



# SPORTS TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM 2026 - 2027

# **PENSACOLA SPORTS SPORTS TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Guidelines for Reimbursement
- B. Visitor Tracking Form
- C. Post-Event Form

Should you have any questions about any part of the grant funding process, please do not hesitate to call me at Pensacola Sports, and thank you for your interest in sports in our area.

Laura McCullers, Director of Operations  
Pensacola Sports 850.434.2800 | 850.454.7387  
[lmccullers@pensacolasports.org](mailto:lmccullers@pensacolasports.org)

## I. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

The Escambia County Tourist Development Council (TDC) was created pursuant to the State of Florida Local Option Tourist Development Act and Escambia County Ordinance Chapter 90, Article II Section 90-31 – 90-64. The TDC guides the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners in the administration of funds collected from a local option tourist development tax (commonly known as the “bed tax”) on occupied transient lodging sales, i.e. hotels/motels, campgrounds, and condominiums. The funds are designated to promote Escambia County as a preferred visitor destination with emphasis on the shoulder season of late August through May.

Through Pensacola Sports, the TDC allocates funds from its annual budget to a grant program for local groups and organizations that coordinate events with a demonstrated history of visitor impact or significant potential to draw visitors to the area. The Grant Fund is administered by Pensacola Sports. Funds must be used in accordance of the provisions of Florida Statutes 125.0104 and 129.09 to ensure proper oversight and accountability.

Funding for events and projects are NOT always available due to pre-existing funding commitments and changing TDT collections from year to year. This application is an evaluation tool only, and despite availability of funds at any given time, Pensacola Sports is not obligated to fund any event at any time. Pensacola Sports has the right to terminate an awarded grant due to unavailable funds by written notice.

A “Sports Tourism Event” shall be defined as “a new or existing organized sports event which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and in which public interest is manifested.” For the purpose of this grant program, the public interest should extend to Escambia County residents and to those living outside Escambia who would consider visiting the destination and staying overnight to observe or participate.

Direct sales, advertising, or marketing programs that are either supplemental to, or are in conflict with Pensacola Sports, Visit Pensacola, Arts Culture Entertainment (ACE), or the Escambia County Tourist Development Council's direct sales, advertising, or marketing programs do not qualify as a special event.

Each application will be evaluated against applicable state and local statutes, established criteria, and historic precedent. The number and extent of these grants are dependent upon the availability of designated funds and specific allocations.

## II. GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- A. One application will be accepted per event, per fiscal year. **Grant applications MUST be submitted before the following dates based on the event start date.** Late applications will NOT be considered by the grant committee (with exception to pop-up events or unique circumstances at the committees discretion). Early application submissions are encouraged.

Due by October 10: Events held between January 1 and March 31

Due by January 10: Events held between April 1 and June 30

Due by April 10: Events held between July 1 and September 30

Due by July 10: Events held between October 1 and December 31

- B. Grant funds are intended to supplement the sponsoring organization’s budget.
- C. Funding is intended to support marketing and promotional efforts, and venue/site expenses.
- D. Funding is not intended to support administrative costs or non- public events.
- E. Housing/lodging secured for the event must be located within Escambia County.

