



- The official designated Local Arts Agency for Polk County since 2004
  - Recognized by the Board of County Commissioners and the State of Florida
- The designated recipient of the State Specialty Arts Plate funds.
- Represents Polk County non-profit Cultural Arts Organizations (*Cultural Arts Council*) on a local, state and national level.





# **Tourism: Why it's Important to the Arts/Culture/Heritage Grants**

# Grant Funding Source

## Tourism Development Tax \$

- Tourist Development Tax (TDT) = Tax that is collected for overnight stays at hotels/motels/short term rentals
- Florida Statute is clear about how these public funds / tax dollars can be used
- The underlying message throughout this section of law is that they are, specifically and solely, to be used to ***promote tourism.***

# Why Promote Tourism / Cultural Tourism?

- Main Reason: It stimulates our economy/ creates jobs
- Other benefits:
  - Revenues come largely from tourists rather than local residents
  - Tourism revenues are largely credited for the lack of a STATE Income tax in Florida, so it keeps taxes lower for Florida residents

# Tourist Definition (paraphrased)

**Florida Statute (F.S.) provides a two-prong definition of a tourist:**

- Visitor from OUTSIDE the County's boundaries that stays overnight inside Polk.
  - Replenishes the funding source via Tourist Development Tax (TDT) paid for their hotel, Air BnB or other short-term rental
  
- Visitor from outside the county's boundaries that comes into Polk to recreate (with or without an overnight stay - day tripper).
  - Contributes to the local economy through various spends (restaurants, retail, etc.).

# IMPORTANCE: TDT \$ are the funding source for ACH Grants

**Because of the statutory limitations on how these monies can be spent:**

- Develop your programs with thoughtful intent to attract tourists – especially “cultural tourists”
- Write your grant applications in a way that demonstrates you have a strategic plan in place to do so
- If you are submitting in a category that does NOT require out-of-area advertising, you still need to think about how you can draw tourists or enhance Polk’s reputation as a “DESTINATION for the Arts” in order to score well in this process\*\*



**GENERAL Lessons Learned (2018/19)  
and...  
TIPS for better scores!**

# GRANT APPLICATIONS – LESSONS LEARNED

- Read the *Application Guidelines* and carefully review new requirements for this year
- Make sure your submission addresses EVERY bullet & EVERY question on the *Guidelines*!
  - If it wasn't important, we wouldn't ask for it.
  - It's better to show a weak plan than NO PLAN AT ALL!\*

Note: We had at least one applicant last cycle who actually wrote in the narrative that they had NO plan for a particular category. Please don't be THAT applicant!

# LESSONS LEARNED - General

Read the **SCORING guidelines\*** and score (or have someone **ELSE** score) your submission against them.

- Continues to be one of the biggest issues!
- Best way to maximize your points and... **POINTS = \$\$\$**
- During the last cycle (based on MY scores), two applications scored too low for funding -- below 60 points.\*\*
- **Minimum score is 70 points** (next year proposed to be 75 points) –
  - We had a few applicants that scored too low for funding during the last cycle
  - If your 2020 submission scored 75 or below, you probably need to “step up your game” so you’ll be in a more comfortable position moving forward!

# LESSONS LEARNED - General

- **Have someone ELSE proofread your work !!!!**
  - **Typos and missing parts of sentences are very distracting to scorers and reflect negatively on the applicant**
- **Be CAREFUL with cut/paste! Go back and proof your work.** (We've all made this mistake at least once)
  - **Example: one 2020 applicant (victim of cut/paste) said that their event would not be possible w/out funding from the City of Lakeland. (not the source of this funding\*)**



# **Lessons Learned – Tourism/Survey Data**

# Evaluation: Tourism/Survey Data

- **Have a plan for gathering tourism data and include it in your narrative under the evaluation portion.** If your evaluation plan is weak, your score will reflect that.
  - Easier when you have a “gate” and can collect zip code data through ticket sales
  - But...if you don’t have a gate, you still need a solid plan
    - Talk to PAA or other cultural organizations that have held similar events/programs for ideas.

# Evaluation: Tourism/Survey Data

- **Write it up well.** Don't assume scorers can read your mind(s). I assure you, we're not that talented!
  - e.g. One applicant said that in the **PAST**, they had used **aerial photos** to estimate attendance at a large festival...but they never said they would be using that method again for THIS event. If it's not stated, we have to assume it's not happening.
- **Note:** Aerial photos alone are not extremely accurate for calculating audience size – but they're totally useless for determining TOURISM draw
  - They don't show WHERE attendees came from\*\*
  - Find a legitimate way to get tourism data – spot surveys by volunteers, out of state license tag tallies, etc.

