

## Hillsborough County Tourist Development Council Announces Availability of Funding, FY 2018 – FY 2019

The Hillsborough County Tourist Development Council is seeking new partners and projects for its three visitor related programs funded by the Tourist Development Tax. It will receive applications for funding from government and not-for-profit corporations to assist with tourism promotion activities in Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019 (starting October 1, 2017). Applications are due on or before Monday, **January 23, 2017, no later than 4 p.m. at the Economic Development Department, 601 E. Kennedy Boulevard, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, Tampa, Florida. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted nor evaluated.**

The three major programs for which applications are sought, in order to address basic elements of the visitor-based tourism economy, and complement core visitor initiatives with the leisure traveler, convention and meeting delegates, and the sports event traveler:

1. **Visitor Experience (VE) Program** supports activities that inform, direct, educate and provide a safety element to the visitor to increase the rate of return visits and the impact of word of mouth influence on family and friends to travel to our destination. Small scale initiatives that can enhance a visitor's experience may include: design, printing and distribution of brochures; minor signage particularly assisting visitors in wayfinding or place designation; and walking/biking/blue way trails/maps and related guides (printed/online/ mobile).
2. **Festivals and Events Program (Festivals)** is a sponsorship initiative that complements private and corporate support garnered for the festival or event. The festivals and events should have a broad-based appeal or by tapping a niche/specialty market at the start, develop into a broader one. Requests may be for multi-year (up to a five-year engagement cycle) or one-time or occasional financial support.
3. **Out-of-Area Marketing Co-Operative (Co-op) Program** is limited to purchased media (print, online, mobile, broadcast (TV and radio), digital, OOH (Out-Of-Home), etc.) placements that are targeted outside and beyond the Tampa-St. Petersburg (Sarasota), Florida Designated Market Area (FL DMA 539, which includes Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Manatee, Sarasota, Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties). The intent is to generate overnight lodging stays and not to promote within the local drive market.

The application cycle is open to new partners and projects that can perform within the criteria and overall objectives of these three programs. Current partners involved in these three programs that are receiving funding through the FY17 period do not need to re-apply if there program scope of work and funding needs will not change. If a current funded partner is proposing changes in work scope and changes in budget then they will be required to make application for such changes. In the event that a current funded partner no longer wants to be considered for funding they need to notify the County of such.

Independently the TDC and the BOCC have committed to a funding formula that addresses independently from this process the funding of the operations of the Tampa Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau (Tampa Bay CVB/Visit Tampa Bay), the Tampa Bay Sports Commission, capital improvements to the City of Tampa Convention Center (TCC), and ongoing debt service support to the Plant City Stadium and the TCC.

Applications and additional details on the three programs are available on line at, see link below.  
[HCFLGov.net/businesses/economic-development/tourism-development/how-to-get-tourism-tax-funding](http://HCFLGov.net/businesses/economic-development/tourism-development/how-to-get-tourism-tax-funding)

For more information, contact Marilyn Hett with the Economic Development Department at [HettM@HCFLGov.net](mailto:HettM@HCFLGov.net) or call (813) 272-6212.