

## GRANT PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

Under contract with Leon County and the City of Tallahassee, COCA manages two community grant programs that typically distribute over \$1 million dollars annually to arts and cultural organizations that contribute significantly to the quality of life and tourism impact in Tallahassee and Leon County.

The Cultural Grant Program and the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Program were developed by COCA through community task forces and the guidelines for each program are reviewed each year. A diverse community volunteer panel reviews applications and makes funding recommendations in a rigorous and highly accountable process. Those volunteers change every year ensuring an objective perspective and limiting bias.

Funding for COCA's grant programs comes from the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) funds. Grants funded with TDT funds must meet the requirements as set forth in the Florida Statute enacting the tourism tax.

COCA's contract with the City and the County provides all the planning, management, and execution of the grant program, including:

- Workshops to provide instruction on tools for successfully completing the grant process.
- Individual consultations with applicants as they complete their applications over a two-month period.
- Recruitment and training of citizen review panelists.
- Disbursement of grant payments to each grantee
- Reviews and evaluation of interim and final reports on the use of funding.
- Annual evaluation and input meeting with panelists, applicants, and interested citizens to examine issues and make recommendations for a strong and fair grant process.

## Purpose of COCA's Grant Programs

The mission of COCA's **Cultural Grant Program** is to serve and support the community of non-profit arts and cultural organizations within Tallahassee and Leon County through program funding which enhances the quality of life as well as the tourism and economic development of our community. An applicant's programming must contribute to the tourism development of Leon County in accordance with Florida Statute 125.0104. Volunteer citizen panelists are recruited each year to review and score grant applications and make recommendations for funding. Eligible organizations must be a 501c3 and have been providing arts or cultural programming in their discipline for at least three complete fiscal years. Recipients of tourist development tax revenue will have demonstrated efforts to enhance Leon County's tourism impact. COCA offers free technical reviews, consultations, and grant writing workshops to assist applicants throughout the grant process.

The **Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Program** is designed to increase the visibility and awareness of Leon County's arts and cultural organizations and their programming, to those outside of the County. Marketing initiatives should highlight our vibrant and diverse cultural community and seek to attract visitors. For the purposes of this grant, organizations will need to specify marketing and promotional initiatives which use media outlets or strategies that are not primarily focused on the local Tallahassee/Leon County market. Use of these grant funds should raise the overall awareness of Leon County as a desirable place to visit. Applicants must establish quantifiable objectives and conduct a program evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Examples of eligible opportunities may include, but are not limited to: media placement and production, 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 work marketing to tourists).

Though the **Cultural Facilities Matching Grant Program** has sunset, COCA's administrative work continues to support grantees who are completing their projects. The grant provides funding to assist in the construction, renovation, and equipping of cultural facilities. A Cultural Facility is building that shall be used primarily for the programming, production, presentation, exhibition, or any combination of the above functions of any of the arts and cultural disciplines including, but perhaps not limited to: music, dance, theater, creative writing, literature, architecture, painting, sculpture, folk arts, photography, crafts, media arts, visual arts, programs of museums, historical sites, and historical/heritage facilities.

The intent of this grant program is capital improvement that, for the purposes of this application, is defined as an addition or renovation of a permanent structural improvement or the restoration of some aspect of a property that will either enhance the property's overall value or increases its useful life.

COCA also administers the annual **Arts Education Grant Program** for local arts teachers. See the Arts Education Overview to learn more about that program.