

MSTU Special Projects Funding Guidelines

Introduction and Purpose

The Pinellas County Unincorporated Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) is an ad valorem tax adopted by the Board of County Commissioners as authorized by the Florida Constitution and Florida Statutes that allow for the separate taxation of the unincorporated area of the County to enable the provision of municipal services within unincorporated areas of the County similar to the services provided by cities. A small portion of the County Unincorporated MSTU funds, called special project awards, have been budgeted by the Board of County Commissioners to support culture, recreation, and community enhancements for residents in unincorporated areas of Pinellas County. We are accepting applications from eligible non-profit organizations who wish to provide these types of projects, according to the following guidelines.

Eligible Projects

MSTU Special Project funding may be awarded for projects by non-profit organizations that enhance Pinellas County's unincorporated communities. All proposed projects must:

- Be located in Unincorporated Pinellas County
- Be a one-time capital expense, or contribute towards a community asset
 - Operating expenses such as salaries, utilities, maintenance, equipment, and non-durable goods would not be eligible projects.
 - The asset should have a useful life of over 5-years
- Align with the Pinellas County Strategic Plan
- NOT have started before the MSTU Special Project funding agreement has been approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the applicant has received the executed agreement

Note: Pursuant to Art. I, Sec. 3 of the Florida Constitution, "No revenue of the state or any political subdivision or agency thereof shall ever be taken from the public treasury directly or indirectly in aid of any church, sect, or religious denomination or in aid of any sectarian institution."

Maximum Award

The maximum funding award available is \$20,000.00 per year per applicant.

Project Period Timeframe The application period will open October 1st and will close December 31st. Applicants may only submit one application per fiscal year.

All awards depend on funding availability and the Board of County Commissioners of County Commissioner's approval.

Projects must be completed, with close-out documentation submitted, within one year of the award. Should extenuating circumstances arise, applicants may submit a written request for extension to County staff for consideration.**How to Apply**

To apply, complete the MSTU Special Projects Funding Application Form.

Please fill out all fields and provide accurate contact information for your organization. You should include three comparative quotes for materials and labor for the proposed project.

County staff will review all applications to make sure all required submission guidelines are met.

Funding Information

- County staff will review the application for completeness and eligibility. If the application is satisfactory, then it will advance for consideration. The Board of County Commissioners will have final approval of all funding awards.
- If approved, the applicant will receive notification of the award.
- Multiple entities will not receive funding for different components of the same project.

Funding Request Payment

- Projects cannot be started until receipt of the executed agreement
- Upon completion of the project, the applicant must submit a project close out packet consisting of:
 - o An invoice to the County from the awarded organization as a request for project payment
 - o Material/vendor proof of payment receipts for all quoted services with detailed line-item descriptions
 - o Before and after photos of the project
- Upon receipt of the project close out form, County staff will schedule a field inspection to verify project close out for acceptance
- Payment may take up to 45 days following acceptance of the project invoice by county staff

Program Disclaimers

The Board of County Commissioners approval does not guarantee payment funding in whole or in part. Pinellas County reserves the right to reject the funding request, in whole or in part, if it is in the best interest of the county. All projects supported by this program are subject to fiscal non-funding which requires termination of any County fiscal obligation if available funds are not budgeted and appropriated for the obligation, and may be discontinued should there not be available funds in a new County fiscal year. Any applicant that fails to follow funding award guidelines for their project may become subject to repayment of funds disbursed under this program and also be ineligible for future funding.