- F. Applicant must provide a current IRS Form W-9.
- G. Proof of liability insurance must be provided by the host organization in the amount of \$1 million. Pensacola Sports must be named as additionally insured on policies at least 14 days prior to event.
- H. A completed Post-Event Report (ATTACHMENT C) must be submitted within 60 days after the event. The report must include tracking statistics regarding out-of-town visitors and their overall impact on the local economy, particularly on transient lodging facilities and occupancy. Failure to submit a complete Post-Event Report within 60 days after the event, will result in grant award disqualification, unless the grant committee approved an extension for a special circumstance. If the event occurs near the end of the fiscal year request for reimbursement must be received by September 30.
- I. Funding shall be provided as reimbursement for approved actual expenditures upon completion of the event. **Proof of payment MUST be provided.** Proof of payment may be submitted in the form of a "paid" vendor credit card receipt or check. If a check is used, a copy of both the front and back of cleared check must be provided. If a credit card is used, a credit card statement that shows the EFT of payment must be provided. All expenses provided for reimbursement must include the vendor invoice matching the amount shown in proof of payment. **Cash receipts WILL NOT be accepted for reimbursements.**
- J. Funds granted will be subject to audit by the Escambia County, Pensacola Sports auditor, or another outside auditor as directed by Escambia County or Pensacola Sports.
- K. Pensacola Sports may choose to lend assistance or administer grant funds approved in the form of advertising, public relations, promotions or research programs through its respective agency of record on behalf of the applicant.
- L. Recognition of the Escambia County Tourist Development Council, Pensacola Sports, and/or Visit Pensacola must be included where appropriate on all printed material and the organization's web site and referred to in public relations activities. A camera-ready logo will be provided. **All printed materials with the Pensacola Sports logo and/or Visit Pensacola logo must be approved before use and presented with Post-Event Report.**
- M. As part of the terms and conditions of this grant, it is essential that all promotional materials and online content associated with the grant funded event include a clear and visible promotion of Escambia County hotels. This requirement aligns with the intent of the Tourist Development Tax to bolster tourism and hospitality within our county. **In all digital content, please include "for other accommodations in Escambia County, visit [visitpensacola.com/places-to-stay/](http://visitpensacola.com/places-to-stay/)."** This link may be included with event host or event partner hotel(s).
- N. **Allowable expenses per state and local statutes include the following:** Promotion, marketing and programming expenses, paid advertising, and media buys, production and technical expenses, site fees/costs (contract help, rentals, insurance) rights fees, sanction fees, non-monetary awards and travel expenses (if approved by Pensacola Sports in advance), lodging in an Escambia County property, meals for participants and officials.
- O. **Disallowable expenses:** General and administrative expenses, cash expenses, building, renovating and/or remodeling expenses, debts incurred prior to grant requests, programs which solicit advertising or sponsorships, hospitality or social functions where alcohol is served.

### III. FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

The intent of the Sports Tourism Grant Program is to provide funding assistance for events that attract overnight visitors to Escambia County impacting the commercial lodging industry, hotels/motels, campgrounds, condominiums, VRBOs and Air BNBs as well as restaurants, retail establishments and other businesses. To be considered for funding, the following criteria have been established:

- ° Each application must include a signed Certification and Compliance page.
- " Event must have legitimate/proven potential to bring or have past history of bringing out-of-town visitors who occupy qualifying accommodations.
- # Applicant must provide a detailed marketing/promotions plan.
- ) Applicant must provide a detailed event budget.
- The event must promote and/or use commercial lodging establishments within Escambia County.
- 7 Grant recipient must provide proof of Liability Insurance Coverage of at least \$1 million dollars and name Pensacola Sports as additionally insured.

#### **IV. RATING CRITERIA AND PROCESS** *(subject to change)*

Each grant application will be reviewed to ensure that all required materials have been supplied. Failure to supply all the required materials may result in disqualification. Each application will be scored on a 100-point scale based on the following:

##### **Total Room Nights Produced up to 40 pts**

- More than 3,000 room nights are needed to score 40 pts in this category
- 2,001-3,000 room nights scores up to 30 pts.
- 1,001 -2,000 room nights scores up to 25 pts.
- 501-1,000 room nights scores up to 20 pts.
- 201-500 room nights score up to 15 pts.
- 100 -200 room nights scores up to 10 pts.
- Less than 100 room nights score up to 5 pts.

##### **Total Direct Economic Impact up to 30 pts**

- \$1,000,000 in direct economic impact is needed to score 30 pts.
- \$500,001 - \$999,999 scores 25 pts.
- \$250,001 - \$500,000 scores 20 pts.
- \$100,000 - \$250,000 scores 15 pts.
- Less than \$100,000 in direct economic impact scores 5 pts.

##### **Event date(s) up to 10 pts**

- 10 pts for events in December -January
- 10 pts for events in November or February
- 6 pts for events in September or October
- 4 pts for events in April or August
- 2 pts for events in March or May
- 0 pts for events in June and July

##### **Image Enhancement up to 10 pts**

- 3 pts for stability of Local Organizing Committee
- 2 pts each for national publicity, established track record and diversity of location
- 1 pt for positive publicity

##### **Marketing Plan/Intangibles up to 10 pts**

- 3 pts for marketing reach outside the area
- 2 pts each for video broadcast/web-streaming and social media/digital campaign
- 1 pt each for spin-off opportunities, co-promotion, and reaching the target audience

## V. GRANT REQUEST FUNDING LEVELS

The following table reflects the level of funding possible based on the event's total score:

30 - 39 pts	\$0 - \$5,000
40 - 49 pts	\$5,000 - \$7,500
50 - 59 pts	\$7,500 - \$10,000
60 - 69 pts	\$10,000 - \$12,500
70 + pts	\$12,500 +

**The estimated number of room nights does not guarantee the level of funding at which the event may be approved. The final funding recommendation will be based on Pensacola Sports grant committee's discretion and available funding levels. Example: if Pensacola Sports believes the event has overstated the potential room nights, they have the right to place the application in a lower funding category.**

## VI. VISITOR TRACKING

In order to assess the impact of each event on the lodging industry, the **importance of tracking the number of overnight visitors** attending the event is a priority.

