

Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1: I have accessibility needs and am unable to use the digital application, what should I do?

Answer: We will provide a paper application for those with accessibility needs, it should be noted the instructions on the paper application differ slightly than the online application. Please contact Kylie Diaz at kylie@visitspc.com

Question 2: I am unsure of how to acquire an Economic Impact Study, do you have any suggestions?

Answer: Below we have listed companies whose expertise is in Destination/Tourism Metrics

- Future Partners, <https://futurepartners.com/>
- Tourism Economics, <https://www.tourismeconomics.com/>
- Downs & St. Germain Research, <https://dsg-research.com/>
- Longwoods International, <https://longwoods-intl.com/>

Question 3: I am having issues with the digital application. What should I do?

Answer: If encountering table/form issues:

1. Save your form (through the Save & Continue button). Exit out of your form. Clear browser cache. Click on link you received to access your form again, and hopefully the table fields will have returned.
2. If the problem persists, or if encountering other issues with the application, please contact Kylie Diaz at kylie@visitspc.com

Question 4: I have other questions about the program. What should I do?

Answer: Please contact Kylie Diaz at kylie@visitspc.com

Question 5: If I submit my application early will I receive a faster decision on funding?

Answer: We welcome early applications as it will give us sufficient time to begin the review process, and while it will not result in an earlier decision it could prevent us from having to extend the timeline.

Question 6: What are examples of government fees & taxes in question 11 on the application?

Answer: Some examples of taxes may include but not limited to bed taxes generated by overnight visitors that can be attributed to the capital project, ticket sales, property taxes etc. Examples of government fees may include but not limited to permit fees, impact fees, water & sewer etc.

Question 7: How can I best align my marketing and sponsorship benefit proposal to coincide with the strategic goals of Visit St. Pete Clearwater?

Answer: Please view this [FY 24 Executive Summary](#) for more information.

Question 8: My organization has already spent money towards our project, would this qualify as matching funds?

Answer: Funds already spent are not "matching funds" as those are defined as expenditures made after the application date.

Question 9: Can you clarify what is needed under the application process for Matching Funds? Can this be some type of letter from investors? Are there specific examples you can provide us that meet this requirement?

Answer:

Per the [Capital Funding Guidelines](#), the following are available options for Matching Funds:

"Matching Funds" shall mean and include any of the following assets or expenditures by applicant incurred or available after the application date:

1. cash funds;
2. in-kind contributions to the Capital Project;
3. land acquired for the Capital Project at the purchase price, or fair market value if donated;
4. costs of infrastructure improvements to real property necessary to complete the Capital Project;
5. Capital Project design and engineering costs;
6. capital equipment.

Here are some examples of matching funds from previous applications, if you do not see something listed below and want to verify that it qualifies please reach out to us.

Detailed Private Donations

Grants received (State of Florida, etc.)

Letter from Bank verifying proof of funds, cash on hand, or bank loan.

Proceeds from the sale of land

In Kind donation on land

A letter from an investor confirming committed funds would also likely qualify, but please confirm with VSPC

Question 10: Is the cost of the economic impact study (required to apply for CFPF funding as outlined in the capital funding guidelines) eligible to count toward the matching funds for a capital project?

Answer: No. The CFPF Guidelines define matching funds to mean "assets or expenditures by applicant incurred or available after the application date," and the economic impact study must be completed before and submitted with the application, in order for the application to be complete. Additionally, even without that limitation, matching funds are provided only for those purposes outlined in the Florida Statutes and the Tourist Development Plan, that is, to "acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, or provide debt service on" the capital project. The economic impact study does not fall under any of those categories.

Question 11: Does a proposed large, permanent art installation at a museum owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization and open to the public qualify for funding under the CFPF?

Answer: Probably not. The expenditure of Tourist Development Tax funds is limited to only those uses outlined in Florida Statutes Section 125.0104(5)(a) and adopted by the County's Tourist Development Plan (Pinellas County Code Section 118-31, et seq.) , and tax statutes are construed narrowly. Under the Capital Projects Funding Program, the Plan authorizes the provision of matching funds:

[T]o acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, or provide debt service on one or more publicly owned and operated convention centers, coliseums, or auditoriums as well as aquariums or museums that are publicly owned and operated or owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public, and sports and recreation facilities not eligible for Category E funding below (hereinafter referred to as "eligible facilities"). Eligible facilities must be located within Pinellas County and demonstrate the ability to attract tourists from the State of Florida, nationally or internationally.

While the proposed art installation (as described by the applicant) would apparently be permanently constructed on museum grounds, it was also described as "part of the collection." It would not appear to constitute an extension, enlargement, improvement, etc., of the museum itself, but would instead be a work of art *in* or *at* the museum. This determination could change based on specific facts (for example, if the installation was a structural addition to the museum that patrons could enter, it might constitute both art and an extension of the museum). However, if the Board of County Commissioners made the legislative determination that the installation constituted an "improvement" to the museum (as opposed to the construction of art *at* the museum), and found that it had the ability to attract tourists, then it could qualify.

Question 12 : Would a permanent art exhibition built and displayed within an existing municipally-owned library, in coordination with a museum owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization, qualify for funding under the CFPF (with the applicant being the City)?

Answer: Possibly, depending on the specific facts. The expenditure of Tourist Development Tax funds is limited to only those uses outlined in Florida Statutes Section 125.0104(5)(a) and adopted by the County's Tourist Development Plan (Pinellas County Code Section 118-31, et seq.), and tax statutes are construed narrowly. Under the Capital Projects Funding Program, the Plan authorizes the provision of matching funds:

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According to the applicant, the "exhibition" would be an improvement of a portion of the existing library, or constructed inside the existing library building, consisting of one or more rooms used to display art. As a library is not a capital project authorized under the CFPF, there appear to be two possible ways that this project could be attempting to qualify:

1. As an "extension" of the existing museum. This does not appear to apply. First, the existing museum organization is not the applicant and does not own the library, so this is not an "extension" of their museum as an institution or organization (assuming, for argument's sake, that the capital of the museum--its building--could be "extended" for purposes of the statute by the construction or acquisition of a new non-contiguous location, which would have to be reviewed). This analysis might change if the applicant was the museum and the museum owned or leased the location of the new exhibit.

2. As the "construction" of a "museum." While a museum does not necessarily have to be in a stand-alone building for the purposes of the CFPF, we would need more facts to determine if the proposed project would qualify as a "museum" and not just an "exhibit." (Remember, for CFPF, we're talking about the museum structure, not the concept or institution.) I would suggest that some factors that might speak to whether it is a museum structure for CFPF purposes would be whether it has a separate entrance (whether exterior or interior), whether the art is integrated into the library (i.e., paintings hung near the shelves) or displayed in a separate dedicated space, the actual size and construction of the museum area, the volume of museum items on display, whether the city will have staff dedicated to the museum, etc. If the Board of County Commissioners made a legislative determination that the project constituted the "construction" of a "museum" that has the ability to attract tourists, it could qualify. More facts would be required before that determination could be made.

Ultimately, the applicant would have to specify under what provision they believe they qualify, and provide more facts, for a more comprehensive evaluation.