



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 24-0496A, Version: 1

Subject:

Revisions to the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines from the Tourist Development Council.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the revisions to the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines.

- The Elite Event Funding Program provides funding for eligible major events that generate attendees or room nights in the County.
- Recommended revisions were unanimously approved by the Tourist Development Council on March 20, 2024.
- Substantive revisions include:
 - 1.) Renaming program to include Destination Enhancement Events which are category 3-5 events that typically do not meet any room night criteria.
 - 2.) Board of County Commissioners (Board) will approve a total maximum funding amount for Destination Enhancement Events.
 - 3.) Convention and Visitors Bureau staff is authorized to approve Destination Enhancement Events.
 - 4.) Destination Enhancement funding awards will be reported to the Board on the County Administrator's Receipt and File Report.
 - 5.) Destination Enhancement Tourism Promotion Agreements will be approved by the Director of Administrative Services and included in the Purchasing Department's Receipt and File Report.
 - 6.) Destination Enhancement funding cycle will run on a bi-annual basis, subject to funding availability.
 - 7.) Defined "Broadcast" and Broadcast Criteria for category 1 events to include receiving in excess of 100,000 views, in addition to established room night/attendance requirements.
 - 8.) Clarified "Marketing" as pre-event expenditures and "Sponsorship" as on-site brand exposure.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Summary:

With Board approval, the revised Guidelines to administer the Elite Event and Destination Enhancement Funding Program will commence with the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) application and funding cycle.

Background Information:

The Elite Event Funding Program is one of the marketing programs administered by CVB staff, The

original Guidelines were approved by the Board on February 7, 2012, and amended on January 29, 2013, April 15, 2014, December 12, 2017, December 11, 2018, March 10, 2020, and March 8, 2022.

Over the past five years, applications received for category 3-5 events have increased by approximately 73.3%, or from 15 to 26. Funding for category 3-5 ranges from “up to” \$15,000.00 for a category 5 event to a maximum of \$25,000.00 for a category 3 event. Renaming these events as Destination Enhancement (DE) Events and moving them to a bi-annual funding cycle will allow the CVB to 1) be more selective in the review process to ensure only the best events receive funding, 2) delineate those events that are truly “Elite” Events, and 3) ensure the Elite Event Funding Program remains within the \$2.0 million cap authorized by the Tourist Development Plan.

On March 20, 2024, during the regular scheduled meeting, CVB staff presented the proposed Guideline revisions to the TDC which included the following:

- 1) Renaming program to include Destination Enhancement Events which are category 3-5 events that typically do not meet any room night criteria.
- 2) Board will approve a total maximum funding amount for DE Events.
- 3) CVB staff is authorized to approve Destination Enhancement Events.
- 4) DE funding awards will be reported to the Board on the County Administrator’s Receipt and File Report.
- 5) DE Tourism Promotion Agreements will be approved by the Director of Administrative Services and included in the Purchasing Department’s Receipt and File Report.
- 6) DE funding cycle will run on a bi-annual basis subject to funding availability.
- 7) Defined “Broadcast” and Broadcast Criteria for category 1 events to include receiving in excess of 100,000 views, in addition to established room night/attendance requirements.
- 8) Clarified “Marketing” as pre-event expenditures and “Sponsorship” as on-site brand exposure.

The TDC was very supportive of the changes and unanimously approved the revised Guidelines. If approved by the Board, the revised Guidelines will become effective in the upcoming FY25 funding cycle.

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Staff Member Responsible:

Brian Lowack, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council

Attachments:

Elite Event Funding Guidelines (redline version)

Elite Event Funding Guidelines (clean version)