# Evaluation: Tourism/Survey Data

- Demonstrating tourism draw: If you **HAVE** ***attendance/tourism data from past years*** ...PLEASE also mention it in your narrative. Don't make the scorers have to dig for / analyze it.
- Likewise if your narrative says it's "attached," please be sure to **ATTACH** it. There were some missing this past cycle.
- Several organizations did a great job using documented historical tourism draw from previous to demonstrate expected draw for the current year (Ramon Theatre and Dr. J. Owens Academy, MODAS Summer Intensive)

# Ramon Theater

Performers	Attendees	1 <sup>st</sup> timers	Out of countv	Under 18
		24	24	1
Jimmy Buffet Tribute	81	24	32	0
Beach Boys Tribute	84	33	47	0
Beatles Tribute	89	40	27	0
Premiere Classic Country	84	24	2	0
Journey Tribute	60	15	59	1
California Toe Jam	126	28	38	1
Willie Nelson & Waylon Jennings Tribute	151	46	5	0
ZZ Top Tribute	23	2	0	0
Elvis Tribute (canceled due to pandemic)	0	0	0	0

# Dr. J. Owens Academy



Attachment B.

Dr. J. Owens  
Academy of  
FINE Arts



## Comfort Inn & Suites (FL713)

3520 North Highway 98  
Lakeland, FL 33809  
(863) 859-0100  
GM.FL713@choicehotels.com

Account: 3985595

Date: 3/14/20

Room:

Arrival Date: 2/21/20

Departure Date: 2/23/20

Check In Time:

Check Out Time:

Rewards Program ID:

You were checked out by:

You were checked in by:

**Total Balance Due: 0.00**

CHATTANOOGA CHOIR  
LOGAN, AUNDRETTE  
2201 VANCE AVE  
Chattanooga

Post Date	Description	Comment	Amount
2/21/20	Room Charge	#301 BATTLE/ BUS DRIVER, MR. S	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#201 LAWRENCE, BERTHA	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#402 CHATTANOOGA CHOIR, 3	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#404 CHATTANOOGA CHOIR, 4	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#407 CHATTANOOGA CHOIR, 5	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#500 CHATTANOOGA CHOIR, 6	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#502 TATE, VITA/REGINA	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#400 TRIMIEW, DR. OLIVER	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#302 STARKS/FAGIN, PATRICIA/FARTEMA	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#303 NORMAN, VANESSA/MICHAEL	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#304 FREEMAN/LOGAN, ROBERT/GATHA	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#305 GREEN, ANGEL	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#307 GREEN/SMITH, KEVIN/JAHLON	125.00
2/21/20	Room Charge	#312 BRYANT/ WILLIAMS, JOHNNIE/GREGORY	125.00

# Florida Dance Arts

Attendees at MODAS Workshop in Lakeland, FL in March 2019 (similar event but only 2 days)

- Total participants: 48
  - Out of County – 33
  - In County – 15
- Out of County Attendees and Corresponding Overnight Stays
  - Naples, FL – 8 attending and 24 overnight stays
  - Melbourne, FL – 2 attending and 1 overnight stay
  - Tampa, FL – 5 attending and 2 overnight stays
  - Davie, FL – 1 attending and 1 overnight stay
  - Winter Park, FL – 8 attending and 16 overnight stays
  - South Carolina – 1 attending and 2 overnight stays
  - Dade City – 6 attending and 12 overnight stays
  - Royal Palm Beach - 1 attending and 1 overnight stay

# Evaluation: Tourism/Survey Data

- ***Consider summarizing your zip code data in a table*** rather than including pages and pages as an attachment.
  - You can always include a couple SAMPLE pages (labeled as such) to demonstrate how you collected the data, if desired, but we don't need *15 pages* of zip code info for a single event
- If you include survey data (as a method of counting tourists), consider **consolidating** your results in a table or on an actual survey
  - The latter shows scorers the survey itself AND the results

# Gold Star for 2020 Cycle

## Tourism/Survey Data



Ticket Sales by County	Number of Tickets	Percentage of Sales
Hardee	9	.12
Highlands	25	.35
Hillsborough	383	5.29
Lake	138	1.91
Orange	122	1.69
Osceola	208	2.87
Pasco	388	5.36
Polk	3977	54.96
Other FL Counties	244	3.37
Out of State	1161	16.04
Out of Country	217	3
Unspecified	364	5.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>7236</b>	

