

Tourist Development
Fund for Cultural Tourism

Application Guidelines

Category B

2025 - 2026



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Introduction

In 1982, Palm Beach County levied a tourist development tax on “every person who rents or lets for consideration any living quarters or accommodations in any apartment, hotel, motel, resort, condominium for a term of six months or less.” A percentage (22.51%) of the first four cents levied on every dollar of such rent is to be expended on cultural tourism development grants in support of fine arts entertainment, events, programs, festivals, and activities that directly promote Palm Beach County tourism and is designated as The Tourist Development Fund for Cultural Tourism. The Cultural Council for Palm Beach County advises and administers this grant under a contract with the Tourist Development Council and the Board of County Commissioners.

About the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County

The mission of the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County is to nurture, promote, and support a healthy, diverse, and inclusive cultural sector. We serve as cultural architects, championing and growing cultural organizations and creative professionals so that arts and culture are a part of everyday life, for everyone.

The Cultural Council for Palm Beach County is the only organization solely dedicated to supporting arts and culture in The Palm Beaches, Florida’s Cultural Capital®. In its sustaining effort to foster growth of the cultural sector, the Council provides support services to cultural organizations and creative professionals, administers public and private grant programs, advocates for cultural funding, enhances local arts education, and promotes cultural tourism. The Council serves as a venue highlighting works by Palm Beach County-based professional artists at its headquarters in the historic Robert M. Montgomery, Jr. Building in Downtown Lake Worth Beach. The building is also home to the Roe Green Uniquely Palm Beach Store, featuring items by local artisans, as well as the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Visitor Information Center.

About the TDC

The **Tourist Development Council (TDC)** has oversight responsibility for the contracted marketing agencies which include Discover The Palm Beaches, the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County, the Palm Beach County Film & Television Commission, and the Palm Beach County Sports Commission along with the Palm Beach County Convention Center operations. The development of the TDC Strategic Plan, with the approval of the Board of County Commissioners, provides a framework for use by all agencies in creating the marketing and promotion programs of tourism in Palm Beach County. This is accomplished by empowering collaborative partnerships of these agencies, advocating appropriate destination-defining developments, and ensuring the continued steady growth of visitors to The Palm Beaches.

Tourism is among Palm Beach County's major industries resulting in an economic impact of \$10.3 billion in the local economy, producing a record breaking \$87 million in bed-tax revenue, lodging sales exceeding \$1.4 billion annually and supporting 96,000 tourism-related jobs. The Tourist Development Tax and the current use is critically important to the management of Tourism Development in the Palm Beaches. The tax, which began in the 1980s to promote the tourism and the cultural economy by state statute, has served the state and county well.

The TDC continues to grow the Palm Beach County economy through the managed investments in marketing, promotion, investments in beaches, the convention center, and two Spring Training baseball stadiums.

Equity Statement

We believe that everyone has cultural traditions that are inherently valuable. We seek to honor and value creative expression of all people through the work of the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County. Creating an art-filled community means seeing, celebrating, and serving all. Cultural equity is essential to a sustainable arts and cultural sector and a vibrant and thriving community.

About the Program

The Cultural Council and the Tourist Development Council seek to strengthen Palm Beach County as a cultural tourism destination by providing program support to cultural institutions that attract out-of-county visitors by offering arts and cultural programming that appeals to, and satisfies, tourists.

This program, the Tourist Development Fund for Cultural Tourism (Category B) supports marketing and cultural tourism expenses associated with the presentation and/or production of programs open to the general public. Palm Beach County nonprofit arts and cultural organizations with annual operating revenues of at least \$1,175,000 (exclusive of tangible collections, capital and/or endowment corpus) and a recognized ability to produce, present, and promote excellent programs that attracts a significant number of tourists and contribute to Palm Beach County's reputation as a national cultural destination are eligible for this category. The grant is a two-year cycle that requires the applicants to complete an online application by closely following these guidelines and to participate in an interview with a public grant review panel. The applicant is expected to attend an Application Workshop prior to completing the application. Cultural Council grant staff are available for questions and to provide support throughout the application process.

If the panel awards a score of 80 or higher to the applicant organization, a contract will be awarded to reimburse out-of-county marketing expenses and/or artist fees, production, or exhibition costs. Following the completion of a successful year one, including the required submission of interim and final reports and all other contractual obligations, grantees will receive the second-year funding (if available and approved by the Tourist Development Council and the Board of County Commissioners). The second-year grant award will be based on updated information from the organizations and will utilize the same score achieved in year one.

The program is a reimbursement-based grant program for cultural tourism and marketing expenses only. Organizations approved for funding will receive grant disbursements through a quarterly reimbursement process beginning October 1, 2025.

Funding Period October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026

Applicants request funds based on operating revenue reported in FY24 audit and/or FY24 fiscal year financial statements (profit & loss and balance sheet of assets and liabilities).

