



FY 2025 Contract Scope of Work Response Hillsborough Arts Council - Visitor Services & Events

Organization Information		
Organization Name: Hillsborough Arts Council		
Contact Person and Title: Heather Tatreau, Executive Director		
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Organization Street Address: 102 N Churton Street		
City: Hillsborough	State: NC	ZIP Code: 27278
Organization's Annual Operating Budget: \$ 395,000		
Total Request for FY25 Contract: \$43,000		
General Contract Information		
Contract Name: Hillsborough Arts Council's Last Fridays & the Art Walk, Solstice Lantern Walk, The Handmade Parade & Market, and Gallery & Gift Shop		
Month(s) or Date(s) in which Proposal Project/Services will take place: JULY 1, 2024- JUNE 30, 2025		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full Programming for Last Fridays & the Art Walk: March - November each calendar year ● The Art Walk: January - November each calendar year ● The Solstice Lantern Walk - scheduled on the Winter Solstice in December each year. ● The Handmade Parade: occurs in even years and has been moved to the spring to coincide with HAC's annual art fair, now called the Handmade Market; next occurrence with FY25 & FY26 combined TB funding expected May 2026 ● Gallery and Gift Shop: operating 6 days per week year-round 		
Outline/Overview of Scope of Work		
<p>Last Fridays & the Art Walk (LFAW): General Program Background & Update for Scope of Work HAC has worked over the past four fiscal years to create cohesion between Last Fridays programming and Art Walk activities, improving the brand recognition, town & tourism exposure, marketing awareness, public engagement, and overall event experience for LFAW partners and visitors.</p> <p>Since 2021, HAC has adjusted the LFAW timeline to provide "full programming" (art walk + music, poetry, roaming entertainment, arts activities, etc.) March-November, allowing for a strategic build up in the spring, driving traffic as it becomes warmer and more enticing to circulate town, maintaining buzz and boosting business in the heat of the summer, and crescendoing activities as winter is welcomed to celebrate with a "season finale". The Art Walk extends to operate in January & February as well, but without any specialized entertainment elements coordinated by HAC.</p> <p>Heading into FY25, we plan to continue with our successful "decentralized model" for the event, which activates multiple programming zones around town and has had a demonstrable, positive impact on local businesses, artists, community groups, and venues. Our focus has also expanded to include more community groups and to reach audiences that were historically underrepresented in LFAW programming, embodying our firm belief that the arts are for all and fulfilling our mission to build our</p>		

community through the arts. Beginning in FY22, HAC committed to closely tracking the impact of LFAW programming on our Gallery & Gift Shop in downtown Hillsborough, as well as soliciting feedback and data from partnering venues and businesses who remain open each LFAW. The following information speaks to the importance of HAC's role to drive tourism, and the success of our revisions to the LFAW program model:

- On average, retail sales at the G&GS during LFAW experience a 300% increase compared to average daily sales not occurring during LFAW.
- On average, visitation to the G&GS during LFAW experiences a 500% increase compared to average daily visitation not occurring during LFAW.
- Local restaurants & bars reported up to 35% average increase in sales during LFAW compared to normal Fridays. Most restaurants have had to expand outdoor dining and reservation times to accommodate the spike in demand they experience during LFAW.
- Local galleries and art walk venues reported up to 80% average increase in visitation during LFAW compared to normal Fridays. Some venues had even higher increase rates (over 100%) due to their limited normal operating hours and the impact of LFAW on their visibility.

Solstice Lantern Walk (SLW): General Program Background & Update for Scope of Work

The Solstice Lantern Walk (SLW) has become a beloved annual event in Hillsborough, giving residents a reason to come together and celebrate the peaceful quiet that the darker, colder months can bring. Encouraging creativity and a celebration of the community that binds us together and gives us strength in difficult times, the Solstice Lantern Walk brings light to Hillsborough on the darkest day of the year. Celebrations of light in darkness are an important feature of winter holidays celebrated by many cultures throughout history, and help to create a sense of shared culture in our diverse community while providing an opportunity for participants to create lanterns that reflect their own cultural and creative identities.

HAC has a 5 year vision for expanding the event into a festival model inspired by various international winter markets, with food, beverages, family friendly activities, and craft vendors, all culminating in The Solstice Lantern Walk. In 2021 we took the first steps in that direction with an after-walk celebration, and with funding support from the Tourism Board Special Projects Grant in 2022, we hosted the first-ever Solstice Market in conjunction with the walk. This program expansion has allowed for a dramatic increase in impact, both on local artists and our economy. In FY23, we hosted 12 artist vendors, 3 different musicians offering live entertainment, and 4 food/beverage vendors, plus multiple collaborating community groups. These additional components drew a larger crowd to the Solstice Lantern Walk than years past and kept audiences in town for longer, enticing them to support small businesses and giving them the opportunity to develop a deeper appreciation for Hillsborough. In FY24, the Solstice Market featured 12 artist vendors, a popular band, 4 food & beverage vendors, 2 food trucks, and a gathering space for the community to celebrate the magic of the winter season. We also provided activities in River Park for participants to enjoy before and after the walk: a singing bowl artist, telescopes set up by the Chapel Hill Astronomical and Observation Society, and the Spiral of Light. HAC took on the responsibility of creating the Spiral of Light in consultation with Stephanie Trueblood. Additionally, we had 9 participating businesses/venues who joined in to celebrate the solstice with special pre-walk and post-walk promotions, encouraging visitors to maximize their evening in Hillsborough.

