FY27 Grant Guidelines

Cultural Grant

Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Local Community Grant

Administered by the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA),
on behalf of Leon County & the City of Tallahassee

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Grant Programs Calendar

Date	Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant	Local Community Grant *(Formerly Cultural Grant (Community), City Grant)*
Monday, March 30, 2026	Grant Application & Guidelines available, Application Portal Opens	
Friday, April 3, 2026	Grant Application Webinar	
Friday, May 15, 2026	Last day for grantee consultations	
Friday, May 22, 2026	FY27 Application Deadline	
Monday, May 25 – Friday, June 5, 2026	COCA Staff Eligibility Review	
Monday, June 8 – Monday, June 22, 2026	County TDT Eligibility Verification	The TDT review process is not applicable to Local Community Grants.
Tuesday, June 23 – Tuesday, July 7, 2026	Applicant Revisions Deadline (If Necessary)	
Tuesday, July 14, 2026	Secondary County TDT Eligibility Verification Results	
Friday, July 17, 2026	Panelist training	
Friday, July 17 – Friday, August 28, 2026	Panelist review period	
Tuesday, September 1, 2026	Panel Review Meeting	
Thursday, September 3, 2026	COCA Board Reviews & Approves FY27 Grant Recommendations	

Date	Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant	Local Community Grant *(Formerly Cultural Grant (Community), City Grant)*
Thursday, September 10, 2026*	TDC Reviews & Approves FY27 TDT Funding Recommendations	The TDT review process is not applicable to Local Community Grants.
Tuesday, September 30, 2026	City & County Budgets Finalized	
Wednesday, October 1, 2026	Grant Period Begins	
Friday, October 31, 2026	FY26 Final Reports due; applicants who were funded in FY26 must have their final report submitted and approved before their FY27 contract can be executed	
November 2026	First Payment disbursed upon execution of contract; grant awards $10,000 and below will be distributed in one payment; grant awards above $10,000 will be split into two payments	
Friday, April 30, 2027	Mid-year reports due; second payment of awards greater than $10,000 will be distributed upon approval of Mid-year Report	
Thursday, September 30, 2027	Grant Period Ends	
Monday, November 1, 2027	FY27 Final Reports Due	

About COCA

COCA, the Council on Culture & Arts, is a non-profit organization that serves as the facilitator and voice for the arts and cultural industry in Florida's capital area. Designated to serve as the local arts agency for Tallahassee and Leon County, COCA is the capital area's only umbrella agency for arts and culture, and works with and for those who produce, invest in, and enjoy the arts and culture in the area.

COCA's mission is to serve and support the community by promoting and advocating for arts and culture in Florida's capital region. We play a dual role: providing resources and promoting the arts and culture to citizens and visitors. COCA is an "instrumentality of government"- it is not a government entity, but works together with City, County, State, and

Federal, along with local school districts, as their cultural industry partner. COCA designs and administers grant programs under contracts with the City and County and in annual collaboration with a community task force and citizen review panel.

Visit COCA online at www.TallahasseeArts.org. Make sure you sign up for the COCA Classifieds email, which goes out on Thursdays to over 8,500 subscribers. Learn about funding sources, professional development, calls to artists of all disciplines, job opportunities, and more.

Grantees will also want to check out COCA's Marketing Resources and Media Guide at https://www.tallahasseearts.org/services/marketing-assistance/.

Do not forget to post your events on www.TallahasseeArts.org so they can be featured in our Tallahassee Arts Guide "This Week" email of arts, culture, and heritage events that is sent to over 11,500 weekly recipients. We also produce monthly arts education and a monthly "Snapshots of TAG" e-newsletters. Sign up for all of COCA's e- newsletters at https://www.tallahasseearts.org/services/newsletters/.

COCA Grant Programs

COCA currently offers three grant programs: the Cultural Grant, the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant and the Local Community Grant. In a given fiscal year, an eligible organization may apply for:

- One Cultural Grant,
- One Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant, and
- One Local Community Grant.

These three grant programs share one application, one due date and one panel.

Additionally, COCA also offers arts education grants to teachers. More information about that program is available at https://tallahasseearts.org/arts-education/arts-ed-grant/

Cultural Grant

The Cultural Grant funds programming expenses for programs bringing out-of-county visitors to Tallahassee/Leon County. Applicant programming must have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists and must meet at least one of the following goals:

1. **Offer arts, history, or cultural programs with exemplary standards and objectives.**
   The grant program seeks to fund programming that enriches the community with

attention to the highest standards and objectives within a cultural discipline.

2. **Provide educational opportunities in arts, culture, and/or history for young people or adults.**
   The grant program seeks to fund programming that features learning opportunities for young and/or life-long learners.

3. **Serves a special population or need, fills a unique niche, or engages the community in the creative or artistic process.**
   The grant program seeks to fund programming that offers a unique service in arts, culture, and history not otherwise provided in the community; programs that provide distinctive arts, history, and cultural offerings; programs that highlight a range of cultural perspectives and/or access for persons with disabilities; programs that bring arts, cultural and historic exhibits, or events to underserved areas; programs that engage members of the community in the creative and/or artistic process.

Where do the Funds Come from?

The Cultural Grant is funded by Leon County's Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue. Grants funded using TDT funds are subject to compliance with Florida Statute 125.0104, pursuant to which, TDT revenue may be used to "promote and advertise tourism in [Florida] and nationally and internationally" on the condition that:

> *"...if tax revenues are expended for an activity, service, venue, or event, the activity, service, venue, or event shall have as* ***one of its main purposes*** *the attraction of tourists* ***as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue, or event to tourists****."*

Certain definitions set out in § 125.0104, Fla. Stat., are included below to assist in ensuring eligibility:

- "Promotion" means marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities.
- "Tourist" means a person who participates in trade or recreational activities outside the county of his/her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations.

Other authorized uses of Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Revenue include:

- Publicly owned and operated convention centers, sports arenas, auditoriums
- Auditoriums publicly owned and operated by a nonprofit.

- Aquariums or museums or zoological parks publicly owned/operated or owned/operated by a nonprofit.

