marketing plan as generating attendance is the TDC’s priority.

4. Trophies, Plaques, and Non-Monetary Awards

Items must include Clay County’s logo in the design and be pre-approved by the TDC staff before they qualify for reimbursement. Items will only be funded with a robust marketing plan to generate attendance.

5. Field/Facility Related Expenses

It must be outlined in the grant application and will be approved at the discretion of the TDC.

INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS:

1. Prize money, scholarships, monetary awards
2. Shirts that are not pre-approved by TDC staff and/or do not include the Tourism Department logo
3. Any and all travel expenses (includes, but is not limited to, mileage reimbursement, car rental fees, airline tickets, hotel/ accommodations, food, luggage fees, etc.)
4. Private entertainment, food, beverages, or any type of concession
5. Annual operating expenditures not directly related to the Event/ Project
6. Legal, medical, security, engineering, accounting, auditing, planning, feasibility studies or other consulting services
7. Employee salaries
8. Real property or capital improvements to facilities
9. Tangible personal property, including but not limited to office furnishings or equipment
10. Interest or reduction of deficits and loans
11. Expenses incurred or obligated prior to or after the grant Event period
12. Advertising/promotional materials distributed in Clay County during or after the Event
13. Receptions or social functions than those specifically designed for pre-event media promotional purposes
14. Sales tax
15. Website design
16. Ongoing or annual facility maintenance
17. Any use not authorized as determined by the Florida state Statute 125.0104

AUTHORIZATION HISTORY

Event Grant Funding Program

Clay County Tourism leads and supports the Clay County tourism industry by providing innovative marketing programs and promotions to ensure the continued growth of tourism and travel from visitors. The purpose of the Sport Event Grant Program is to position Clay County as a must-experience destination in Florida through quality events and initiatives. The TDC recognizes sporting events as a major contributor to the overall tourism economy. To assist these sporting events, the TDC has guidelines for sporting events seeking funding.

All requests for funds from organizers (Applicants) seeking to host an Event must be reviewed and approved by TDC Staff, the TDC, and the Clay County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Funds that will be submitted for TDC reimbursement cannot be spent until final approval by BOCC has been granted, and the contract with the County has been fully executed. Once funding amount has been approved, funds will not be disbursed until after the Event has been completed. Both a post-event economic impact report and the final Room Night Verification Form(s) have been produced and timely submitted to the TDC for review.

APPLICATION DEADLINE AND GUIDELINES:

Applications will be reviewed at TDC meetings as outlined in the schedule below:

- The Tourism Department will host a Grants Workshop annually.
- The opening of each fiscal year's grant cycle begins with a July 15 Grant Application deadline. Additional applications will be considered as long as funding is available.
- Applications are due no later than the deadlines listed in the chart below. If the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, they are due the last County business day before the posted deadline.
- One application will be accepted per Event.
- The application must be filled out. Not Applicable or N/A should be marked if needed.

The applicant must attend and/or view the recorded TDC Event Grant Workshop, which explains the application, approval, and reimbursement processes outlined in the Grant Agreement. This Workshop will take place in May of each year.

The TDC Staff and TDC will review funding for Special Event Funding Requests outlined on the next page:

SUBMITTAL & MEETING SCHEDULE FOR SPORTS EVENT FUNDING

Grant Application Submittal Deadline	TDC Meeting*
December 15, 2024	January 2025
February 15, 2025	March 2025
April 15, 2025	May 2025
June 15, 2025	July 2025
July 15, 2025	September 2025
October 15, 2025	November 2025

ALL FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRE FINAL APPROVAL BY THE CLAY COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND ENTRY INTO A GRANT AGREEMENT.

*Dates are subject to change, and grant applications will be accepted as funding is available.

You may e-mail, call, or schedule an in-person appointment to review your application by connecting with:

**Clay County Tourist Development Council (TDC)
Attn: Stephanie Lamb
477 Houston Street, P.O. Box 1366
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043**

Stephanie.Lamb@claycountygov.com
Phone: 904-529-3792

*If the date(s) above fall on a weekend or holiday, the items are due on the prior business day.

REIMBURSEMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY:

Within 60 days after the completion of the Event/Project, Applicant must submit the following:

- Completed Post Event Report (Page 9-10)
- Room Night Verification Forms (Page 11) reporting all room nights generated by the event. This includes all staff, competitors, volunteers, spectators, officials, etc., who stayed in paid accommodations verified directly by a hotel, motel, or vacation rental. Every effort should be made to track room night production; however, the form is required even if zero room nights are produced.
- Invoice from Grantee to Clay County for reimbursement of TDC/BCC approved funds (addressed to Clay County Tourist Development Council).
- Collateral supporting the expenses grantees requesting be reimbursed Vendor receipt(s) or Invoices/Orders with proof of payment in the form of front and back copies of the cleared check, online payment confirmation, credit card receipt, or bank statement). Please refer to Eligible/Ineligible Use of Funds from the grant application.
- Copies/samples of advertising or promotional materials for which TDC funds are reimbursing expenses and proof of the Clay County Tourism logo included in said advertising or promotional item.
- If the original award amount must be prorated because the actual verified room nights are less than the guaranteed room nights, an updated invoice with the new award amount will be required.
- The TDC will conduct an audit to promote the accuracy of attendance and room nights reported in the Post Event Report.
- Incomplete reports will not be considered.
- A formal memo requesting an extension of the 60-day deadline must be submitted, and the Tourism Department must approve it.

ROOM NIGHT TRACKING:

In order to assess the impact of each Event on the Clay County transient lodging industry, the TDC requires the tracking of the number of overnight visitors attending the Event/Project.

Applicant will be required to provide all Clay County based accommodations where attendees may be staying with room night certification forms and submit the Room Night Certification Form (page 11) to the TDC at the conclusion of the Event. Applicant is strongly encouraged to conduct their own room night surveys to verify room nights and hotels in order to complete the Room Night Certification Form for back up documentation should there be any discrepancies in determining the total number of room nights generated from the event. All documents verifying room nights must be signed by an authorized representative of the lodging partner.

NOTE: For the purpose of calculating creditable overnight stays, only rooms subject to Tourist Development Tax shall be included; rooms exempt from payment of tax or provided on a complimentary (free of charge) basis shall be excluded from the calculation.

Following the Event, the TDC, the Clay County Clerk of the Court, and/or an Internal Auditor or other representative, the County may designate reserves the right to conduct an audit of information presented for each funded Event. All lodging accommodations listed may be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the Event/Project. PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION PRESENTED CAN AND WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT CURRENT AND FUTURE FUNDING AWARDS. Not tracking your rooms and/or visitors could void your post-event funding.

CONCLUSION:

Applicants are encouraged to not contact members of the TDC, Board of County Commissioners or non-TDC County staff in order to provide a fair and equitable process of consideration of each Applicant. Applicant may make contact with TDC staff to address any concerns or deliver updates. Additionally, the Event director, fiscal administrator or other contact person may be called upon by TDC staff at any time during the review process.

TDC meetings are held (unless otherwise noticed) in January, March, May, July, September and November. Applicant is required to attend the TDC meeting (either in person or via phone) for which the Event application is scheduled for review. This will be the only opportunity to speak directly to the TDC in regard to the Event application.

Clay County Tourist Development Council Room Night Certification Form

A form should be completed by each accommodation that housed event attendees/staff. This form is due to the TDC office no later than 60 days after the end of the event.

Attention: Hotel Representative/Contact

The Event, _____, was awarded Funding through the Clay County Tourist Development Council (TDC) to assist in the advancement of bringing additional economic impact through tourism into our community. The purpose of this form is to certify the number of room nights in Clay County that were attributable to the Event.

Name of Hotel/Accommodation:

Contact Person:

Telephone:

Email:

TRACKED ROOM NIGHTS						
EVENT NAME						
DATE(S)						
PAID ROOM NIGHTS						
COMP ROOM NIGHTS						

Hotel Contact Signature:

The TDC thanks you for your help and partnership in making Clay County a choice destination!

GRANT APPLICANT: I certify that Event listed above consumed the reported room nights.

Name of Applicant:

Signature:

Title:

The TDC reserves the right to unilaterally reduce the maximum reimbursement amount if the Applicant's room night guarantee is not satisfied or documented with this Room Night Certification Form. This SIGNED form must be completed and returned before final payment is delivered to Applicant.