In FY23, it is estimated that SLW had at least 3,000 people in attendance. In FY24, it is estimated that SLW had at least 4,500 visitors in attendance for the walk and to watch, marking a 1500 visitor increase for the event. Of those in attendance in FY24, over half were tourists.

In order to continue this exciting evolution, consistent and ongoing support from Hillsborough's Tourism Board, and other community funders, is essential, and will ensure the successful expansion of this event into a festival that is already becoming a treasured and much anticipated part of Hillsborough's cultural life. For the 2024 SLW, we are planning to expand opportunities for designated viewing areas and more "off-ramps" during the walk to make it more accessible for people with limited mobility to enjoy the festivities with a shorter walk. We are also looking into the feasibility of including West Hillsborough in our programming while helping to alleviate parking downtown.

Handmade Parade (HMP): General Program Background & Update for Scope of Work

On April 30, 2022, the Handmade Parade returned after a four-year hiatus due to the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. HAC made the decision to move this bi-annual event to the spring, in order to strategically spread HAC's tourism activities across the calendar year and to combine efforts with HAC's highly-attended spring art fair. With FY22 support from the Tourism Board, this new model was officially introduced as the "Weekend of Art in Hillsborough" (WOA), featuring April's Last Fridays & the Art Walk, the Handmade Parade, and the Handmade Market (HMM, formerly known as "Art in the Heart").

This approach was well received by the community and resulted in improved tourism impact and overall visitation to Hillsborough compared to previous occurrences of the HMP. Due to the variety of activities offered through the "Weekend of Art", at least 5,000 participants were recorded and marketing efforts attracted a broader audience. This combined initiative also allowed for a more efficient use of HAC's staff, administrative, & operational costs, which increased as a necessity to sustain the future of HAC's tourism efforts and community programming.

The next occurrence of the HMP/HMM will be May 31-June 1 2024, supported with reserved tourism board funding from FY23 and the current FY24 grant. The parade will incorporate 10+ community partnerships & performing artists, large-scale handmade puppets; costumes, music, & dance; and will entice public participation. The market will feature 50+ artists, food & beverage vendors, family-friendly activities, and other arts experiences to serve as pre-parade and post-parade festivities. We will also host several advanced puppet-making workshops, plus accessible opportunities for businesses, families, and visitors to create their unique addition to the parade. Additionally, the Adopt-a-Puppet program will include several community groups and schools tasked with refurbishing old puppets and walking with them in the parade.

Gallery and Gift Shop (G&GS): General Background & Update for Scope of Work

HAC's Gallery & Gift Shop (G&GS) located in the heart of downtown Hillsborough is an essential tourism resource, serving as a point-of-entry for HAC programs and for Hillsborough's arts & culture scene at large. First opening at its current location in 2013 as a standard gallery venue, the Gallery & Gift Shop

now operates 6 days a week year-round, represents artwork by over 60 local artists, and has become an information hub for residents and visitors to learn about Hillsborough's creative community, especially during major town-wide events. In 2023, the Gallery & Gift Shop served 13,591 visitors and generated over \$64,417 in direct income for local artists, which further stimulated Hillsborough's economy.

In 2021, HAC hired its first paid Gallery & Gift Shop Manager. This experimental, part-time position was essential for stabilizing G&GS operations during the pandemic and ensured a strategic focus on growing revenue for artists and expanding the economic impact of HAC's community services. HAC's investment in paid staff has proven to be a worthwhile endeavor - within the first year of having a dedicated Gallery & Gift Shop Manager, hours of operation expanded by 60% (including staying open late on Friday & Saturday nights, when tourists are often looking for unique shopping & arts experiences alongside dining) and gross revenue increased by 46% compared to pre-pandemic sales. In 2023 and 2024, these statistics continue to climb, including the number of visitors and artists benefiting from our services at the Gallery & Gift Shop.

With investment in stabilized & expanded operations comes increased costs. HAC serves as a vital resource for the town of Hillsborough, representing our breadth of local arts & culture and pointing visitors to other galleries, historic sites, local businesses, and entertainment venues. The G&GS has become a go-to location to learn about events and recreation in Hillsborough, particularly related to arts and cultural activities for tourists to experience and enjoy. Due to continued demand, HAC made the strategic decision to promote the Gallery & Gift Shop Manager role to a full-time position in fall 2022 and this decision has proved beneficial for HAC and our local artists. The local artist community is more fully supported, gallery updates are more regular, and oversight of gallery installations has been professionalized. However, along with operational grants and sales revenue, we need sustaining support from the Tourism Board to maintain the rising costs of this essential tourism-driving operation.

The Gallery & Gift Shop is also a growing destination for pop-up workshops, art demonstrations, artist talks, and visitor services. In FY25, we plan to expand our educational offerings by creating regular opportunities for the public to interact with our artists and learn more about their craft. We will publicize these engagements widely in order to attract tourists to Hillsborough. Our G&GS manager is also working on a long term project called, "Meet the Artist." She is collecting 3-minute videos from each of our artists with short demonstrations of their art making process. Once collected, an iPad will be available in the shop for patrons to interact with and learn more about these artists. Hearing directly from the artists about their work will have a positive impact on patrons' appreciation of the art in our shop. We suspect this will also have a positive impact on sales.