Therefore, all applicants to the Cultural Grant must:

- Have demonstrated efforts to enhance Leon County's tourism impact; and
- Show evidence of out-of-county marketing and promotion and track out-of-county visitors.

In addition to COCA's review process, COCA and Leon County will review all Cultural Grant applications to verify eligibility and compliance with § 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes prior to scoring. See section "How are Applications Reviewed?" for more information.

Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

The Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant (CTMG) funds expenses related to marketing to out-of-county visitors. Examples of eligible opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- Media placement and production (print, online, broadcast & radio)
- Printed materials
- Tradeshow registration fees and booth rentals
- Video/CD-ROM/DVD production
- Public relations/media communications
- Promotional items
- Website development
- Graphic design
- Marketing personnel (for marketing to tourists)

Where do the Funds Come From?

The Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant is funded by Leon County's Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue. Grants funded using TDT funds are subject to compliance with Florida Statute 125.0104, pursuant to which, TDT revenue may be used to "promote and advertise tourism in [Florida] and nationally and internationally" on the condition that:

> *"...if tax revenues are expended for an activity, service, venue, or event, the activity, service, venue, or event shall have as* ***one of its main purposes*** *the attraction of tourists* ***as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue, or event to tourists****."*

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Other authorized uses of Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Revenue include:

- Publicly owned and operated convention centers, sports arenas, auditoriums
- Auditoriums publicly owned and operated by a nonprofit.
- Aquariums or museums or zoological parks publicly owned/operated or owned/operated by a nonprofit.

Therefore, all applicants to the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant must:

- Have demonstrated efforts to enhance Leon County's tourism impact; and
- Show evidence of out-of-county marketing and promotion and track out-of-county visitors.

In addition to COCA's review process, COCA and Leon County will review all Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications to verify eligibility and compliance with § 125.0104 of the Florida Statutes prior to scoring. See section "How are Applications Reviewed?" for more information.

Local Community Grant

The Local Community Grant funds programming expenses for programs that serve residents of Tallahassee/Leon County. Applicant programming must meet at least one of the following goals:

1. **Offer arts, history, or cultural programs with exemplary standards and objectives.**
   The grant program seeks to fund programming that enriches the community with attention to the highest standards and objectives within a cultural discipline.

2. **Provide educational opportunities in arts, culture, and/or history for young people or adults.**
   The grant program seeks to fund programming that features learning opportunities for young and/or life-long learners.

3. **Serve a special population or need, fills a unique niche, or engages the community in the creative or artistic process.**
   The grant program seeks to fund programming that offers a unique service in arts,

culture, and history not otherwise provided in the community; programs that provide distinctive arts, history, and cultural offerings; programs that highlight a range of cultural perspectives and/or access for persons with disabilities; programs that bring arts, cultural and historic exhibits, or events to underserved areas; programs that engage members of the community in the creative and/or artistic process.

Where do the Funds Come From?

COCA is contracted by the City and County for the management of its grant programs. For FY27, the Local Community Grant is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

Because the Local Community Grant is not funded by the Tourist Development Tax, applicants to this program are not required to market or appeal to out-of-county visitors. Tourism tracking is encouraged, but not required.

Eligibility

All applicants to COCA grant programs must meet the following basic eligibility. Individual grant programs have additional eligibility requirements.

1. **Applicants must be one of the following:**
    a. **A not-for-profit Florida corporation with at least 60% of your operating cash budget originating from earned income and classified by the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) as a 501(c)(3), sub-class "public charity".**

    COCA staff will confirm your not-for-profit status with the IRS and/or the Florida Division of Corporations. If we cannot confirm your status, you will be asked to provide proof of current not-for-profit status.

    "Operating cash" refers to expenses related to day-to-day operations. It includes programs, overhead and administrative costs. It does not include capital campaigns, endowment funds, cash reserves or contingency funds.

    "Earned income" includes admissions, contract services, corporate contributions, foundation grants, competitive government grants from federal, state, city, or county operations, including Leon County Tourist Development Council and Community Human Services Partnership grants. It does not include operating cash from government sources, such as government-paid staff, expenses and contracts.

The application form will help you determine what percentage of your operating cash originates from earned income.

b. **A state partner (i.e., a department, museum, or other organization working under the FEID number of a part of the State of Florida, Florida State University, Florida A&M University, or Tallahassee State College).**

   State partner organizations are required to provide a letter of support from the Agency Head, Division Director, Dean, Department Chair or University Supervising Official.

   State partners fall into two categories: "General/Educational" and "Destination." The category will determine how much funding you can request. See section "Calculating Your Request" for more information.

   i. **General/Educational State Partners** can apply for programs that demonstrate efforts to enhance Leon County tourism and that create broader public access, benefit, and participation in arts and cultural events in our community. Public education programs must be presented to the public and may not be primarily for university-enrolled students.

   ii. **Destination State Partners** have permanent facilities and/or sites that are open to the public at least 180 days per year, with regular programming directed to the public and tourists and a documented impact on tourist visitation.

Please note: an organization whose primary purpose is to channel resources (financial, human, or other) to an affiliated organization is not eligible to apply if the affiliated organization submits its own application. This prohibition applies even if each organization has its own 501-(C)(3) status. For example, the "Angels for The Theatre" may not apply if the "The Theatre" applies.

Fundraising organizations affiliated with state supported cultural organizations, such as Friends of, Foundations, Citizens Support Organizations, and K-12 schools themselves are not eligible to apply for this grant. Instead, the state-supported cultural organization itself, including college or university schools, departments, or other officially recognized entities, may be eligible to apply for a grant under the special designation of State Partner (see above).

2. **Applicant's mission must be to produce or promote arts and/or history programming.**
   The broad range of activities funded by this grant includes visual, performing, and literary arts, arts education, historic destinations or programming, media arts, and museums.

   (To be an eligible museum, the organization must be open to the public for at least 180 days each year, own or utilize works of art, historical artifacts, or other tangible objects, whether animate or inanimate; care for these works of art, historical artifacts, or other tangible objects; exhibit these works of art, historical artifacts, or other tangible objects to the public on a regular schedule.)

   Even if an organization presents occasional arts or history programming, if its mission is not primarily arts and/or history, then funding should be sought elsewhere. This includes organizations with civic, educational, social service, environmental, health-related, religious, political, journalistic, athletic, or multifaceted missions.