# Gold Star for 2020 Cycle

## Tourism/Survey Data



- With over 7,000 to date Facebook followers, it is consistently being utilized and posts promoted and boosted. Over 1/4 of our fans live outside our county. (Reach on Facebook as of 4/18/ 2020 –over 15k) You can also follow LCT on Twitter and we have an Instagram account. We utilize and are featured in Y Lakeland and lakelandmom.com
- Constant Contact blasts will continue reaching over 8,000 multiple times a month, approx. 1/3 are out of County and 55% are using our mobile app.
- Continue to supply The Outpost Visitor Center with our collateral (500 pieces).
- Print ads will be launched as in the past with a primary focus on our...
- Continue our ads in Today and Tonight and Focus M...
- Their readership increases enormously...
- ty. Also with Watermark M...
- do and Tam...



**Lessons Learned –  
Marketing/Operations Plans and  
Target Audiences**

# MARKETING & OPERATIONS PLANS

- Pro tip: **HAVE ONE!\*\***
- Programming and M & O plans aimed at either type of tourist (overnight or day-tripper) help establish Polk as a “Destination for the Arts” and enhances our ability to draw RETURN visitors
- **So, develop / submit detailed, strategic, Marketing / Advertising plans – AIMED AT ONE OR BOTH TYPES OF TOURISTS!**
  - This is EXTREMELY important since the scoring committee (and scoring matrix) focuses on your plans to DRAW TOURISTS to Polk and/or RETAIN Winter Visitors.

# MARKETING & OPERATIONS PLANS

## Be Specific.

- **Pay close attention to the category you're applying for and...**
  - Document (with specifics) how you will achieve any required out-of-area marketing/advertising requirements.
  - E.g: 100% OOA marketing required by category but applicant's plan addressed only **INSIDE** Polk County advertising

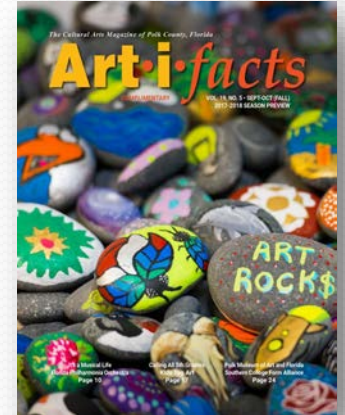
# MARKETING & OPERATIONS PLANS

- ***Include a chart, list or timeline*** (something that shows you have a carefully thought-out plan) **that details your SPECIFIC timing and distribution channels**
- **Specify:** *which* newspapers, billboards (*where*), *which* radio stations, etc. and...
  - *For radio ads, specify if it's PAID advertising or if you're seeking "free" public service announcements or a combo.*
- Denote those distribution channels that reach **OUT-OF-AREA** audiences.
  - ***Huge 'pain point' for scorers – trying to figure out if you met the out-of-area advertising requirements for the category of submission***

# MARKETING & OPERATIONS PLANS

**Don't forget the obvious.**

- **Make sure you use ArtiFacts magazine, Visit Central Florida.org and Polkarts.org to market your events and...**
  - State in your M & O plan that you plan to do so\*\*
  - These are even mentioned (specifically) in the scoring matrix and...
  - Using them bumps up your score AND expands your reach!



# TARGET AUDIENC(S)

- **AVOID stating that your target audience is EVERYONE\*.**
  - Without huge amounts of money at your disposal...it is exceptionally hard to develop a great marketing plan for the masses.
- To the extent possible, segment your marketing plan and be sure you're reaching the intended audience.
  - Consider age, gender, cultural, ethnicity demographics and geography to identify where you will focus your marketing efforts -- build your plan according to who you want to target as your priorities (**maybe pick 2 or 3**).
  - The ISO is one organization that does a great job of segmenting audiences and developing specific plans for their targets (Dave; Arlene; Richard; Molly)
- **Show the scorers you've got a legitimate plan.**

# TARGET AUDIENCE(S)

- Make sure the distribution channels match (are logical for) your stated target audience demographic.
- E.g. If you're going after young urban professionals for a "beat box" event, you probably wouldn't want to choose a classical music or country rock radio station for your ads.