Please explain generally how the organization is going to perform the duties requested in the FY2025 Contract Scope of Work Update during Q1(July-Sept):

LFAW Q1:

Each LFAW season straddles two fiscal years, so Q1 of this program begins half way through the 2024 calendar year/LFAW season.

Q1 LFAW programming will include unique, rotating entertainment, including components like:

- Special exhibitions, receptions, and gallery openings at 21+ participating venues on the Art Walk
- Makers Markets with live music and 20+ artists & community vendors on the Old Courthouse lawn
- A variety of live music performances at local venues and around town
- Showcases of poetry, prose, and spoken word in partnership with Jennifer Daniels
- Dancewaves, drumming & more in River Park, in partnership with the Living Arts Collective
- Family-friendly activities & crafts
- Opportunities to connect and interact with nature, local history, and the arts
- Performance & circus artists
- Community collaborations and nonprofit showcases
- HAC & LFAW info tent/tourism services booth on the Old Courthouse lawn

Administrative efforts will include:

- Planning, designing, and implementing strategic marketing of the events & participating local businesses/partners
- Maintaining communications with artists, stakeholders, collaborators, & partnering venues
- Collecting data, conducting assessments, and making minor adjustments of programming to ensure ROI and maximum impact

SLW Q1:

HAC will be identifying artists, vendors and connecting with local businesses to partner on this cherished Hillsborough event.

HMP Q1:

In Spring 2024, HMP will return along with the newly introduced HMM for the Weekend of Art (WOA). After the completion of HMP/HMM/WOA 2024, HAC will have new information to build from in planning the next WOA for 2026. As Q1-Q4 of FY25 comprise an “off year” for the parade, most of the activities will include debriefing the 2024 HMP/WOA and planning high-level strategies for the 2026 HMP/WOA.

Meetings will be scheduled with organizations, community, and regional leaders to propose collaborations and innovative ways that will increase participation for the next parade. By working closer with these potential partners and businesses, this program will grow in local and regional recognition as a signature event for HAC & a major weekend destination for art and culture in Hillsborough. Q1/Q2 tasks for this off year are:

- Evaluate last event and complete comprehensive planning to take the event into the future.
- Repair, document, and ensure proper storage for existing and new puppets.
- Integrate themes, activities, and successes of HMP into other HAC programs, to ensure public maintains awareness of and excitement for next parade.
- Engage 2024 HMP participants in other HAC events and activities that occur in FY25, further developing community relationships and fostering deeper connection to the arts in Hillsborough.

G&GS Q1:

In 2023, the G&GS started a new quarterly process for artists who wish to apply to consign. Each quarter, the G&GS accepts applications from local artists for the opportunity to showcase their work in-store. The G&GS consignment partnership provides income & stability to local artists and entices visitors to stop in to learn about HAC's programmatic activities throughout the year.

Q1 is the heat of the summer, which means visitation and sales to Hillsborough businesses can suffer a dip, even with the G&GS expanding capacity to stay open 6 days a week. During Q1, HAC and the G&GS will execute duties outlined in this grant by:

- Making strategic efforts to entice tourism including demonstrations, sales and promotions, and artist events.
- In August, we'll tie in themes of back to school and highlight student/youth arts and arts education. There will be a major drive for our ArtCycle program, which collects and distributes art supplies to local schools.
- Host receptions and artist talks during each Last Fridays & the Art Walk.
- Partner with other local tourism-driving groups, including OCAC, OCHM, Burwell, and the Alliance/Visit Hillsborough to collaborate on summer events whenever possible
- Track demographic data at the G&GS from those willing to share, in effort to better understand our key audiences and to determine which audiences may require more proactive engagement.

Seasonal window displays are refreshed at the shop. Also, exhibition rotations at "HAC Satellite Galleries" occur - a new, experimental initiative that was launched in 2023 to expand our impact for artists & overall enhancing more physical spaces in Hillsborough by providing artwork in non-traditional spaces at select venues around town.

Please explain generally how the organization is going to perform the duties requested in the FY2025 Contract Scope of Work Update during Q2 (Oct-Dec):**LFAW Q2:**

October LFAW is always one of the highest attended months due to its alignment with Halloween and we particularly see a surge in families visiting Hillsborough. We plan to bring back the popular Dia De Los Muertos theme again this year to support cross-cultural activities. Programming will include unique, rotating entertainment, including components like:

- Special exhibitions, receptions, and gallery openings at 21+ participating venues on the Art Walk
- Makers Markets with live music and 20+ artists & community vendors on the Old Courthouse lawn
- A variety of live music performances at local venues and around town, including Aztec dancers.
- Showcases of poetry, prose, and spoken word in partnership with Jennifer Daniels
- Dancewaves, drumming & more in River Park, in partnership with the Living Arts Collective
- Family-friendly activities & crafts
- Opportunities to connect and interact with nature, local history, and the arts
- Performance & circus artists
- Community collaborations and nonprofit showcases
- HAC & LFAW info tent/tourism services booth on the Old Courthouse lawn

- **PLUS:** special halloween-themed activities, historic ghost tours, a living ofrenda, and merchant trick-or-treat collaborations.