3. **Applicant must have completed at least one fiscal year of programming in your discipline.**
   "Programming" refers to public events and activities, not simply fundraising activities.

4. **Applicant must present or produce programs/activities/events in Tallahassee/Leon County.**
   Applicants must have a formal, registered business address within the City of Tallahassee or Leon County.

5. **Applicant must have a professional staff.**
   May be paid or volunteer, if staff members are qualified, competent, and regularly available during normal business hours to administer a grant.

6. **Applicant must have a governing Board of Directors that meets regularly and operates under a set of by-laws.**

7. **Applicant must be able to demonstrate the receipt of community support through subscriptions, memberships, earned income, foundation grants, and/or other private fundraising (including in- kind support).**

8. **Applicant must produce arts or cultural programs that are regularly available to the public throughout the year.**
   An organization whose mission is to produce seasonal events or festivals does not qualify for COCA funding.

9. **Applicant must have documented statistics on attendance and participation for your programs and/or facility (paid or free) that represent a broad community impact.**

10. **Applicant must be committed to and have a plan in place to provide for accessibility for people with disabilities, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).**

Cultural Grant & Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Eligibility

1. **In addition to arts and culture, applicant must have, as one of its main purposes, the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue, or event to tourists.**

2. **Applicant must clearly identify public relations/promotional/marketing tactics used to reach visitors outside Leon County.**

3. **Applicant must have a marketing plan that clearly indicates out-of-market advertising or promotion.**

4. **Applicant must track and report the number of Out-of-County visitors served by programs.**

NOTE: No program may receive grant funding from both the Leon County Tourism Grant Program and the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA).

Local Community Grant Eligibility

1. **Applicant must track and report the number of residents served by programs.**

NOTE: No program may receive grant funding from both the Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP) or the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA).

Local Community Grants will be scored based on how well the application aligns with one or more of the following City priorities:

- **Economic Development** – According to the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 study conducted by COCA with Americans for the Arts in 2022 & 2023, the nonprofit arts and culture sector is a significant industry in Leon County—one that generates $203.9 million in total economic activity. This spending—$118 million by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and an additional $85.8 million in event-related spending by their audiences—supports 2,930 full-time equivalent jobs, generates $94.4 million in household income to residents, and delivers $33.2 million in government revenue.
- **Impact on Poverty** – The Florida Chamber's Florida Prosperity Project has defined the Root Causes of Poverty. Several of them are impacted directly by arts and culture:
    - **Lack of employment opportunities** – According to a report from the National Governors Association, at-risk youth most likely to suffer from limited lifetime productivity, the arts contribute to lower recidivism rates; increased self-esteem; the acquisition of job skills; and the development of much needed creative thinking, problem solving and communications skills. Involvement in the arts is one avenue by which at-risk youth can acquire the various competencies necessary to become economically self-sufficient over the long term, rather than becoming a financial strain on their states and communities.
    - **Inequities in education & workforce development–** According to Americans for the Arts' Arts + Social Impact Explorer, employers rank study in the arts as second (following self-employment experience) as an indicator of the kind of creativity they are looking for in employees.
    - **Unsafe environments** – According to the University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project, lower- income neighborhoods with higher cultural assets show less child abuse and neglect investigations (14 percent), obesity (5 percent), and serious crime (18 percent). Kids from those communities also scored 18 percent higher in English Language Arts and Math exams than their peers.
    - **Lack of recognition and access within a community** - According to Americans for the Arts' Arts & Social Impact Explorer, a variety of research shows that common cultural history, whether hip hop, community murals, or immigrant heritage and craft, can provide unity in community dialogues

about housing preservation that celebrates an area's unique culture and reflects the needs and values of all who live there.

- **Public Safety** – According to Americans for the Arts' Arts & Social Impact Explore, arts participation correlates with lower rates of juvenile delinquency and truancy, and cultural resources are linked to better health, schooling, and security. The arts also help maintain community representation and lower rates of harassment.
- **Quality of Life** - According to the Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America initiative, the arts can be especially beneficial for public health in five key areas: collective trauma, racism, mental health, social exclusion and isolation, and chronic disease.

Calculating Your Request

All three grant programs have different maximum requests. Organizations are encouraged to request an award amount appropriate for the scope of your proposal. In some cases, this may be less than your maximum allowable request. Use your best judgment to ensure that your request is competitive.

Cultural Grant

There is a maximum allowable request for every applicant based on the allowable operating income in your last completed fiscal year. How much an organization can request depends on two things: the type of organization and the size of the organization.

Nonprofits

Your funding request is based on "allowable operating income" in your most recently completed fiscal year for which you submitted a 990/990-N. Your "allowable operating income" includes:

- Programming expenses
- Overhead expenses
- Administrative expenses
- In-kind income; if your in-kind income is greater than 15% of your cash expenses, you are capped at 15% in-kind.

"Allowable operating income" does not include capital campaigns, endowment funds, cash reserves or contingency funds.

The application form will assist you in calculating your allowable operating income.

Allowable Operating Income	Group #	Max % of Operating Income	Maximum Request
$0 - $74,999	4	50%	$28,000
$75,000 - $499,999	3	20%	$80,000
$500,000 - $1,499,999	2	10%	$160,000
$1,500,000 +	1	10%	$350,000

State Partners

If your organization is a department, museum, or other organization working under the FEID number of a part of the State of Florida, Florida State University, Florida A&M University, or Tallahassee State College; you may be eligible to apply as a State Partner.

NOTE: No more than 15% of the total funds for COCA's Cultural Grant Program each year will be awarded to State Partner applicants.

There are two categories of State Partners: "General/Educational" and "Destination."

General/Educational

General or Educational Partners can apply for programs that demonstrate efforts to enhance Leon County tourism and that create broader public access, benefit, and participation in arts and cultural events in our community. Public education programs must be presented to the public and may not be primarily for university-enrolled students. Applicants will apply to Group 4 and may request up to a maximum of $30,000 in grant funding.

Destination

A Destination is a permanent facility and/or site that is open to the public at least 180 days per year that has regular programming directed to the public and tourists and has a documented impact on tourist visitation.