- **Try to offer programing that is:**
  - One of a kind
  - First of its kind
  - BEST of its kind
- **Then, think of ways to market it as such.**
- **Something that is UNIQUE or can't be seen anywhere else is definitely a tourist draw!**





# **Lessons Learned – Program Schedule**

# Program Schedule

## ***15-point category (was 20 until last cycle)***

- ***1-5 Points: Any season with minimal documentable impact on overnight or seasonal tourists;***
- ***6-10 Points: Peak season with documentable overnight stays or working in coordination with existing events by developing packages, cross-promotional opportunities, etc.;***
- ***11-13 Points: Near-Peak season event with documentable impact to promote tourism, or promote seasonal tourism;***

# Program Schedule

- ***14-15 Points: Off Peak seasonal event with documentable impact to promote tourism, attract overnight stays or promote seasonal tourism;***
- ***Please Note: Year-round offerings, or “season long” programming applications are evaluated/scored based on the percentage of events during the season of programming that take place in peak periods versus the percentage of events during the season of programming that take place in non-peak periods***

# Program Schedule – Peak Season

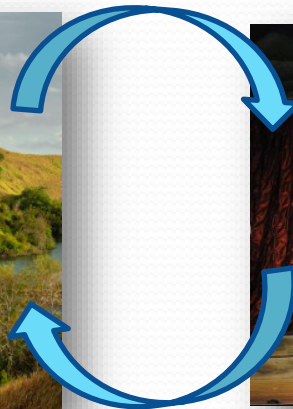
- If you are holding an event during peak season, please **CLEARLY define your plan to attract additional overnight stays (e.g. partnering, bundling, documentation of overnight stays from past year's events, etc.)**
  - Show how you plan to draw/keep folks that normally might not book a room\*\*.
  - **Theatre Winter Haven** example – innovative approach!
  - If you can't provide this information or haven't established a partnering agreement for your peak season events, be prepared to accept a slightly lower score in the category

# Current/Past Marketing Partnership Examples

**PMOA** advertised in the **Tigers** Spring Training program to give fans a reason to stay another day.

**ISO** & **Streamsong** Resort – 2018 (Peak Season)

- Golf and Opera weekend package (cross promoted)
- Opera is one day event – partnered with Streamsong to market is as part of a weekend golf package.



# Marketing/ Cross-Promo Bundling Example

- **Bartow's Syfy\*\*; Chalk Walk and Bloomin' Arts Festival**
- Diverse events – held at different times
- Marketed together as a bundle to increase tourism draw and encourage repeat visits to Bartow (helping establish Polk as a Destination for the Arts)



# Program Schedule – Peak Season

- **Traditional hotels** are often already close to capacity during peak season which can be frustrating for your patrons (if they can't find accommodations)
- So, you might also consider partnering with) **RV parks/campgrounds\*\***, **Short Term Rentals (STRs** – AirBnB; VRBO, etc.
  - You may have a board member or someone else inside your organization who is a STR host.
  - Ask around and capitalize on those relationships by having them promote your event at their STR(s).
- Remember...overnight stays at any of these replenish the pot of \$\$ available for future Arts/Culture/Heritage Grant funding



# **Lessons Learned – Partnerships**

## **Lodging-Restaurants-Retailers-Other**

# Lodging/Hospitality Partnerships

**Now 20 points (formerly 10)**

- Very important category because of the statutory mandate that these public funds be used to promote tourism.
- ***YOU HAVE TOTAL CONTROL OVER YOUR SCORE IN THIS 20 POINT AREA.***
- Do the legwork. Establish some RECIPROCAL partnerships, discount rates, packages, reciprocal advertising/promo agreements – SOMETHING – with hotels, restaurants, retailers!
- We still saw submittals (last cycle) with NO hospitality partners
  - Scores were low (one scored too low for funding)

# Lodging/Hospitality Partnerships

- The three biggest issues we still see when scoring this category are:
  - NO AGREEMENTS or partnering effort
  - NO CURRENT letters/ documentation
  - LACK of reciprocity
- Include **CURRENT** letters and/or website links that demonstrate and document your **RECIPROCAL** agreements with them. Seeing is believing!
  - Even if you have to write the partnership letters ***for them***...do it and ask them to put it on their letterhead and sign.
  - **Platform Art** did this really well last cycle

