

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX USE GUIDELINES UNDER TEXAS STATE LAW FUNDING APPLICATION FORM

State Law: By law of the State of Texas, Fort Bend County collects a Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) from hotels, bed & breakfasts, and other lodging facilities. Under state law, the revenue from the HOT may be used only to directly promote tourism and the hotel and convention industry. **Chapter 351 and Chapter 352 of the Tax Code states that the use of HOT funds is limited to:**

- a) **Convention Centers and Visitor Information Centers:** the acquisition of sites for and the construction, improvement, enlarging, equipping, repairing operation and maintenance of convention center facilities or visitor information centers, or both;
- b) **Registration of Convention Delegates:** the furnishing of facilities, personnel, and materials for the registration of convention delegates or registrants;
- c) **Advertising, Solicitations and Promotions that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry:** advertising and conducting solicitations and promotional programs to attract tourists and convention delegates or registrants to the municipality or its vicinity;
- d) **Promotions of the Arts that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry:** the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts that can be shown to have some direct impact on tourism and the hotel/convention industry. The impact may be that the art facility or event can show hotel nights that are booked due to their events or that guests at hotels attend the arts event. Eligible forms of art include instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture photography, graphic and craft arts, motion picture, radio, television, tape and sound recording, and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms.
- e) **Historical Restoration and Preservation Activities that Directly Promote Tourism and the Hotel and Convention Industry:** historical restoration and preservation projects or activities or advertising and conducting solicitation and promotional programs to encourage tourists and convention delegates to visit preserved historic sites or museums.
- f) **Sporting Event Expenses that Substantially Increase Economic Activity at Hotels:** Expenses including promotional expenses, directly related to a sporting event in which most participants are tourists. The event must substantially increase economic activity at hotels within the county or its vicinity.
- g) **Signage directing tourists to sights and attractions that are visited frequently by hotel guests in the municipality.**

County Policy: Fort Bend County accepts applications from groups, cities, and businesses whose program fits into one or more of the above categories. All requests for funds should be submitted in writing accompanied by the official application.

Based on the application, the Office of Economic Opportunity & Development will make a recommendation to the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court. The FBC Commissioners Court will make the final decision on any request.

Important Notice: Submission of a completed application does not constitute funding approval. The Fort Bend County Office of Economic Opportunity and Development will evaluate each application based on the details provided, the event’s historical performance (if applicable), its potential for growth within Fort Bend County, and the availability of funds.

For instance, while an applicant may request \$20,000 in grant support, the submission alone does not guarantee that any portion of that amount—full or partial—will be awarded.

In addition, all projects proposed for Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds require a supermajority vote for approval. This is defined as more than just a simply majority of members present. Please see below:

Number Members Attending Meeting	Super Majority Votes Needed	
5	4	
4	3	
3	3	
(less than 3)	N/A	No quorum

Eligibility and Priority for Hotel Tax Funds: Priority will be given to those events and entities based on their ability to generate overnight visitors to the area. If an event will not generate any meaningful hotel night activity, it is not eligible for receipt of hotel occupancy tax funds. Events can prove this potential to generate overnight visitors by:

- a) **historic information on the number of room nights used during previous years of the same events;**
- b) **current information on the size of a room block that has been reserved at area hotels to accommodate anticipated overnight guests attending the funded event;**
- c) **historical information on the number of guests at hotel or other lodging facilities that attended the funded event (through surveys, guest directories, or other sources; and/or**
- d) **examples of the planned marketing of the programs and activities that will likely generate overnight visitors to local lodging properties from this event.**

All applicants must generate a minimum of twenty (20) nights. Organizations are encouraged to work with the County and/or FBC municipalities to secure room blocks and tracking links. Only hotels located within Fort Bend County will be included towards the Room Nights count.

Evaluation Considerations

The following information will be considered during evaluation:

- Submission of a complete application;
- Eligibility under Texas Tax Code Sec 351 & 352;
- Financial stability of the Organization;
- Event or Organization history within Fort Bend County or prior host cities;
 - Fort Bend County reserves the right to require a background check on the Event producer(s) and /or Organization. If required, an authorization to release information and associated fees will apply.
- Alignment with Fort Bend County's mission, values and priorities;
- Potential of applicant to achieve project/event goals;
- Projected economic impact to the County with the inclusion or the production of hotel Room Nights; and
- Potential for significant return on investment.