If the applicant is eligible to apply as a State Partner Destination as defined above and has less than 60% of its annual operating cash budget originating from earned income, applicants may request up to $30,000.

An eligible State Partner Destination that has **more than 60%** of its operating cash budget originating from earned income, use the chart below to find your appropriate request. **The application will assist you in calculating your allowable operating income.**

Earned Income of the specific department, division or program applying for the grant	Group #	Max % of Operating Income	Maximum Request
$0 - $74,999	4	50%	$28,000
$75,000 - $499,999	3	20%	$80,000
$500,000 - $1,499,999	2	10%	$160,000
$1,500,000 +	1	10%	$350,000

Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Eligible applicants may request up to $4,000 to support out-of-county marketing and promotion of programs to ensure compliance with Florida Statute 125.0104.

Local Community Grant

Eligible applicants may request up to $8,000 to support local arts programs.

How Can Grant Funds Be Spent?

All funds must be spent within the grant activity period of October 1 through September 30. Funds that are not spent within this period (or for the specific programs and expenses described in your application) are subject to repayment.

Applicants will detail how grant funds, if awarded, will be used to support and/or promote one of the organization's programs, publications, events, or other public activities.

All events and activities funded by this grant must be for the public and not be intended for an exclusive target group only. Any fees charged to participate should be reasonable and not so high as to effectively exclude a large group of people.

Allowable Expenses

All grant fund expenses must be directly related to programs. Tourism funding must include the promotion of activities, services, venues, or events with the attraction of tourists as one of the main purposes of such programming and/or promotion.

Cultural Grant

Examples of expenses that may be allowable so long as they specifically fulfill that statutory purpose include, but are not limited to:

Personnel: Administrative, **Artistic/Programmatic**, and **Technical/Production** – May be used to fund a portion of staff salaries as directly related to programming and/or promotion of tourist related activities/events/programs. May include artistic director, curator, marketing staff, etc.

Outside Fees & Services: Artistic – Payments to firms or persons for the services of individuals who are not normally considered employees of applicant but consultants or employees of other organizations whose services are specifically identified with the project. Include artistic directors, directors, conductors, curators, dance masters, composers, choreographers, designers, actors, dancers, singers, musicians, teachers, instructors, etc. serving in non-employee/non-staff capacities.

Outside Fees & Services: Other – Payments to firms or persons for services of individuals who are not normally considered employees of "applicant," but consultants or the employees of other organizations, whose services are specifically identified with the project.

Exhibit/Production/Event Expenses – Costs directly related to the production of the event. Includes exhibit rentals; royalties; printing and graphic design; exhibit costs; sets and costumes; lumber, supplies and equipment; postage and freight.

Educational Programs & Materials – Costs directly related to educational programs, including materials.

Project Space Rental – Payment specifically identified with the project for rental of rehearsal, theatre, hall, gallery, and other such spaces. If the applicant owns the building, space rental expenses are not allowed.

Travel – Limited to travel costs to individuals providing outside contractual service. This may include contracted artists or technicians. Include housing costs for these individuals in this category. Travel expenses for ongoing personnel is not allowed.

Marketing/Promotion – Costs for marketing/publicity/promotion specifically identified with the project. Do not include payments to individuals or firms defined as "personnel" or "outside professional services." Include costs for newspaper, radio, and television advertising; printing, and mailing of brochures, flyers, and posters; space rental when directly connected to promotion, publicity, or advertising. Items purchased for merchandising or resale are not allowable.

Project Materials and Supplies – Project Materials and Supplies – All eligible expenses not entered in other categories and specifically identified with the project. Include consumable office supplies, postage, equipment rentals/purchase, supplies/materials, and event-specific insurance. Note: General liability and workers' compensation insurance are not allowable under this category.

Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

The Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant can only be used for marketing expenses. Examples of eligible opportunities may include, but are not limited to

- Media placement and production (print, online, broadcast & radio)
- Printed materials
- Tradeshow registration fees and booth rentals
- Video/CD-ROM/DVD production
- Public relations/media communications
- Promotional items
- Website development
- Graphic design
- Marketing personnel (for marketing to tourists)

Local Community Grant

Examples of expenses that may be allowable include, but are not limited to:

Personnel: Administrative, **Artistic/Programmatic**, and **Technical/Production** – May be used to fund a portion of staff salaries as directly related to programming and/or promotion of program-related activities/events/programs. May include artistic director, curator, marketing staff, etc.

Outside Fees & Services: Artistic – Payments to firms or persons for the services of individuals who are not normally considered employees of applicant but consultants or employees of other organizations whose services are specifically identified with the project. Include artistic directors, directors, conductors, curators, dance masters, composers, choreographers, designers, actors, dancers, singers, musicians, teachers, instructors, etc. serving in non-employee/non-staff capacities.

Outside Fees & Services: Other – Payments to firms or persons for services of individuals who are not normally considered employees of "applicant," but consultants or the employees of other organizations, whose services are specifically identified with the project.

Exhibit/Production/Event Expenses – Costs directly related to the production of the event. Includes exhibit rentals; royalties; printing and graphic design; exhibit costs; sets and costumes; lumber, supplies and equipment; postage and freight.

Educational Programs & Materials – Costs directly related to educational programs, including materials.

Project Space Rental – Payment specifically identified with the project for rental of rehearsal, theatre, hall, gallery, and other such spaces. If the applicant owns the building, space rental expenses are not allowed.

Travel – Limited to travel costs to individuals providing outside contractual service. This may include contracted artists or technicians. Include housing costs for these individuals in this category. Travel expenses for ongoing personnel is not allowed.

Marketing/Promotion – Costs for marketing/publicity/promotion specifically identified with the project. Do not include payments to individuals or firms defined as "personnel" or "outside professional services." Include costs for newspaper, radio, and television advertising; printing, and mailing of brochures, flyers, and posters; space rental when directly connected to promotion, publicity, or advertising. Items purchased for merchandising or resale are not allowable.

Project Materials and Supplies – All eligible expenses not entered in other categories and specifically identified with the project. Include consumable office supplies, postage, equipment rentals/purchase, supplies/materials, and event-specific insurance. Note: General liability and workers' compensation insurance are not allowable under this category.