Documentation may be requested for in-kind contributions. The funding levels are:

- Operating Revenues of \$2 million or less: request 10% of operating revenues
- Operating Revenues between \$2,000,001 and \$3,000,000: request \$200,000
- Operating Revenues between \$3,000,001 and \$5,000,000: request \$250,000
- Operating Revenues above \$5,000,000: request \$300,000

Application Deadline

Deadline for application is Friday, February 28, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. for the grant period October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026.

Eligibility

Applicant must fulfill all of the following at time of application:

- The organization must be a nonprofit organization 501(c)3, or part of an organization, or unit of government which produces and/or presents a cultural program or festival.
- The organization must be headquartered in Palm Beach County.
- The organization must have completed, at minimum, five years of fiscal operation as a nonprofit organization in Palm Beach County.
- The organization must be registered with Guidestar (www.guidestar.org) to verify nonprofit status.
- The applicant must provide a Department of Agriculture Reference/License Number reflecting the organization's current status, found on the Florida Department of Agriculture letter permitting solicitations: www.fdacs.gov
- The organization must document at least \$200,000 of budgeted marketing activity for FY2025/2026
- The organization must have a board of directors composed of at least 1/3 Palm Beach County residents.
- The organization must employ at least one permanent full-time employee or one permanent full-time equivalent (FTE).
- The organization must demonstrate through board-approved financial statements and/or financial audit that it meets or exceeds the operating revenue budget threshold of \$1,175,000.
- The organization must provide a dollar-for-dollar match for the amount requested (the match can be derived from contributed or earned income).

Allowable Expenses for Reimbursement

- Professional in-house marketing staff; up to 50% of adjusted salary (gross salary less vacation, sick, personal, bereavement, and holidays)
- Outside Professional Services specific to Artist fees directly related to the funded program, including travel
- Outside Professional Services specific to Marketing and/or Public Relations directly related to the funded program
- Outside Professional Services specific to Production and Technical expenses directly related to the funded program
- Marketing and Advertising costs directly used on out-of-county marketing related to the funded program
- Space Rental directly related to the funded program
- Pre-payments made prior to the grant period for expenses directly related to the funded program are allowable if deposits are required for contracts, if there is a savings for paying early, services are essential to the program, or goods or services are available only if advance payment is made. Submit reimbursement after the event/service occurs.

Grant Restrictions from Funding or Reimbursement

- General operating or administrative expenses including travel, salaries, and benefits not related to the funded program
- Mortgage or rent of office building, renovation, or remodeling of facilities
- Purchase of permanent equipment, anything with a lifespan of one year or more
- Fundraising, galas, sponsorship, development, membership, annual reports, printed newsletters, private event invitations and/or program publications that include solicited (paid) advertising. Call center expenses related to membership and subscription renewal are not allowable
- Funds cannot be used for expenses or program costs associated with sponsorships, co-op marketing opportunities or additional support from another TDC agency. Likewise, program costs incurred in fulfillment of sponsorships, co-op marketing opportunities, or additional support from other TDC agencies are not eligible for reimbursement through this program
- Classes and other educational activities
- Advertising and/or printing that omit the County, TDC, or Cultural Council logos and/or recognition
- Food and beverage expenses
- Student or Intern expenses
- Any awards, prizes, or contributions
- Any other non-program-related expenses
- Prepaid expenses, unless specified in allowable expenses
- Postage

Grant Application Review Criteria

- Cultural excellence of the organization – 20 pts
- Cultural tourism and marketing program – 60 pts
- Administrative excellence of the organization – 20 pts

Scoring Rubric

Grant panelists will receive a copy of the Scoring Rubric as a part of the panelist training materials. The Scoring Rubric is designed to ensure an objective and fair evaluation of the proposed program. The scoring mechanism defines each of the three criteria scored by panelists. **Within each criterion, standard descriptions and corresponding point values are listed to serve as a guide in the scoring process. Grant applicants should use this Scoring Rubric when completing the application.**

RUBRIC VALUATION - Overall consideration for the applications

Value	Description	Score
Excellent	Strongly demonstrates a commitment to cultural tourism; places value on using public funds to deliver outstanding cultural excellence to increase audience size, number of out-of-county visitors, and number of hotel nights; merits investment of Palm Beach County bed tax funding.	90-100
Good	Satisfactorily demonstrates a commitment to cultural tourism; places value on using public funds to deliver cultural programming to increase audience size or number of out-of-county visitors or number of hotel nights; merits investment of Palm Beach County bed tax funding.	80-89
Fair	Does not sufficiently demonstrate public value of arts and culture. Does not merit investment of Palm Beach County bed tax funding.	70-79
Weak	Makes an incomplete or inadequate case for the public value of arts and culture. Does not merit investment of Palm Beach County bed tax funding. Information is confusing, unclear, and lacks specific details.	0-69