Fort Bend County Application

ORGANIZATION

Name _____
Incorporation Date _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____
Website _____

CHECK ONE

- Nonprofit – 501(c) Attach a copy of IRS Determination Letter
- Government Entity
- School/Educational Organization
- For Profit Organization
- Other (Please specify) _____

Purpose/Mission of your Organization:

Disclose/Summarize any significant, planned organizational changes and describe their potential impact on the Event for which funds are requested:

REPRESENTATIVE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

Name _____
Title _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

Name _____
Title _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

EVENT INFORMATION

Name _____
Start Date _____ End Date _____
Event Location _____
Website URL _____
Facebook URL _____

Twitter (X) URL _____

Instagram URL _____

Other social media accounts where Event will be promoted:

Which Category or Categories Apply to Funding Request, and Amount Requested Under Each Category:

- a) Convention Center or Visitor Information Center:** construction, improvement, equipping, repairing, operation, and maintenance of convention center facilities or visitor information centers, or both. Amount requested under this category: \$_____
- b) Registration of Convention Delegates:** furnishing of facilities, personnel, and materials for the registration of convention delegates or registrants. Amount requested under this category: \$_____
- c) Advertising, Solicitations, Promotional programs to attract tourists and convention delegates** or registrants to the county or its vicinity. Amount requested under this category: \$_____
- d) Promotion of the Arts that Directly Enhance Tourism and the Hotel & Convention Industry:** the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts that can be shown to have some direct impact on tourism and the hotel/convention industry. The impact may be that the art facility or event can show hotel nights that are booked due to their events or that guests at hotels attend the arts event. Eligible forms of art include instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture photography, graphic and craft arts, motion picture, radio, television, tape and sound recording, and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms : \$_____
- e) Historical restoration and preservation projects or activities or advertising and conducting solicitation and promotional programs to encourage tourists and convention delegates to visit preserved historic sites or museums.** Amount requested under this category: \$_____
- f) Expenses including promotional expenses, directly related to a sporting event in which the majority of participants are tourists. The event must substantially increase economic activity at hotels within the county or its vicinity.** Amount requested under this category: \$_____

WRITTEN NARRATIVE OF EVENT

- **Event Overview:** Provide a comprehensive description of the event for which funding is being requested, including its scope, primary goals, specific objectives, intended audience, and historical background—such as previous host cities.
- **Tourism and Industry Impact:** Explain how the event will actively contribute to the growth of tourism and support the hotel and convention sectors within Fort Bend County.
- **Alignment with Organizational Mission:** Describe how the event supports and advances your organization’s strategic priorities and long-term objectives.
- **Event Schedule and Activities:** Present a detailed itinerary of planned activities, including any applicable admission fees and the proposed timeline, if available at the time of submission.
- **Attendance and Visitor Metrics:** Include projected attendance figures, estimated number of contracted hotel room nights, and anticipated percentages of both out-of-town and overnight visitors.
- **Future Growth and Expansion Plans:** Outline your vision for expanding the event in Fort Bend County in the coming years, if applicable. If the event has been held previously, provide historical attendance data and other relevant metrics that demonstrate its impact and reach.
- **Promotional Strategy for Local Engagement:** Detail the strategies and outreach efforts intended to attract both residents and visitors, thereby enhancing tourism and community participation in Fort Bend County.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR EVENT

- **Marketing Plan:** The plan must outline key elements such as visual content, central messaging, intended audience, scheduled release dates for advertising, public relations, and event-related materials. The plan should also detail the selected marketing channels (e.g., digital platforms, print publications, television, radio) and include a breakdown of the budget allocated for media placements.
- **Proposed Event Operating Budget:** A detailed budget illustrating financial planning and long-term viability of the event for which funding is being sought
- **Confirmed and Pending Sponsorships:** A current list of event sponsors, including all participating organizations—municipal, governmental, or otherwise. Each entry should specify the sponsor's name, the amount of funding requested, and the status of the sponsorship (confirmed or pending).

METRICS TO EVALUATE SUCCESS

- **Success Evaluation Criteria:** Provide metrics that will be used to assess the effectiveness and impact of the event. If funding is awarded, the organization will be expected to submit a final report detailing the extent to which the event’s objectives were met.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please initial the following to confirm acknowledgement:

_____ The Event “directly enhances and promotes tourism AND the convention and hotel industry.” (Tax Code, Section 351 and 352).

_____ Fort Bend County will be recognized as an official sponsor in all marketing materials to indicate award of the grant.

_____ Organization will comply with Fort Bend County’s Grant policy in executing the Event for which funds were received.

_____ A final report detailing the success of the Event as measured against identified metrics will be provided to Fort Bend County no later than sixty (60) days post-event or the last day of the breakdown date.

_____ Organization understands Advertising and Promotional grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis after the Event takes place and receipts of proof of advertisement and promotion are provided in the final report/summary.

_____ Willing to sign an authorization to release information form for the purposes of conducting a background check on Event producers and/or Organization.

I hereby confirm that all information contained in and additional documents supplied for this application are true and complete as of the date of this application. I acknowledge that I am authorized on behalf of the application Organization to complete and submit this application and the additional documentation requested herein. I acknowledge that all funding granted through this program will be used exclusively for the purposes described in this application and in compliance with **Texas Tax Code, Section 351 and 352**. I have read and understand the Fort Bend County’s policy and acknowledge that the County may, at its sole discretion, amend the criteria and policy it utilizes to evaluate HOT Funds grant requests.

Print Name

Date

Title

Signature

Please Submit to:

(Office of Economic Opportunity and Development, 245 Commerce Green Blvd, Suite 165,
Sugar Land, TX 77478