November LFAW programming will be a scaled back version of peak LFAW offerings, adjusting to the coming winter season and earlier evening hours. Strategies to promote “small business/shop local”, artist Sunday, holiday season activities, and other winter traditions, including the Solstice Lantern Walk, will be integrated.

December marks the beginning of the “off season” for Last Fridays, allowing staff to focus heavily on a debrief of the 2024 calendar year/LFAW season, survey participants and stakeholders, and adjust strategies for the 2025 calendar year/LFAW season. Other tourism-driving activities hosted by HAC continue during this time, including the Solstice Lantern Walk, Gallery & Gift Shop, etc.

Administrative efforts will include:

- Planning, designing, and implementing strategic marketing of the events & participating local businesses/partners
- Maintaining communications with artists, stakeholders, collaborators, & partnering venues
- Collecting data, conducting assessments, and making minor adjustments of programming to ensure ROI and maximum impact
- Surveying participating venues & contracted artists for feedback, debriefing all elements of the 2024 season with internal and external stakeholders
- Beginning to outline strategy for the 2025 season
- Directing tourism and visitation to other special fall, holiday, and winter traditions that occur around Hillsborough and supporting the marketing efforts of these groups/activities

SLW Q2:

Q2 marks the active planning phase and execution of SLW. Staff will finalize vendor/artist contracts, permits, and volunteer assignments. Logistical preparations include taking inventory of supplies, purchasing new supplies, assembling luminaries, creating signs, setting up/monitoring website registration, and holding orientation sessions for volunteers. Creating the Spiral of Light in River Park is another task that requires a team of volunteers to collect and lay out the greenery ahead of the event, followed by deconstruction of the spiral after the event. This year, we will create designated viewing areas for participants who prefer to watch. This endeavor will require clear messaging and increased marking efforts.

The SLW event takes place in late December and requires full staff, board, and volunteer involvement. A clear timeline of duties will be put into place by our Program Director so there is a smooth execution. Providing a safe and enjoyable experience for over 4,000 participants is our top priority in December.

HMP Q2:

Since FY25 is an off year for HMP, there is no active planning in Q2. However, possible collaborations and artist invitations are considered year round. We must also ensure that parade materials, such as large-scale puppets, are properly stored to minimize damage.

G&GS Q2:

Q2 occurs over the holiday season. Fifty percent of our total annual sales occur in this quarter, so it's the busiest time of year for our team. The G&GS experiences significant uptick in visitation from out of town and thus an increased need for HAC/G&GS volunteers to provide suggestions of places to shop, dine, and explore while they are in town for the holidays. The success of the Solstice Lantern Walk also depends on the G&GS to be highly operational - we sell over 500 lantern kits, host lantern workshops, and help people get signed up/learn about the event. For Q2, the G&GS contributes to TB objectives by:

- Providing visitation information for increased tourist traffic.
- Selling lantern kits & leading workshops for those participating in the Solstice Lantern Walk, which occurs in December on the winter solstice.
- Accepting new quarterly artist consignment applications.
- Collaborating and cross-promoting other holiday happenings around town, including the Holiday Parade, Gingerbread Exhibition, and more.

Please explain generally how the organization is going to perform the duties requested in the FY2025 Contract Scope of Work Update during Q3 (Jan-March):**LFAW Q3:**

Jan & Feb LFAW programming will scale back to focus primarily on the Art Walk. HAC will support participating venues through website marketing and providing cross-promotion of efforts such as:

- Special exhibitions, receptions, and gallery openings at 10+ participating venues on the winter Art Walks
- Live music performances at local venues
- Family-friendly activities & crafts
- Opportunities to connect and interact with local history and the arts

Q3 allows staff to focus heavily on reviewing feedback from the 2024 calendar year/LFAW season, outlining strategies for the 2025 calendar year/LFAW season, and initiating plans to ensure public awareness of the return of full programming. Communications with venues to confirm their participation in 2025 pick up by early February.

In March, full programming for Last Fridays & the Art Walk returns with a season kick-off, strategically building back momentum for the year and incorporating spring themes.

Administrative efforts will include:

- Maintaining communications with artists, stakeholders, collaborators, & partnering venues
- Collecting data, conducting assessments, and making minor adjustments of programming to ensure ROI and maximum impact
- Surveying participating venues & contracted artists for feedback, debriefing all elements of the 2024 season with internal and external stakeholders
- Finalizing strategy for the 2025 season and sharing outline with stakeholders.
- Directing tourism and visitation to the Jan/Feb Art Walk and other activities that occur around Hillsborough; supporting the marketing efforts of these activities.
- Confirming themes, community collaborations, and artistic partnerships for 2025 LFAW season.
- Securing permits and developing updated marketing materials and planning resources.

- Planning, designing, and implementing strategic marketing of the upcoming 2025 LFAW season & participating local businesses/partners.

SLW Q3:

In January, staff and volunteers meet to debrief on December's SLW. Successes and ideas for improvements are documented to inform planning for next year. Statistics are compiled on demographics of participants and the budget is reconciled. During the remainder of the quarter, any suggested changes are kept in mind when meeting with stakeholders about HAC events. Possible SLW collaborations are considered year round.

HMP Q3:

Since FY25 is an off year for HMP, there is no active planning in Q3. However, possible collaborations and artist invitations are considered year round. We must also continue to ensure parade materials, such as large-scale puppets, are properly stored to minimize damage.