## A Word about Restaurants & Retailers...

- Missed opportunity by many applicants
  
- Remember, the reason we promote tourism is to stimulate the local economy!
  - If your event is unlikely to draw overnight tourists, you really **MUST** capitalize on the day-trippers and local attendees that you **CAN** draw.
  - If your event **does** draw overnight tourists, restaurant and/or retail partnerships add value for your attendees & encourage return visits to the area
  - Consider asking in your surveys: Did you spend \$ at a local restaurant or retailer, or stay overnight at a local hotel/STR/RV park/Campground, etc.
    - Use that data to demonstrate economic impact in future applications (and reports)
    - **RP Funding Center** does this very well in their survey

## Partnerships

- **Required field on the new digital application:** If your plan/event involves using/hiring out of county hospitality partners, you must explain why you are unable to partner with in-county vendors.
- ***If your event is offering food*** (food trucks, catering, etc.), please try to use a **LOCAL** vendor.
  - If there's a legitimate reason why you cannot (e.g. no local vendor capable of providing the unique or specific services needed), you must explain that in your application.
  - No LOCAL vendor and/or no valid explanation as to why not...your score will be impacted

## Past Hospitality Partnership Examples

- Explorations V museum has offered free museum admission to employees of hospitality/restaurant and other partners to expose them to the venue and encourage referrals/recommendations
  - (Harry's; Mongolian Grill; Florida Dance Theatre, etc.)



★ **Lakeland Community Theatre teams with local restaurants to give away dinner gift certificates or discounts on appetizers/dessert in raffles at their event or as a prize in a drawing for those who complete the requisite zip code attendance survey\*.**



# Hospitality Partnerships

- Use screen captures (SCAPS) to demonstrate that you are promoting your partners and that they are promoting you.
  - Include the SCAPS in your application
  - If links are not up yet on your respective websites or social media pages, include SCAPS from last year and state that you plan to do the same this year!
  - When they DO go up, capture and save them for NEXT year's application (as needed).
  
- If partnerships are still a “work in progress,” share/include emails that demonstrate that you're working on it
  - **Florida Dance Arts** example
  
- **Don't miss these 20 points.** With a little legwork, they are there for the TAKING!

# Lodging Partnerships

- Don't forget about the emerging opportunities to partner RV Parks/Campgrounds and STR's
- For the highest score possible, you need to establish **RECIPROCAL agreements** with your partners to **cross promote**/market on their social media, websites, signage and/or in their facilities...and include **CURRENT agreement documentation** in your application

# ★ Gold Star Organizations

- Include excellent partnership details in their application(s)
  - They do the legwork: Get reciprocal agreements and DOCUMENT them (current, signed letters)
- Partnerships include hotels, restaurants and other arts/culture/heritage organizations
- Here are a couple of examples that clearly show the reciprocity in partnerships



# Theatre Winter Haven

## **TWH Obligation to Hotel**

- Provide show/exhibits collateral material (posters, brochures, special promos to be displayed in hotel lobby)
- Discounts will be provided to hotel guests and employees for all shows/exhibits
- TWH's website will be linked to hotel websites
- Complimentary tickets to all Hotel's exec. Staff up to a certain value.

## **Hotel Obligation to TWH**

- Complimentary guest room per hotel based on availability (\$149.00) Excludes March and Holidays.
- Promote all major TWH shows/exhibits on accommodation websites
- Distribute TWH's event collateral in all service areas
- Sell discount tickets at the front desk for all shows (holiday 20 - advance purchase 20% discount) and holiday 50 – DAY OF show 50% discount)

# Platform Art

## PA Obligation to HB Plant Museum

- Promote HB Plant Museum in all newsletters/posts about this project and list them on the PA website year-round as a key partner
- Offer discounted event tickets to museum staff
- Promote HB Plant Museum by sharing links and announcements on social media channels

## HB Plant obligation to PA

- Promote PA's project to all visitors by displaying promo material and co-host a screening (when even materials are complete)
- Offer tickets for PA salon and screening events
- Promote salon and screening events on their social media channels

# Platform Art

## PA Obligation to Restaurant

- Promote restaurant on website year-round and distribute restaurant promo
- Offer discounted even tickets to Restaurant staff
- Promote restaurant to a broader audience by sharing links and specials on PA social media channels

## Restaurant obligation to PA

- Promote PA's historical project to all visitors by displaying promo material in the restaurant.
- Offer dining discounts for PA guest parties of 10 or more and host or cater a salon
- Promote hosted events on Restaurant social media channels

# ★ Other Stellar Partnership Examples

- **Lake Wales Arts Council** “Stay and Play” package
  - Partnered with both **Bok** and **Nutwood** (restaurant)
  - Cross promotion plans detailed in application