Non-Allowable Expenses

Grant funds may not be used for general overhead that is unrelated to programming and/or promotion (i.e., financial audit, board retreats, decorating the facility, etc.)

Grant funds may not be used for capital expenses. For the purposes of this grant, capital expenses include building projects, acquisitions, renovations, land acquisition, and other permanent improvements to physical plants (i.e., new roof, air conditioning systems, security fence, lighting grids). Capital expenses also include the purchase of equipment that is not related to the production of events or exhibits.

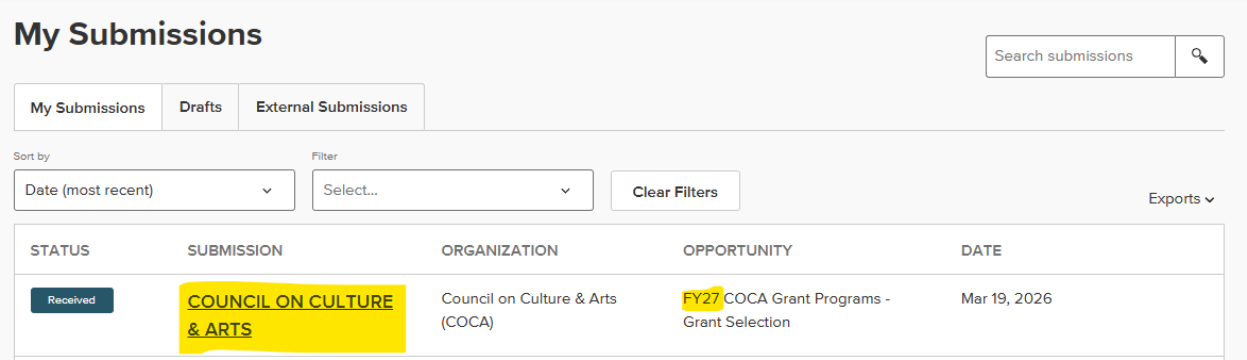
For example, a projector for closed captioning, stage lights, film projector, artwork for a permanent collection, or interpretive items for an exhibit are allowable. A copy machine (for office use only) or a delivery van is not.

Other non-allowable expenses include:

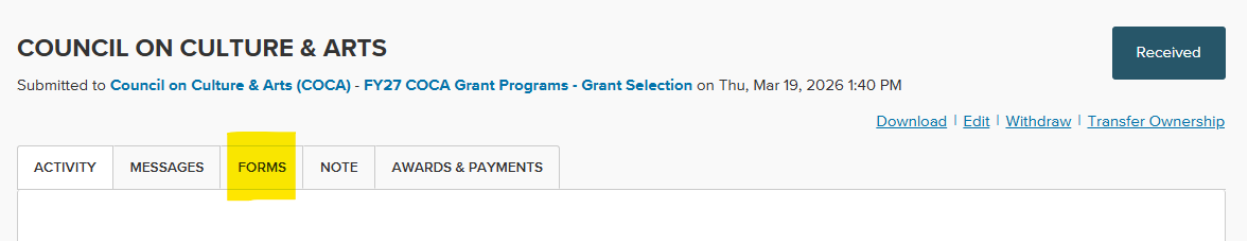
- Expenses incurred or obligated outside of the grant period
- Any costs not directly related to programming and promotion
- Bad debts, contingencies, fines and penalties, interest, and other financial costs
- Mortgage payments
- Operation of privately-owned facilities (i.e., studios, homes)
- Private or exclusive entertainment (i.e., parties, receptions or benefits that are not open and accessible to the public)
- Food and beverages (including alcohol)
- Cash reserves
- Contributions and donations
- Endowment
- Fellowships/scholarships
- Fundraising
- Re-granting
- Third-party grant administration (indirect costs)
- Attendance at conferences and seminars
- Staff Travel
- Plaques and awards
- Religious programs
- Lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state, or local legislation or any other expenditure not authorized by Chapter 112 of the Florida Statutes
- The City of Tallahassee and Leon County discourage line-item requests if you are eligible to apply to this grant program or others.
- No program may receive TDT grant funding from both the County Tourism Event Grant Program and the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA).
- No program may receive Local Community Grant funding from the Community Human Services Partnership (CHSP), the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA).

How Do I Apply?