G&GS Q3:

During Q3, the G&GS closes to the public for the first 3 weeks of January. During this time, the gallery is rotated to showcase new work and the shop is restocked & reorganized for a fresh look. Any renovation projects or necessary upgrades/improvements to our physical space and operations are also addressed during this time. Quarterly applications for consignment are accepted for prospective artists to showcase their works in the G&GS. Valentine's Day, black history month, women's history month, and other seasonal holidays or important celebrations are promoted. Seasonal window displays are refreshed. Collaborations with students from Cedar Ridge High School's IB program are finalized & multiple student art exhibitions are held, which have proven to be extremely popular with visitors and community members alike. Gallery artists are confirmed for the upcoming calendar year.

Please explain generally how the organization is going to perform the duties requested in the FY2025 Contract Scope of Work Update during Q4 (April-June):

LFAW Q4:

Q4 LFAW programming will include unique, rotating entertainment, including components like:

- Special exhibitions, receptions, and gallery openings at 21+ participating venues on the Art Walk
- Makers Markets with live music and 20+ artists & community vendors on the Old Courthouse lawn
- A variety of live music performances at local venues and around town
- Showcases of poetry, prose, and spoken word
- Dancewaves, drumming & more in River Park, in partnership with the Living Arts Collective
- Family-friendly activities & crafts
- Opportunities to connect and interact with nature, local history, and the arts
- Performance & circus artists
- Community collaborations and nonprofit showcases
- HAC & LFAW info tent/tourism services booth on the Old Courthouse lawn

Administrative efforts will include:

- Planning, designing, and implementing strategic marketing of the events & participating local businesses/partners
- Maintaining communications with artists, stakeholders, collaborators, & partnering venues
- Collecting data, conducting assessments, and making minor adjustments of programming to ensure ROI and maximum impact
- Finalizing process for Makers Market applications and preparing vendors for the re-launch of that component

SLW Q4:

Any suggested changes from the last event are kept in mind when meeting with stakeholders. Possible SLW collaborations are considered year round.

HMP Q4:

Q4 of FY25 will mark the point where the next Handmade Parade is one year out. Confirmation of 2026 HMP/WOA budget and any additional fundraising planning needs will occur. Also, preliminary planning will begin, as well as public marketing initiatives to ensure awareness of the 2026 return of the HMP.

Activities will include:

- Establish 2026 parade concepts and confirm the date.
- Plan outline of activities and other parade-adjacent events, including plans for the WOA.
- Confirm dates with community collaborators and calendars.
- Contact community groups, schools, and businesses to help them plan for the next HMP and invite them to participate in other events in Hillsborough in the meantime.
- Continue “adopt a puppet” program to engage other groups in repairing or re-working puppets to fit new themes.

G&GS Q4:

Standard operations continue and we see a spike in the late spring with more visitors in town as the weather improves. Monthly Last Fridays & the Art Walk receptions, artist talks, demonstrations, and pop-up workshops are held. Special promotions for mother’s day and other popular shopping holidays. Quarterly acceptance of new artists and cross-promotion of other major cultural events. Seasonal window displays are refreshed.

Outline/Overview of Job Tasks and Schedules

Please explain generally how the organization plans to accomplish all goals associated with the scope of work, including but not limited to, marketing, hiring, volunteer recruitment, exhibit development, event tasks, etc.

HAC is committed to building & enriching the Hillsborough community through the arts. The primary way we fulfill this mission is by offering 8+ public programs and signature events year-round. Doing so requires coordination and collaboration between staff, board, and volunteers 365 days per year. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in HAC’s over-reliance on volunteers for lead program management & mission fulfillment, and created an opportunity for the board to reassess personnel needs to ensure steady and sustainable growth for HAC. In FY21, the board hired part-time contractors

to begin fulfilling the marketing, programming, retail management, and fundraising needs of the organization. In FY22, the board voted to transition these employees to two separate full-time roles, further stabilizing, professionalizing, and investing in the consistent delivery of HAC's mission.

Going into FY23, HAC established 4 staff positions that execute daily operations: The Executive Director (FT), Program & Marketing Director (FT), Gallery & Volunteer Manager (FT), and Bookkeeper (PT).

Recognizing the need for experienced arts & nonprofit professionals to manage daily operations, the HAC board is gradually transitioning from a working board to a governing board that is focused on short and long term strategic planning and overall mission compliance. The full-time Executive Director is responsible for fundraising, grant writing, oversight of staff & programs, strategic planning, and community relationships. The full-time Program & Marketing Director oversees all day-to-day marketing efforts, develops and executes strategies to boost visibility of arts and culture in Hillsborough, and supports all public-facing/communications efforts of HAC. This staff member also currently takes the lead on nearly all day-to-day programming efforts, including permitting, contracting, and event planning, with support from other staff and volunteers. The Gallery & Volunteer Manager oversees the Gallery & Gift Shop, ensuring this vibrant shopping destination is open 6 days a week year-round, and is responsible for the behind-the-scenes and administrative aspects of the G&GS. A dedicated team of volunteers supports this crucial flagship operation of HAC, especially during weekends and evenings. This role also takes the lead on recruiting, training, and scheduling volunteers for all HAC programs, to ensure a consistent volunteer experience. The Bookkeeper, Treasurer of the Board, and a contracted CPA work together, along with the Executive Director, to maintain financial oversight, budget preparation and compliance, and daily financial procedures.