1. Maximum 20 points for Cultural Excellence

Panelists will consider the following standards when evaluating each application for Cultural Excellence:

Excellent 19-20 points	Good 16-18 Points	Fair 13-15 Points	Weak 0-12 points
Mission statement clearly describes the organization; the programs and activities fully support the mission.	Mission statement describes the organization; programs and activities fully support the mission.	Mission statement describes the organization; programs and activities do not fully support the mission.	Mission statement does not clearly describe the organization; programs and activities do not support the mission.
Recent cultural programs and upcoming plans clearly reflect excellence and contributed to the County's reputation as a cultural destination.	Recent cultural programs and upcoming plans show evidence of excellence and contribution to the County's reputation as a cultural destination.	Evidence of growth and development of cultural programs with attempts to contribute to the County's reputation as a cultural destination.	The programs are not sustaining the cultural form and do not contribute to the County's reputation as a cultural destination.
Organization is supporting and sustaining inclusive programming and building a diverse audience.	Organization has made steps towards inclusive programming and building a diverse audience.	The organization's efforts around diversity and inclusion are lacking clarity.	There is no evidence of a diverse audience or any plans indicating inclusivity in programming.

2. Maximum 60 points for Strength of Proposed Cultural Tourism and Marketing Program

Panelists will consider the following information when evaluating the Strength of Proposed Cultural Tourism and Marketing Program:

Excellent 52-60 points	Good 43-51 Points	Fair 35-42 Points	Weak 0-34 points
<p>Well-defined marketing and promotion program that successfully targets out-of-county visitors, establishes defined strategies and tactics to achieve stated goals, and clearly defines target audiences and potential impact.</p>	<p>Marketing and promotion program that targets out-of-county visitors, outlines strategies and tactics to achieve stated goals, provides information on target audiences and potential impact.</p>	<p>Marketing and promotion program that is lacking strategies and tactics to reach out-of-county visitors and does not clearly indicate the impact of the program.</p>	<p>The program lacks clarity, fails to provide information on targeting out-of-county visitors, and does not provide specific information on strategies and tactics for implementation.</p>
<p>The proposed marketing program includes detailed and attainable strategies to increase audience size, number of out-of-county visitors and number of hotel nights.</p>	<p>The proposed marketing program includes strategies to increase audience size, number of out-of-county visitors and number of hotel nights.</p>	<p>The proposed marketing program does not include strategies to increase audience size, number of out-of-county visitors and number of hotel nights.</p>	<p>The proposed marketing program is confusing, unclear, and unrealistic about counting visitors and tracking hotel nights.</p>
<p>There is clear evidence that successful strategies are employed to measure and analyze audience growth.</p>	<p>The organization has established realistic goals for measuring audience growth.</p>	<p>The organization's efforts at audience measurement are lacking.</p>	<p>There is little to no evidence of measures to analyze audience growth.</p>

3. Maximum 20 points for Organizational Administrative Excellence.

Panelists will consider the following information when evaluating Organizational Administrative Excellence:

Excellent 19-20 points	Good 16-18 Points	Fair 13-15 Points	Weak 0-12 points
There is clear evidence that the organization is following best practices in governance, operations, and fiscal management.	There is some evidence that the organization is following some best practices in governance, operations, and fiscal management.	There is little evidence that the organization is following best practices in governance, operations, and fiscal management.	There is no evidence that the organization is following best practices in governance, operations, and fiscal management.
The board of directors is a strong mix of experience and backgrounds and is active in supporting the organization and its programs.	The board of directors represents a variety of experiences and backgrounds and is active in supporting the organization and its programs.	The board of directors is active in supporting the organization and its programs.	The board of directors lacks qualified candidates, does not reflect the County, and no evidence is provided to show board governance and leadership of the organization.
There is a strong financial plan, a diversified revenue stream, an endowment in place, and effective fundraising systems.	There is a financial plan, and a revenue stream. Some fundraising has been effective for the organization.	There is no financial plan. There may be a deficit. There is a lack of effective fundraising and lack of a diversified revenue stream.	The budget is not balanced, hard to understand. There is no financial plan nor a diversified revenue stream.

Applicants must receive a minimum average of 80 points to be considered for funding.

Review Process

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be reviewed by a panel comprised of Cultural Council board members, TDC representatives, regional and community volunteers. Applicants will be required to participate in an “interview-style” review in a public setting, provide a brief update of programming and organizational changes since the grant submission, and answer panelist questions. Panelists score all applications and the highest and lowest score is dropped to give an average score for each application. An application must receive a score of 80 or higher to be considered for funding. A funding formula is used to calculate the award amount based on the grant amount requested, score, and available funds. Applicants that receive a score of 80 or above will be reviewed by the Cultural Council Grants Committee, approved by the Cultural Council Board of Directors, and approved by TDC board for recommendation of a grant award. In the final step, the Board of County Commissioners will approve the grant awards recommended by the TDC.