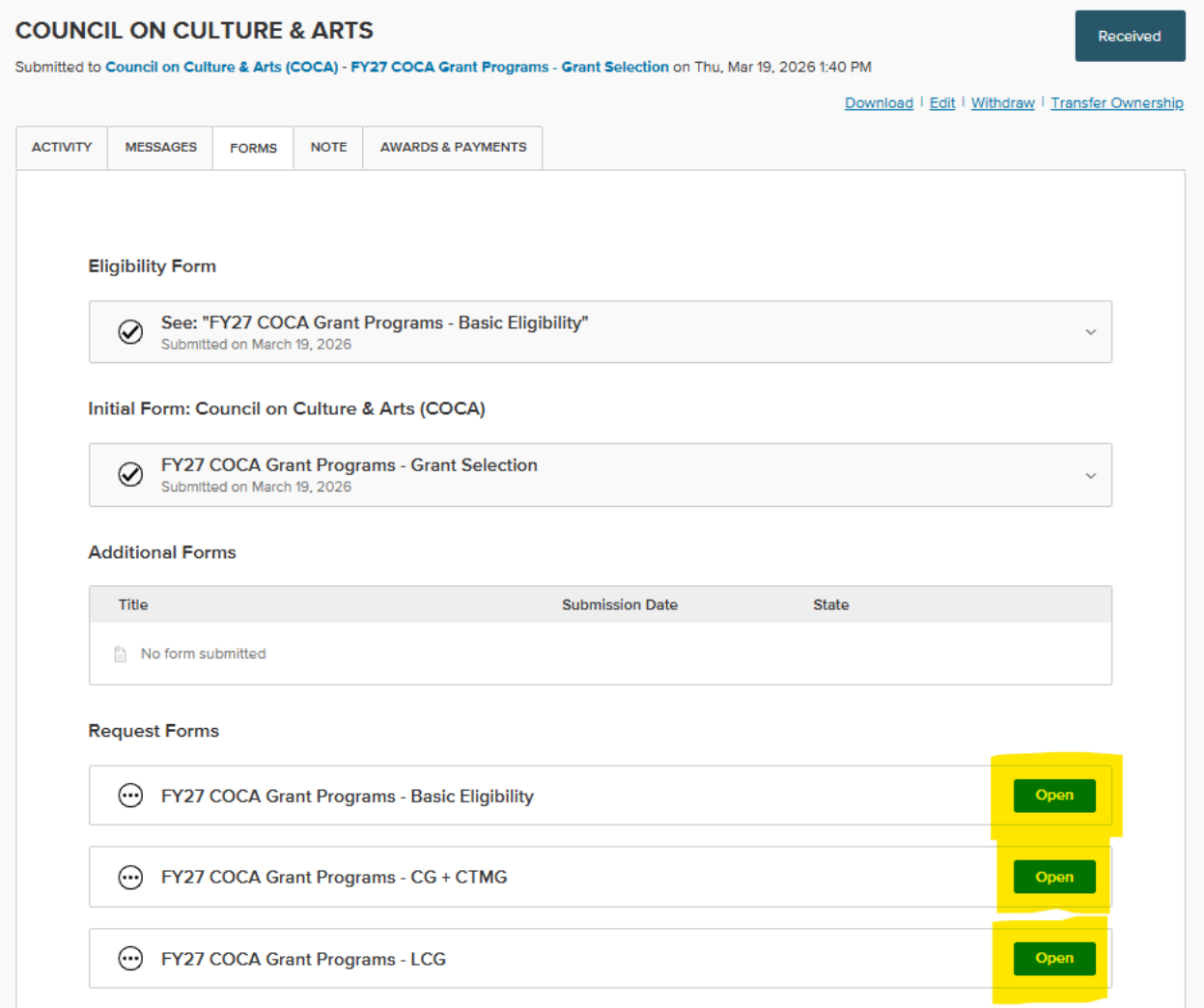
1. Navigate to https://tallahasseearts.submittable.com/.
2. Next to "FY27 COCA Grant Programs," click "submit."
3. Create a Submittable account, or log in to your Submittable account, and confirm your address.
4. Fill out the following form, "FY27 COCA Grant Programs – Grant Selection."
5. Upon hitting "Submit," you will be automatically redirected to a page titled "My Submissions."
6. Click the link for your FY27 submission (should be at the top of the list)



7. Click the "Forms" tab.



8. Scroll down to the “Request forms” section. All required forms will be immediately available.



9. All relevant forms (Basic Eligibility, CG + CTMG, LCG) must be submitted by **Friday, May 22, 2026.**

COCA offers technical assistance to all interested applicants. If you would like to have your draft application reviewed before submission, please do so at least one week before the deadline. New applicants are strongly encouraged to set up a consultation.

Please email Summer Callahan, Grants Manager at summer@tallahasseearts.org to discuss eligibility requirements, schedule a technical consultation, or ask questions about completing your application.

Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances. If you have difficulties with the submission of an electronic application, please email Summer Callahan, Grants Manager at summer@tallahasseearts.org.

How Are Applications Reviewed?

Cultural Grant + Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

COCA staff will review all applications to confirm eligibility with the basic eligibility requirements of the COCA grant program. See "Eligibility" section for more information. For the TDT-funded grants, the Cultural Grant and the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant, COCA staff will also review applications to confirm eligibility under Section 125.0104, F.S.

All Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications will also be provided to the County's Director of Tourism to further confirm eligibility under Section 125.0104, F.S. If the County determines that an application is ineligible, the rationale will be provided to COCA in writing on or before June 22 and thereafter transmitted to the applicant by COCA.

The applicant will then have until July 7 to revise and submit their application. The revised application will be transmitted by COCA to the County.

The County will review the revised applications and provide a written decision on eligibility to COCA on or before July 14. If the County does not inform COCA of the ineligibility of any specific application(s) and the rationale for such decision by July 14, then such application may proceed to evaluation by the grant scoring panel pending confirmation of eligibility by the County. Any applications deemed ineligible by COCA and/or the County as described above will not proceed to the scoring panel, and such decisions are final and unappealable.

Applicants should refer to the **County Eligibility Review Policy** for complete details. This policy is maintained as a separate document and governs all County-related eligibility review requirements for TDT-funded grants.

Local Community Grant

Applications to the Local Community Grant are not subject to any additional review.

Panel Review Process

For FY27 applicants, one panel will be held for both TDT-funded grants (Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant) and the Local Community Grant.

COCA uses a citizen review panel process, like both the Florida Division of Arts & Culture (DAC) and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant programs, to make

recommendations for funding. Panels are composed of non-profit businesspeople, tourism professionals, community leaders, artists, educators, experts in cultural disciplines and others as deemed appropriate for review criteria. COCA accepts nominations for panelists year-round by COCA. You can nominate a panelist here: https://tallahasseearts.org/fy27-panelist-nomination-form/ .

In appointing panel members, COCA considers geographic representation, professional acumen, objectivity, and varied aesthetic, institutional, and cultural viewpoints. All panelists must comply with the Standards of Conduct for Public Officers and Employees of Agencies as set forth in F.S. Section 286.012.

Panelists must recuse themselves from the discussion and scoring of any application from an organization in which they:

- serve as a board or staff member.
- serve as a key volunteer.
- serve as a paid consultant.
- have any other formal association or other experience which will give the appearance of a conflict.

Staff and Board members of COCA (as well as their spouses) and any staff, board member, or spouse of an applicant organization are ineligible to serve as voting panelists for all COCA grant programs.

In accordance with the County contract for the FY27 panel, one member of the Tourist Development Council (TDC) or their designee is required to participate in the Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant review panels. The TDC member or designee will adhere to all panel policies and procedures. The TDC member or designee will participate fully in the scoring process and vote to recommend applicants based on panel review. If a voting TDC member serves as a panelist, to avoid double voting, they will recuse themselves from the subsequent TDC Council vote on the same applications.