Historically, HAC staff and board worked with individual "program chairs", who were responsible for the logistics, volunteer recruitment, budget compliance/allocation, and other event related tasks, from planning to day-of coordination, for their assigned program. HAC is moving away from having a single program chair responsible for each program, and is instead resourcing all HAC programs with a broad team of volunteer leaders that have been recruited and organized based on skill-sets and volunteer role interest areas. This is creating a more collaborative and sustainable approach to manage the workload of program management, increasing the quality of HAC program delivery, and is reducing the silo effect of each HAC program operating uniquely and independently from another.

In FY25, HAC programs will be run by HAC staff, with assistance from volunteers as described above, and oversight from the Executive Committee/Board. This cooperative system allows for checks and balances to be in place, and for no single individual to be held responsible for all facets of any given program. Major programmatic decisions are ultimately made by the staff, with the board ensuring compliance with strategic plans. This includes the programs in this contract proposal. The Executive Committee monitors & reviews progress of staff and volunteers through regular reports submitted for each program and area of operation by the Executive Director. The Executive Committee utilizes board members & board committees for advice and insight on governing responsibilities. Board members are encouraged to be actively engaged with either a program or committee area that they are specifically well suited for.

Please explain how the organization is going to fundraise and build sustainability in FY25:

The HAC treasurer, Bookkeeper, and Executive Director work with HAC staff and lead volunteers of each program to set annual program budgets and determine overall needs. These budgets are set during the late spring budget cycle and staff are required to adhere to these budgets throughout the fiscal year. Any changes to this budget must be submitted to the treasurer for review, followed by approval from the board of directors prior to allocation of additional funds or budgetary adjustments. In FY23, HAC began implementing a re-forecasting process for the annual budget based on actual revenue and expenses, in effort to be more responsive to any major changes or deviations that may occur during the fiscal year. Initiatives to adopt full-cost budgeting and operations, an emerging best practice in the non-profit sector, is also underway, allowing us to improve our communications with funders about the comprehensive costs of running our programs.

HAC is entering a new season of strategic planning, and the HAC Board has been working closely with HAC staff and lead volunteers to outline a set of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) annual goals that will support the vision of the new strategic plan. The Board also attended a “Board Boot Camp” and “Organizational Assessment” program with the Executive Service Corps of the Triangle in spring 2023 that prepared us for further strategic planning and overall improved governance in FY25. A key component of our growth in FY25 will include offering more opportunities to garner feedback from our event partners, community stakeholders, artists, visitors, and the general public. It is important we check in regularly with those we serve to ensure our mission is still being executed to the best of its ability and that our programs, the majority of which are free & accessible to all, are aligning with the needs of our community.

Another key area of growth for the upcoming fiscal year, will be to expand staff once again to keep up with the demand for our programs. We will add a part-time Fundraising Coordinator position to grow our sustainer program, coordinate fundraising events with donors, and solicit corporate sponsors.

Please explain how the organization plans to grow tourism in Hillsborough in FY25:

The year-round flagship HAC events continue to see growth each year, bringing thousands of tourists to Hillsborough. With support from the Town, Tourism Board, and local businesses, we will be able to lead the charge in planning for the increase in crowds and grow our events. Our staff approaches each event strategically, notices growth trends, and plans accordingly. For FY25, we will partner with our local stakeholders to find creative solutions to event parking while integrating West Hillsborough. We will increase our efforts to advertise outside of Hillsborough and then ensure the infrastructure can support locals and tourists alike.

Marketing Plan

All HAC programs are promoted via strategic, organic, and paid marketing efforts that include:

- *HAC website - 26,000+ views/year*
- *HAC social media (unpaid/organic) - 45,000+ average reach/year*
- *HAC monthly newsletter - 6,100+ distribution list with 45% open rate*
- *HAC quarterly donor newsletter - 100+ highly engaged distribution list*
- *On-site marketing at events and at the G&GS - 30,000-40,000+ visitors/year*
- *Printed signage and flyers*
- *Press packages with high-quality photography and announcements to extensive list of media outlets*
- *Postings to 20+ community calendar to ensure inclusion & awareness of tourism-driving events*
- *Collaborative cross-promotions with local businesses and community groups*
- *Radio and/or TV advertising as budget allows*
- *Print advertising or features in print publications as budget allows*
- *Paid social media advertising as budget allows*

Please explain generally how the organization is going to provide the minimum requested marketing materials as well as any additional marketing and materials that will ensure the events/programs/projects/service/historic sites' success for Q1(July-Sept):

LFAW Q1:

- The LFAW season bridges our fiscal years. We create a comprehensive marketing plan for each LFAW season to ensure consistency of event promotion & carry it through the calendar year. The marketing plan established in spring 2024 will be carried across FY24 to FY25. Tweaks may be made based on progression of the season so far and any feedback received from key stakeholders; funds received to invest in this program will be outlined in the FY25 budget and allocated strategically to ensure proper prioritization of use. Renewal of artist contracts may occur in Q1, as well as infrastructure repairs or replacement as needed.
- Marketing & advertising efforts include detailed information about:
 - Each month's special entertainment and programming, such as artists, live music, and activities occurring around town.
 - 21+ art walk venues / local businesses actively engaged in LFAW programming
 - Recaps of previous month's arts programming + sneak peeks of what's to come for the next month, to entice repeat visitation and create urgency for returning
- An interactive map on the website will be updated and maintained to help event attendees find the various elements of entertainment during each LFAW
- A monthly one-pager with high-level overview of entertainment offerings + QR code linking back to website for interactive map and art walk venue listing details
- Distribution and restocking of the LFAW rack card designed at the beginning of the 2023 season to keep nearby visitors centers and other destinations receiving tourists aware of the program.
- Refreshed press package with updated photography announcing themes/entertainment line up for Q1 LFAW events

