

Summary of Fiscal Year 2025 Recommended Changes

1) Require 50% of the grant funds to be used towards marketing

- Previously, permissible expenses included both programmatic expenses and marketing expenses. This has not changed; however, now there is a set proportion of the grant that shall be required to be used towards marketing expenses.
- There has been a new eligibility requirement added:
 - Applicant may request funds for **both marketing and programming**.
 - At least 50% of the funds must go towards marketing expenses.
 - The other 50% can be used for programming expenses.

2) Streamline metrics for artistic/cultural purpose and tourism impact

- **Artistic/cultural purpose:** Previously, there were 4 possible selections in this category. This has been narrowed to 3 options:
 - At least 80% of survey respondents will “strongly agree” or “agree” that our offering was a meaningful artistic and/or cultural experience. An analysis of survey responses will be provided with the final report.
 - At least 25% of our performances will have nationally or internationally acclaimed performers of the highest professional quality. Final report will include biographies for these performers.
 - Our TDC/A project will garner at least two reviews or feature stories in regional or national media outlets. Final report will include these stories.
- **Tourism impact:** Previously, there were 5 options in this category. This has been narrowed to 2 options:
 - Our organization will collaborate with at least two hotels to draw visitors to the area. Final report will document the results of our collaboration.
 - At least 30% of tourists responding to a survey will indicate that our marketing attracted them to the TDC/A project. Final Report will include types of marketing strategies that brought tourists to their offerings.

3) Add a requirement for a visitor survey to collect attendee data, including lodging information

- One additional requirement of grantees has been added. Organizations unable to collect this information will not be eligible for funding
- Applicant must be able to report on tourism statistics by meeting the following requirement:
 - We will conduct a survey that will be sent to at least 25% of our ticket buyers or attendees with the following questions. We will report on the answers and survey completion rate in the final report:
 - For out-of-county residents:
 - During your visit to the area, did you stay in paid lodging (i.e. a hotel, AirBnB, VRBO, condo rental for less than six months, etc.)?
 - Are you a part-time resident of Sarasota County?
 - If yes, how many months per year do you spend in Sarasota County?
 - For in-county residents:

- When you attended this show/performance/exhibition, did you bring any out-of-county residents with you?
- If so, where were they from? (choice of: Manatee County, other Florida county, out of state, out of country)
- Are you a part-time resident of Sarasota County?
- If yes, how many months per year do you spend in Sarasota County?

4) Add a point of entry or ticket sale requirement for grant eligibility

- There is a new eligibility requirement added:
 - In order to accurately collect attendance numbers and collect visitor information, projects must have a point of entry where attendance can be tracked (i.e. ticket sale, registration form, point of entry at a door, fence, or other barrier).

5) Process no more than two reimbursement requests per grant award

- Previously, up to three reimbursements were allowed. Reducing this number helps to diminish some of the administrative burden on county staff.

6) Create a more robust scoring rubric to evaluate grant applications

- In previous cycles, applications were scored in three categories:
 - Artistic/Cultural Purpose (8 points)
 - Tourism Impact (8 points)
 - Administrative Competence (4 points)
- We've updated the scoring rubric (see pages 9-11 in the guidelines):
 - Assigned specific point values to specific questions
 - Updated the rubric to a 100-point scale instead of a 20-point scale.
 - Weighted tourism appeal (50 points) heavier than artistic/cultural purpose (30 points)

7) Evaluate and restructure the grant review panel

- In previous years, the grant panel consisted of 7-9 members accepted to the panel by an open application process.
- We are recommending a change to structure the panel to the following makeup:
 - 7-9 members of the following composition

#	Role	How they are selected
1	Tourism/Marketing Representative	Staff or Board representative of Visit Sarasota County a representative nominated by VSC
2	Tourism Representative	Member of the Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA) OR a local hotelier OR a representative nominated by one of these entities
3	Marketing Representative	Member of the Central West Coast Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association OR a representative from a local marketing firm OR a representative nominated by one of these groups

4	Finance Representative	A CPA, CFO, or a representative nominated by a local CPA firm
5	South Sarasota County Representative	Lives in South County, south of Blackburn Point Road. Applications accepted annually.
6	Arts Representative	Applications accepted annually.
7	Arts Representative	Applications accepted annually.
8	Member At-Large	Applications accepted annually.
9	Member At-Large	Applications accepted annually.

8) Eliminate the Grant Policy Committee

- In previous years, the Grant Policy Committee (GPC) was convened as a committee of the Arts and Cultural Alliance to oversee any policy changes to the TDC/A program and to ensure said policy were followed throughout the grantmaking process.
- This committee has been dissolved and these responsibilities for policy development and adherence to policy will fall to ACA staff.