Applicants attending panel meetings will be available to answer questions asked by panel members but may not elaborate on their grant beyond those questions. Applicants may respond to all questions and comments from panel members during the review meeting. All panel proceedings are open to the public.

A member of the COCA Board of Directors will chair each panel meeting but does not review or score the applications. Members of COCA's staff will be present to provide administrative support and technical assistance.

COCA staff will report the panel's recommendations to the COCA Board of Directors for review and approval. All TDT- funded grants (Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism

Marketing Grant) will be forwarded to the Tourist Development Council (TDC) for review and approval.

The COCA Board is authorized to amend such recommendations based on current information not made available to the panel. Examples of the types of current information that may prompt such amendment include, but are not limited to:

- a panelist conflict of interest not disclosed at the panel meeting.
- misinformation presented at the panel meeting by someone other than a designated applicant representative.
- COCA staff error discovered after the panel meeting.
- bankruptcy or other fiscal concerns.
- or changes in the applicant's staff or operations that would impair implementation of the proposed grant activity.

All TDT- funded grants (Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant) will then be forwarded to the Tourist Development Council (TDC) for review and approval.

COCA will notify applicants of the outcome of the grants review and approval process.

No award is final, however, until the City and County Commissions approve their annual budgets. Funding for this grant program is contingent upon City and County budgets and tax collections.

Scoring Criteria

The scoring criteria for each grant program is based on the type of funding that grant program receives.

Cultural Grant + Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications will be scored on the following criteria:

- Organizational Capacity (up to 20 points)
    - The organization's planning shows realistic and appropriate future programming plans.
    - This organization's artistic, education, and/or administrative personnel (paid or volunteer) can conduct its programs effectively.
    - The applicant has demonstrated support for the organization through other sources of funding, volunteer efforts, program partnerships, and documented participation data.

    - The applicant exhibits sound fiscal management and administration as evidenced by the grant's narrative and the organization's past and current operating budgets.
- **Program Evaluation (up to 20 points)**
    - This program reflects the mission of the organization, and the scope of this program is feasible to implement in timeline provided and resources allocated (facilities, staff/volunteers, funding, etc.).
    - This program serves an appropriate number of people for the amount requested (considering special, unique, underserved population it targets or unique niche it fills).
    - There are clearly articulated goals and useful methods of evaluating and documenting the success of this program (that extends beyond attendance figures).
    - Whether serving a large constituency, a special or unique population or fulfilling a unique niche, this program's impact on and/or service to the community is an effective use of public funding.
- **Tourism Impact (up to 10 points)**
    - The application indicates the project is for a tourist-related business or activity and clearly conveys it has the attraction of tourists as a main purpose.
    - The application clearly identifies PR/promotional/marketing tactics to reach visitors from clearly identified geographic markets outside Leon County.

Local Community Grant

The Local Community Grant applications will be scored on the following criteria:

- **Organizational Capacity (up to 20 points)**
    - The organization's planning shows realistic and appropriate future programming plans.
    - This organization's artistic, education, and/or administrative personnel (paid or volunteer) can conduct its programs effectively.
    - The applicant has demonstrated support for the organization through other sources of funding, volunteer efforts, program partnerships, and documented participation data.
    - The applicant exhibits sound fiscal management and administration as evidenced by the grant's narrative and the organization's past and current operating budgets.
- **Program Evaluation (up to 20 points)**

- This program reflects the mission of the organization, and the scope of this program is feasible to implement in timeline provided and resources allocated (facilities, staff/volunteers, funding, etc.).
- This program serves an appropriate number of people for the amount requested (considering special, unique, underserved population it targets or unique niche it fills).
- There are clearly articulated goals and useful methods of evaluating and documenting the success of this program (that extends beyond attendance figures).
- Whether serving a large constituency, a special or unique population or fulfilling a unique niche, this program's impact on and/or service to the community is an effective use of public funding.

- **Community Impact (up to 10 points)**
  - The application aligns with one or more of the following City Priorities. See "Eligibility" section for more information.
    - Economic Development
    - Impact on Poverty (lack of employment opportunities, unsafe environments, lack of recognition and access within a community)
    - Public Safety
    - Quality of Life

Funding Formula

The final score will be calculated by taking the average score of the panelists, dividing it by the total possible score (this number will vary based on the total number of programs the applicant has applied to), then multiplying by 100 (final score = average score/total possible points x 100). Below are examples of the funding formulas used to determine the potential maximum funding for requests. Keep in mind, these formulas are guidelines, not guarantees. COCA's Board of Directors has sole and final discretion to set funding formulas to be applied consistently based on the grant panel scoring.

Final Score	Maximum Funding
90 – 100	100% of request
80 – 89.99	90% of request
70 – 79.99	80% of request

Applications scoring less than 70 will not be eligible for funding. When determining the final scores for funding purposes, numbers will be rounded to two decimal places only and not to the whole number. For example, 89.99 will not be rounded to 90.

Reconsideration of Scoring Request

Any applicant wishing to request reconsideration of its score must submit a written and signed request for reconsideration to the COCA Board of Directors within 72 hours (3 business days) after the verified scores are announced via email by COCA Staff. Timely requests for reconsideration will be forwarded by the Chair of COCA's Board of Directors to the full scoring panel, which will review the request(s) and announce its final, unappealable decision at a public meeting within approximately seven (7) days, but no more than fourteen (14) days, following the submission of the request. In addition, suggestions regarding the grant program's policies and guidelines are welcomed year-round. The grant program is reviewed annually with the collaboration of a public task force and all applicants are encouraged to participate in the process.

Funding Order

The funding order is determined by the type of funding that grant program receives. Grant programs funded by the Tourist Development Tax (the Cultural Grant and the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant) will be ranked together. The Local Community Grant will be ranked separately.

Cultural Grant + Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant

Each Group will be ranked by score from the highest score to the lowest score. Funds will be distributed in the following order:

Group 4; Group 3; Group 2; Group 1

Note: No more than 15% of the total Grant allocation may be awarded to State Partner Organizations

Local Community Grant

Priority funding will be given in this order the highest to the lowest score:

1. Organizations not awarded funding from the Cultural Grant or Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant;
2. Underserved organizations who received TDT funding.
3. The remaining organizations will be ranked in order of score and funding will continue until the funds are exhausted.