SLW Q1:

In Q1, we will confirm event logistics such as the date, route, and timeline. Our Program Director will prepare special event permits. Teasers and save-the-date marketing will begin via the website, social media, E-News, and flyers.

HMP Q1:

HMP marketing will be minimal during FY25 Q1. This will mostly be a debriefing time and an opportunity to remove any outdated marketing information about the 2024 HMP from the website; ensuring placeholder copy to maintain interest for the next HMP, but avoiding confusion with the public about when it is expected to occur again.

G&GS Q1:

The G&GS serves as an essential hub and resource for marketing material distribution, event information, and other tourism services - both for HAC programs and for Hillsborough's arts & culture events at large.

Please explain generally how the organization is going to provide the minimum requested marketing materials as well as any additional marketing and materials that will ensure the events/programs/projects/service/historic sites' success for Q2 (Oct-Dec):

LFAW Q2:

In addition to the efforts described for Q1, Q2 will feature special attention on holidays & seasonal marketing strategies. Collaboration with other groups driving tourism and providing signature events during the holiday season, such as Visit Hillsborough, the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, the Gingerbread Competition Team, and the Chamber. Q2 will round out the 2024 LFAW season. Other Q2 marketing efforts will communicate details about the “season finale” and a sneak peek/reminder to join us in Q3 for the 2025 LFAW season.

SLW Q2:

- Special event permits are submitted.
- Communications and administration begin for:
 - Contracted Entertainment
 - Food/beverage vendors
 - In-town Solstice Specials & Promotions
 - Community collaboration opportunities
- Marketing picks up:
 - Pre-event signage distribution begins
 - Flyer distribution continues
 - PR Package sent to 250+ local media outlets and arts partners
 - Social media posts/ads ramp up
 - WUNC Radio Ads begin
- On Nov. 1:
 - Lantern kits go on sale
 - Event registration opens
 - Solstice Market artist application goes live
- Website is updated to reflect:
 - Workshop & Lantern Kit Details
 - In-Town Solstice Specials & Promotions
 - Solstice Market Artists, Food/Bev, and Entertainment
 - Know Before You Go
- Lead volunteers prepare luminaries and event supplies.
- Day-of event volunteers are organized.

HMP Q2:

HMP marketing will be minimal during Q2. This will mostly be a time for updating and ensuring placeholder copy to maintain interest for the next HMP and re-engage stakeholders/internal groups early on in the planning process for the 2026 parade.

G&GS Q2:

The G&GS serves as an essential hub and resource for marketing material distribution, event information, and other tourism services - both for HAC programs and for Hillsborough's arts & culture events at large. During our busiest time of year and the holiday season, there is more information to be shared about special promotions and events occurring around town.

Please explain generally how the organization is going to provide the minimum requested marketing materials as well as any additional marketing and materials that will ensure the events/programs/projects/service/historic sites' success for Q3 (Jan-March):

LFAW Q3:

In Q3 HAC develops updated branding, print materials, maps, and other marketing resources for venues to use as they finalize plans for the upcoming LFAW season. This quarter requires a lot of behind-the-scenes planning, communications, and alignment with LFAW partners and venues to ensure marketing materials are developed with accurate information and strategies to drive tourism. Artist contracts are signed for the 2025 season, when appropriate, and entertainment will be mapped out to build momentum strategically.

In January and February, the activities of participating Art Walk venues are cross-promoted on HAC social media and e-news channels, and the HAC website is updated to reflect this quieter, but still active, time period.

Towards the end of February, HAC will roll out the new marketing program for the upcoming 2025 season. This may include rack cards, posters, flyers, as well as other print and online materials. Community event calendars will be updated and press packages distributed. Artist applications for the Makers Market/nonprofit showcases open up through online, e-news, and social media promotions. Preparations for the HAC info booth at 2025 LFAWs, and any necessary equipment repairs or replacements will occur in this quarter to ensure a smooth and successful LFAW season.

- Ramping up in March, marketing & advertising efforts include detailed information about:
 - Themes and priorities for special entertainment and programming, such as artists, live music, and activities occurring around town.
 - 21+ art walk venues / local businesses actively engaged in LFAW programming
 - Sneak peeks of what's to come this season, to entice repeat visitation and create urgency for joining each month
- An interactive map on the website will be updated and maintained to help event attendees find the various elements of entertainment during each LFAW
- A monthly one-pager with high-level overview of entertainment offerings + QR code linking back to website for interactive map and art walk venue listing details
- Distribution of the 2025 LFAW rack card/flyer/brochure to inform nearby visitors centers and other destinations receiving tourists about the upcoming season
- 2025 LFAW press package with updated photography announcing major themes/entertainment line up/participating art walk venues this season.