Should your event use a registration procedure, we encourage you to utilize the attached "Visitor Tracking Form" (**ATTACHMENT B**) or a similar document to gather the required information or use [pensacolasports.org/accommodations-survey/](https://pensacolasports.org/accommodations-survey/)

Each participant/group must include their home zip code, hotel/condo (specify property address/location) in which they are residing, number of rooms secured, number of days, and the number of guests staying in each room, specific with address and contact if available.

Following the event, Pensacola Sports reserves the right to conduct a post audit of information presented on the Post-Event Report (**ATTACHMENT C**). All lodging accommodations listed may be contacted to confirm the number of room nights generated for the event. **Not tracking event rooms and/or visitors or providing misleading or false information can and will void event funding and future grant funding.**

## VII. CONCLUSION

Applicants are not to contact members of the Tourist Development Council (TDC), The Pensacola Sports Grant Committee, or Pensacola Sports Board of Directors during the review process. Please submit the attached application form and Certification and Compliance Statement to:

Pensacola Sports  
Sports Tourism Grant Program  
Attn: Laura McCullers  
1000 College Blvd, Bldg 24  
Pensacola FL 32504  
[lmccullers@pensacolasports.org](mailto:lmccullers@pensacolasports.org)

## VIII. FLORIDA SPORTS FOUNDATION GRANT PROGRAM

The Florida Sports Foundation (FSF) Grant Programs are designed to assist communities and host organizations in attracting sports events, which will generate significant out-of-state economic impact for the state of Florida. The Foundation's Board of Directors awards grants on a quarterly basis, and places emphasis on out of-state economic impact, return on investment, community support and image value to the state. Events that will be considered for grant funding include amateur events, collegiate events, or professional all-star games and championships, or other categories approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors.

Pensacola Sports is an approved FSF partner/sports commission.

If you are an event holder interested in applying for this grant in addition to the Pensacola Sports Grant, please contact Laura McCullers, [lmccullers@pensacolasports.org](mailto:lmccullers@pensacolasports.org).

If event qualifications are met, Pensacola Sports will submit your FSF grant application on your behalf. **A Sports Tourism Event Grant application MUST be completed 30 days in advance of the Pensacola Sports grant deadlines (detailed below) for Pensacola Sports to submit an FSF Grant Application on behalf of your event.**

Event information provided on your Sports Tourism Grant Application will be used to apply for the FSF grant program.

Pensacola Sports must submit FSF grant applications in the designated quarter based on the event start date. In the case that an event occurs in one quarter and ends in another, you will apply in the quarter which the event starts.

- 1) June 10 –These events must be held between October 1 and December 31.
- 2) September 10 –These events must be held between January 1 and March 31.
- 3) December 10 –These events must be held between April 1 and June 30.
- 4) March 10 –These events must be held between July 1 and September 30.

## IX. Pensacola Sports Grant Application

### 1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Organization name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mission Statement:

Organization contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: ☐ Independently chartered ☐ Private Not for Profit ☐ Other, describe:

Sporting event(s) (and dates) hosted by the organization:

### 2. EVENT INFORMATION

a. Event Title: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Event Website: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Description of event (**format, qualifying criteria, ages, # of teams etc.**):

e. Sport(s) involved: \_\_\_\_\_

f. Location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

g. Proposed facility(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

h. Event owner/Sanctioning body: \_\_\_\_\_

i. Event owner contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

j. Event director(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

k. Event history (*most recent, regardless of location*):

Previous location/date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name/phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Out-of-town participants: \_\_\_\_\_ Out-of-town spectators: \_\_\_\_\_

Total hotel room nights: \_\_\_\_\_

l. Does your organization require background checks for staff/volunteers?      Yes      No

Is your organization Safe Sport certified?      Yes      No



### 3. GRANT REQUEST

- a. **Amount of grant requested:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Have you applied for a Visit Pensacola, ACE, or Downtown Improvement Board Grant for this event? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No  
*The event may NOT eligible for grant funding if an application has been submitted to Visit Pensacola for the same event.*
- c. Have you received support from Pensacola Sports for this event in the past?(Please list dates, grant amounts awarded, and any other support provided):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Intended use of grant funds, if awarded (must be allowable expenses listed on page 4 & 11):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e. Would you like to request any additional support? (**check all that apply**):  
Brochure or program design and/or printing: Yes\_\_\_\_\_
- Secure hotels: Yes\_\_\_\_
- Promotion through social media or other marketing assistance: Yes\_\_\_\_\_
- This support is not in addition to grant amount; this cost may be deducted from total grant award.*