For this program, an organization is underserved if it has an annual operating budget of $150,000 or less.

If there are more funds available than the total request, any remaining funds will be reallocated to the next fiscal year.

After Award Approval

Once COCA has received a signed contract from an approved applicant, processing of the grant award begins. The award is paid out in installments after receipt of the signed grant contract.

Grantees who have not executed their grant contract within 90 days of receipt risk forfeiture of grant funds.

Grant Period

All grant funds must be spent between 10/1/2026 and 9/30/2027. There can be only one application per grant program and grant period for funds to benefit any single organization.

Non-Discrimination

By submitting this application, applicants agree they do not discriminate:

- In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.).
- In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29U.S.C. 794) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”) (42 U.S.C. 12101-12213).
- In accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.).
- In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.).
- On any criteria listed in the City of Tallahassee’s Anti- Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policies and Procedures. Should there be a discrimination concern regarding a grantee, a copy of COCA’s Civil Rights Complaint Policy is available upon request.

For further information and copies of the non-discrimination regulations identified above, contact the National Endowment for the Arts’ Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or 202-682-5695 (Voice/T.T.), or visit their website at http://www.arts.gov/.

COCA can also assist with accessibility planning. Email COCA’s accessibility coordinator, Samantha Sumler, at samantha@tallahasseearts.org to arrange a consultation.

Should there be a discrimination concern regarding a grantee, a copy of COCA’s Civil Rights Complaint Policy is available upon request.

Board-Affiliated Vendor Restrictions

Grant funds derived from Tourist Development Tax revenues shall not be used to compensate any vendor in which a member of the recipient's governing board holds a material interest, except when:

(a) The goods or services were obtained through a competitive solicitation as defined in F.S. 287.012(6), and the board member disclosed the conflict consistent with F.S. 112.313(3) and abstained from related decisions; or

(b) The vendor is a documented sole source per F.S. 287.057(3)(c) — available only from a single source due to inability to obtain competition, proprietary technology, or unique capability.

All exceptions require written documentation submitted with grant reporting. This section applies to all TDT-funded grant programs administered by or on behalf of Leon County.

Intellectual Property Rights

It is the responsibility of applicants to hold the rights for any intellectual property (scripts, images, music, etc.) used in programs funded by this grant.

Funding Recognition

COCA grantees are required to include the COCA logo, the combined Leon County-Visit Tallahassee logo, and the City of Tallahassee logo on grant-related visual marketing materials (online, print, and media) developed for the funded program. To download logos, visit https://tallahasseearts.org/apply-for-grant/#logos

Whenever you include online funding recognition (on your organization's website and email marketing for example), the combined Leon County-Visit Tallahassee logo should be linked to www.VisitTallahassee.com the City of Tallahassee logo should be linked to www.Talgov.com, and the COCA logo should be linked to www.TallahasseeArts.org as much as possible. If you are awarded a Local Community Grant, you may also need to include the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) logo. Grant-related marketing materials MUST be submitted to Communications & Marketing Manager, Samantha Sumler, at samantha@tallahasseearts.org for approval prior to the publication, dissemination, or release of marketing materials.

Grantees are encouraged to submit their marketing materials before a new fiscal year begins, as they may be able to get annual approval for certain types of collateral (such as posters or emails), if the subsequent logo use is identical.

Please note: Grantees that have been funded for the current fiscal year and anticipate funding for the subsequent fiscal year are encouraged to continue following the recognition policy described above when promoting their upcoming season or programs for a new fiscal year. Logo usage is necessary when recognizing support of sponsors and should appear on most, if not all, marketing materials.

Wherever other sponsors for your grant program are included, COCA, Leon County-Visit Tallahassee, the City of Tallahassee, and when applicable, the National Endowment for the Arts logos should also be included. For ease of use, a "combination logo" of COCA/City/County/Visit Tallahassee may be used on all print media. However, the combination logo may not be used for online funding recognition, as online funding recognition must include individual logos with hyperlinks to the appropriate agency.

If COCA notifies a grantee of a failure to properly acknowledge COCA, Leon County-Visit Tallahassee, City of Tallahassee, and when applicable, the National Endowment for the Arts, in any of their grant-related marketing/promotional materials during the grant cycle, and the grantee fails to correct the issue, that grantee will have 5 points deducted from the next grant application the organization submits to COCA. Our government partners are dedicated to supporting worthwhile local events through grant programs and other promotional opportunities but reserve the right to reduce or eliminate grant funding for organizations that do not comply with grant recognition policies.

Grantees are required to submit copies of proof of grant acknowledgment at the time of the final report.

Changes to Programs

Grant funds may be used only for those programs or purposes specified in the application, reviewed by the grant panel, and approved by the COCA Board and (if applicable) the Tourism Development Council (TDC). Any significant changes in a grantee organization or its programs (i.e., budget, schedule, scope, personnel, etc.) must be submitted as a proposed amendment at the time the changes take place, and approved in advance in writing to COCA, before grant funds may be utilized by grantee. Contact the Grants Manager at summer@tallahasseearts.org to request an amendment form.

Grant Reports

Each grant recipient will be required to submit one interim report and one final report of all funds disbursed to their organization using forms located in the Submittable platform. The report will include Programming Documentation, Expenditure Log, and, upon request, Proof of Payment. The report will also include proof of Logo Recognition. Grantees are also required to report the estimated number of visitors or potential visitors served by the

project or program. See section “Grant Programs Calendar” for specific deadlines. Grant Report Forms will be completed in COCA’s online grant portal – https://tallahasseearts.submittable.com/

An applicant must demonstrate that they:

- implemented the program(s) for which they received funding.
- spent the grant funds on allowable expenses and as indicated in their application.
- spent all grant funds within the grant activity period.

Failure to do so, or failure to do so in a timely manner, will require the applicant to fully repay any funds received and become ineligible for future funding.

Grantees who fail to submit reports at the appropriate deadline may be ineligible for the following grant cycle of the Cultural Grant, Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant and/or Local Community Grant.

In extreme/unusual circumstances, an organization may request an extension from COCA. However, an extension will delay any grant funds awarded in the following fiscal year.