# ★ Other Stellar Partnership Examples

- **Sun 'n Fun** partnered with the **Polk History Center** and **Polk Libraries** to cross promote history & heritage programs
- Partnered with the **ISO** to expand exposure/interest for their hosted “Flag Day” concert



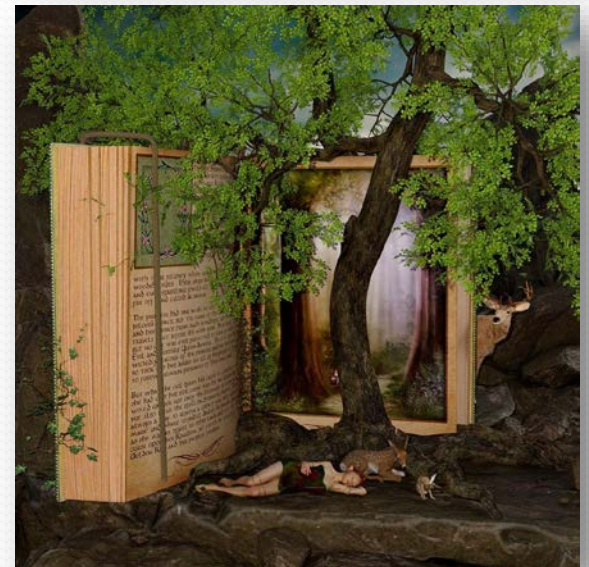
# ★ Other Stellar Partnership Examples



Christmas at **Bok / LegoLand** Florida



**Florida Dance Theatre** / Harrison School  
for the Arts and Public Libraries



# LESSONS LEARNED - PARTNERING

- **Think about teaming with other ACH organizations / events to produce programs on the same weekend so they can be *marketed as a package*.**
  - e.g. Your Friday night art exhibit grand opening and a Saturday festival or theater production could be packaged to encourage overnight stays
- Requires thought and calendar coordination but with a little effort, you can do it!
- Great way to demonstrate that you're really trying to encourage overnight stays.
- Get creative and make this work!!!

- **Even for multi-day events – SHOW that you’ve put together a package that encourages tourists to come from somewhere else and spend money HERE in Polk**
  
- Whether it be with restaurants or hotels, other arts organizations or bike tours/air boat rides/ball games...
- Think of what YOU would enjoy doing in Polk County if you stayed a couple of days and put it together for them.\*\*
  - **Ramon Theatre** Example
  - They don’t have to **buy** it as a package but it’s nice to have a bundle of things they can choose from and ...
  - it demonstrates you’ve truly given some thought to how to promote “tourist spends” here at home.

## Lodging/Hospitality Partnerships

- Reminder: This application category is VERY important because of the statutory mandate that these public funds be used to promote tourism.
- ***YOU HAVE TOTAL CONTROL OVER YOUR SCORE IN THIS 20-POINT AREA.***
  - Go out there and establish some RECIPROCAL partnerships, discount rates, packages, reciprocal advertising/promo agreements – SOMETHING... ***With hotels, restaurants, retailers, others*** – anyone who will belly up and partner with you, and...

# SHOW ME THE MONEY!\$

- Review reporting requirements BEFORE your event(s)
- Gather required data/documentation
  - Save receipts / Collect survey data (tourism component)
  - Sample surveys provided by PAA and PCTSM
- If possible, assign this responsibility to a “trusted someone” in the organization (collecting, archiving required data for each grant)
  - This can easily be one of those critically important things that slips through the cracks
- Makes your life easier when you do the report AND gets your \$\$\$ faster!

# T a k e A w a y s

- ***Document. Document. Document.***
  - Provide documented proof of anything you state in your narrative.
- Read the rules **AND the scoring criteria**
  - Pay attention to detail and make sure you've addressed every question / component of the guidelines
  - Score (or have someone else score) your own submission against the scoring criteria
- TIGHTLY DEFINE your target audience(s)
- Work on those **Marketing plans!**
- **PARTNER:** Do the legwork and establish partnerships
- Be prepared for the REPORT

# Questions / Comments ??

*\*Cindy Rodriguez is an executive board member of the Polk Arts Alliance, an Arts, Culture and Heritage Grants Committee member for the TDC and one of the original advocates for the grants process in Polk County*

*Taking the Grants process very seriously, Cindy offers these examples of innovation/best practices and recommendations based on the issues she has seen -  
- those that are the most overlooked, easiest to correct / overcome for improving scores and receiving maximum grant dollars/benefit.*