### 4. ECONOMIC IMPACT/PARTICIPATION PROJECTIONS

- a. Total expected participants (Competitors, coaches, trainers, officials, etc.)
- |       |                  |              |
|-------|------------------|--------------|
| ADULT | out-of-town_____ | in-town_____ |
| YOUTH | out-of-town_____ | in-town_____ |
- b. Total expected spectators (fans, family, friends, etc.)
- |       |                  |              |
|-------|------------------|--------------|
| ADULT | out-of-town_____ | in-town_____ |
| YOUTH | out-of-town_____ | in-town_____ |
- c. Hotel rooms used per night:\_\_\_\_\_ Total nights of event:\_\_\_\_\_
- TOTAL ROOM NIGHTS (*hotel rooms per night x nights of event*):\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Is this an elimination tournament/event?
- e. Have any room blocks been secured? If yes, how many and at which properties?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- f. Please explain how you plan to document actual room nights generated from your event?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 5. TOTAL EVENT BUDGET

Please complete the following budget summaries: (provide attached lists as necessary to complete information) In-kind contributions are donations of goods or services - instead of cash.

Has your event or organization received or requested any public funding from the city, county, state or other organizations receiving public funds?

PROJECTED INCOME	CASH	IN-KIND
Entry Fees (participants)		
Admissions (spectators)		
Grants*		
Sponsorships**		
Sales (Merchandise, etc.)		
Public Funding Support		
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		
PROJECTED EXPENSES	CASH	IN-KIND
Housing		
Food		
Sanction Fees		
Site Fees		
Officials/Umpires		
Awards		
Rentals/Equipment		
Marketing/Advertising		
Administrative Costs		
Other Expenses (explain below)		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		

**\* Do not include the Pensacola Sports grant request**

**\*\* Please provide summary of sponsors including the amount of cash and/or in-kind contribution (an attached list may be provided with grant application):**

If other expenses, please provide detail of these expenses:

**NOTE:** If a grant is awarded, payment/reimbursement occurs after the event by invoicing Pensacola Sports for the grant amount and submitting evidence of paid EFT payment or **cleared** checks for those expenses equal to or greater than the amount of the Grant. All expenses must be allowable expenses in accordance with the Pensacola Sports' current appropriations agreement with Visit Pensacola.

**Allowable Expenses:** promotion, marketing, and programming, paid advertising and media buys, production and technical expenses, site fees/costs (contract help, rentals, insurance) rights fees, sanction fees, nonmonetary awards, travel (if approved by Pensacola Sports in advance).

**Disallowable Expenses:** general and administrative expenses, debts incurred prior to the grant, programs which solicit advertising, hospitality, or social functions where alcohol is served.

**Incomplete applications:** Incomplete applications are subject to delays and or complete dismissal. **Inaccurate**

**applications:** Applications with false, inaccurate, or overstated information are subject to loss of funding.

**Performance:** The actual performance of the event in accordance with this application will be reviewed for results

**6. DETAIL MARKETING PLAN FOR EVENT** – Please include all the following marketing strategies that apply (plan may also be attached to grant application). **Make sure to include and notes any out-of-market strategies.** Use of Pensacola Sports and/or Visit Pensacola logo must be approved in advance.

Print advertising or direct mail:

Online advertising (include any social media outreach and targeted audience):

Broadcast ads (radio or television):

Email campaigns:

Promotion at other events/conferences:

Other:

How will Pensacola Sports and Visit Pensacola be recognized?

How will the Pensacola Area be marketed to participants and spectators?

## CERTIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENT



### APPLICANT:

I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that I have read the Grant Guidelines of the Pensacola Sports Tourism Event Grant Program and will abide by all legal, financial, and reporting requirements as a condition of receiving grant funds from Pensacola Sports, by way of Escambia County. If a specific event is identified in the Grant Award letter, I understand that proof of insurance as noted in the Guidelines must be provided before the event specified takes place; failure to do so will result in grant funds being withheld.