Appeal Process

Applicants that feel there was an error made during the review that adversely affected their final rating can file a written appeal to Cultural Council staff within two weeks of the conclusion of the panel. The letter must be signed by the authorizing official of the organization and sent to the AVP of Grants at the Cultural Council. Applicants must include in the letter evidence that the error was made and evidence of where the correct information can be found in the materials presented to the panel. If sufficient evidence was provided, the letter will be presented to the Cultural Council's President & CEO to review the appeal. If a change in the grant award is deemed necessary, the board of the Cultural Council and the TDC will review and approve.

The Grant Application

The online grant application can be accessed via the grants portal found on the Cultural Council's website in the application toolkit for Category B. First-time users of the grants portal will need to create an account. Information on how to create the account, or questions regarding the grants portal can be directed to Cultural Council staff. Allow ample time to complete the application and upload the required documentation and exhibits. **Be sure to complete the correct application for your category.** An application training presentation will be available in the application toolkit to assist applicants through the application process. In addition, the Cultural Council will offer a workshop on the application and the grant process.

Required Submissions

There are a number of documents that are required in order to complete the application:

- FY24 audit including the auditor's opinion which reflects at least \$1,175,000 operating revenue threshold
 - For organizations that are on a calendar year or if the FY24 audit is not completed at the time of application, applicant must provide FY24 financial statements including a statement of activities (profit & loss statement) and statement of financial position (balance sheet of assets and liabilities) signed and dated by the CEO or Board Chair.
 - **PLEASE NOTE:** a final FY24 certified audit, including auditor's opinion, must be submitted to the Cultural Council by June 30, 2025 for those organizations submitting financial statements due to being on a calendar year.
- Budget Workbook that includes your FY25/26 budget, explanation of any in-kind benefits, explanation of budget surplus or shortfall (deficit) if applicable
- Sample(s) of recent marketing/advertising material

Support Materials

Applicants will have an option to include a recent annual report, recent performance/event reviews or feature articles on the organization, and/or any other submissions that will help support the grant application (brochures, photos, videos).

Grant Contract

Once a grant is awarded, a contract is prepared between the Cultural Council, TDC, and Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners. Prior to execution of the contract, the following documents are required:

- Certificate of Insurance – that must include (1) general liability coverage with limits of not less than \$500,000 each occurrence and (2) list Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners, Tourist Development Council and Cultural Council for Palm Beach County as additional insured for the contract term.
- Updated Program/Project Description
- Budget Modification Workbook
- Authorized Signatory - Provide proof of person(s) authorized to sign contracts by submitting information from the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations found at www.sunbiz.org. Include registration copy or board resolution as documentation.
- Applicants must be registered on www.e-verify.gov.
- Human Trafficking affidavit
- FY24 Audit
- If the applicant is a division of a larger institution, the applicant must include an audit which identifies direct expenses and revenues of the program. If this is unavailable, the applicant must provide internally prepared financial statements of revenues and expenses for the last two fiscal years signed by the chief financial officer and an authorized official of the larger organization.

Program or Budget Amendment

Grantees must notify the Cultural Council if there is a change to the program and/or the budget approved in their contract. A program/budget amendment form must be completed.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to submit Interim (April) & Final (October) Reports detailing visitor attendance, artist hotel room night stays, and marketing spend. Successes and challenges experienced through the program are reported in the final report. Grantees may be requested to participate in Intercept Surveying of their audiences. Failure to submit timely reports and audience survey information if requested may result in a 15% grant reduction.

Credit Requirements

The grantee must include the following credit designations for the agency managing their grant (Cultural Council for Palm Beach County), the funding source (Funded by the Tourist Development Council), and the grantor (Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners). **Refer to the FY2025/2026 reimbursement guidelines and brand standards manual** located in the grantee toolkit on the Cultural Council website.

Application Assistance

The following application assistance options are available to support applicants through the process:

- View FY25/26 Application Training Presentation (located under the applicant toolkit on the Cultural Council website)
- Attend an application training session at the Cultural Council, January 17, 2025, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. RSVP to dcrank@palmbeachculture.com
- Call or email the grants team anytime

Timeline

Application release – January 17, 2025

Onsite application training – January 17, 2025

Application deadline – February 28, 2025

Panel review – May 15, 2025

Grant Award Notification – Summer, 2025

Interim Report Due – Spring, 2026

Final Report Due – Fall, 2026

Grant Contacts

We are here to assist you. Please contact members of the Cultural Council grants team to answer your questions and provide assistance with the online portal.

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