I attest that I have read and understand all components and funding process related to this Grant Application, and that, if funded, the organization listed here will comply with all requirements and guidelines listed therein. I understand that should this grant be approved; the funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis. I also agree that my electronic signature is the legal equivalent of my manual signature on this application.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Current organization W-9 form is included with grant application: YES

*Reminder that proof of liability insurance must be provided at least 14 days prior to the event.*

**Add your event to the Pensacola Sports and Visit Pensacola website community calendars:**

<https://www.visitpensacola.com/events/submit-an-event/>

Please sign and return the Application and the Certification & Compliance Page to:

Email to Laura McCullers, [lmccullers@pensacolasports.org](mailto:lmccullers@pensacolasports.org)

Pensacola Sports  
Sports Tourism Grant Program  
1000 College Blvd, Bldg 24  
Pensacola, FL 32504

## GRANT REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES/CHECKLIST

Failure to submit a complete Post-Event Report within 60 days after the event, will result in grant award disqualification, unless the grant committee approved an extension for a special circumstance. If the event occurs near the end of the fiscal year request for reimbursement must be received by September 30.

Have your post-event report in order, invoice to Pensacola Sports, documentation of expenses and proof of payment, contracts, copies of ads or merchandise. Use single sided copies only, color copies if applicable. Any screen shots/magazines/programs used for backup will need single side only color copies.

Must show how Escambia County/Pensacola was recognized/promoted with the event; Pensacola Sports and Visit Pensacola logos displayed and Pensacola messaging to event participants.

Must have detailed invoices, not just an order or a quote, it must be an invoice.

Must include copy of cleared checks, front and back.

If paid by a credit card, need credit card statement, and copy of cleared check paid to the credit card company.

Provide copies of any contracts, agreements and or applications for which you are asking reimbursement.

For lodging expense, must have detailed invoice (folio sheet) showing ALL fees per night including all taxes. Must have a list of names and affiliates for each room. Lodging details should include full name of lodging location i.e. Holiday Inn Express Downtown, address, and contact, if available.

CASH receipts are not reimbursable.

Be sure all copies are legible and do not copy checks on top of an invoice.

DO NOT use staples or print double sided.

Pensacola Sports reserves the right to request additional information.

Please note that per state statute, Pensacola Sports is subject to Public Record Law. Thereby your submission, reimbursement and back up to/from Pensacola Sports are subject to Public Records Requests.

All documents are subject to applicable statute of limitations. Currently 5 years after submittal.

## PENSACOLA SPORTS VISITOR TRACKING FORM

Zip Code	Participant/ Group Name	# Youth in Party	# Adults in Party	Full Name of Hotel, Address, & Contact	# Rooms	# Nights

**This form is to be used at registration desk and/or event check-in.**

**Online visitor surveys may also be completed here:**

**<https://pensacolasports.org/accommodations-survey/>**

## POST - EVENT REPORT

**To be reimbursed, please submit the following:**

Completed Post-Event Report (Attachment C).

An invoice from your organization to Pensacola Sports for payment of awarded grant amount.

Valid invoice(s) or receipts for allowable expenses.

Copy of proof of payments such as cleared check record showing front and back of checks, or bank statements recording electronic funds transfer.

Number of visitors calculated with backup documentation (registration lists, rosters, surveys).

Number of room nights tracked with backup documentation (ie: hotel letters, surveys).

Copies of marketing or advertising materials, websites showing Visit Pensacola and/or Pensacola Sports logo.

**GRANT INFORMATION**

Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Awarded Grant Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make Check Payable to: \_\_\_\_\_

*Must be same as listed on W-9*

## EXPENSES TO BE REIMBURSED

Itemized expenses to be reimbursed by the Pensacola Sports Tourism Event Grant funds must be allowable and match submitted invoices:

EXPENSE ITEM	AMOUNT
TOTAL:	\$

## VISITORS

Out of town participants: \_\_\_\_\_ (athletes, coaches, officials, event staff)

Local participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Out of Town Spectators: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Spectators: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Attendees: \_\_\_\_\_ (participants+ spectators) both local and out of town

## ROOM NIGHTS

To calculate the total number of room nights, multiply number of rooms by the number of nights for each party/group.

- Unknown or untracked is not acceptable and request for reimbursement will not be processed.
- Please provide explanation if actual room nights are different than what was reported as anticipated room nights on the grant application.

HOTEL PROPERTY/ADDRESS	# ROOM NIGHTS	HOTEL PROPERTY/ADDRESS	# ROOM NIGHTS

*Please attach information such as sign-in sheets or rosters with hometowns/zip codes to support room nights reported.*

## MEDIA/ MARKETING

Add additional sheet that provides a summary of media exposure received (local, regional and national/ print/television and radio) as well as examples of promotional materials (brochures, posters, programs, etc.)

I certify that the above information is complete, true, and accurate to the best of my knowledge .

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Organization) (Date)