SLW Q3:

Following the Solstice Lantern Walk, volunteers and staff members meet to debrief and reflect on successes and areas of improvement. Additionally, debrief surveys are sent to all volunteers and market vendors to collect feedback. Staff members compile ideas and begin organizing resources for next year.

HMP Q3:

HMP marketing will be minimal during Q3. This will mostly be a time for updating and ensuring placeholder copy to maintain interest for the next HMP and re-engage stakeholders/internal groups early on in the planning process for the 2026 parade. The “adopt a puppet” initiative may ramp up again towards the end of Q3, to begin identifying groups and partners who are willing to help manage puppets for the 2026 parade.

G&GS Q3:

Once reopened from a brief winter break, reengagement activities with the public will commence to drive traffic back to the G&GS and around historic Hillsborough. This reengagement will whet the public's appetite for HAC's 2025 calendar year programmatic activities with LFAW. Advertising regarding the new gallery exhibitions will also be implemented.

Please explain generally how the organization is going to provide the minimum requested marketing materials as well as any additional marketing and materials that will ensure the events/programs/projects/service/historic sites' success for Q4 (April-June):

LFAW Q4:

- Continued marketing & advertising efforts include detailed information about:
 - Each month's special entertainment and programming, such as artists, live music, and activities occurring around town.
 - 21+ art walk venues / local businesses actively engaged in LFAW programming
 - Recaps of previous month's arts programming + sneak peeks of what's to come for the next month, to entice repeat visitation and create urgency for returning each month
- An interactive map on the website will be updated and maintained to help event attendees find the various elements of entertainment during each LFAW
- A monthly one-pager with high-level overview of entertainment offerings + QR code linking back to website for interactive map and art walk venue listing details
- Distribution and restocking of the LFAW rack card designed at the beginning of the 2024 season to keep nearby visitors centers and other destinations receiving tourists aware of the program.
- Refreshed press package with updated photography announcing themes/entertainment line up for Q4 LFAW events

SLW Q4:

SLW marketing will be minimal during Q3. This is mostly a time for behind the scenes preparations for Q1.

HMP Q4:

Q4 will mark the point where the 2026 parade is one year out; marketing efforts around this message may begin, to ensure the public saves the date and is aware of the pending return of this beloved program. This will continue to be a time for updating and ensuring placeholder copy to maintain interest for the next HMP and re-engage stakeholders/internal groups early on in the planning process for the 2026 parade. The adopt-a-puppet initiative and other marketing campaigns may be implemented, to engage groups and partners who are willing to help manage a plan for the 2026 parade. Themes and elements of HMP may be integrated into other HAC programs/marketing efforts.

G&GS Q4:

Marketing efforts in Q4 will be focused on driving tourism to Hillsborough for LFAW, other town-wide summer events/activities, and the continually revamped array of local artwork available for sale.

Detailed Proposed Budget - LFAW

a. Item	b. Amount Needed via Contract Funding in FY25 (for each item)	c. Amount Contributed by Organization (for each item) <i>*Info provided here reflects all other earned & contributed revenue sources from HAC budget for LFAW</i>	d. Other Funding Sources		e. Total Contract Budget (add columns b-d)
			Amount	Source	
1. LFAW Performance Services (9 months of entertainment, \$1800-\$2200 per month)	\$8,650		\$6,250	NC Arts Council	\$14,900
2. LFAW Makers Market Port-a-lets (6 months at \$419 each)	\$2,514				\$2,514
3. LFAW Licenses & Permits (venue reservations, signage permits, vendor fees)	\$700				\$700
4. LFAW Advertising - paid, print and digital/online	\$1,200		\$1,200	NC Arts Council	\$2,400

5. LFAW Marketing - Signage, Rack Cards, and Flyers; branded materials	\$250		\$250	NC Arts Council	\$500
6. Contracted services & equipment for capturing high-quality photography & videography of tourism-driving activities/LFAW	\$900		\$900	NC Arts Council	\$1,800
7. Equipment rental - lighting (Get Lit), other	\$100		\$2,000	Town of Hillsborough	\$2,100
8. Supplies for workshops & art-making activity tables at LFAW	\$400		\$400	NC Arts Council	\$800
9. Other supplies and program sustainability costs	\$300		\$300		\$600
9. Personnel & payroll for year-round LFAW program coordination & fulfillment of tourism services (allocated personal costs assoc. with sustaining operations of this program: 25% of Exec. Director's time, 35% of Program & Marketing Director's time, 10% of Gallery & Volunteer Manager's time, 15% of Bookkeeper's time)	\$6,486	\$25,274	\$24,576	NC Arts Council	\$56,336
10. Administrative expenses & overhead allocated for year-round LFAW program coordination & fulfillment of tourism services (including volunteer stewardship, web services & subscriptions, office supplies, occupancy & storage, insurance, etc.)	\$2,000	\$4,324	\$5,000	NC Arts Council	\$11,324

11. LFAW Volunteer hours Est. 500 hrs./FY @ \$29.95 (Nat. Average)		\$14,975		Information shared for awareness of volunteer investment, <u>not added into budget totals.</u>	
TOTALS (sum of each column)	\$23,500 (9 months of full Last Fridays & the Art Walk programming, 12 months of services)	\$44,299	\$40,876	NC Arts Council; Town of Hillsborough	\$93,974 TOTAL PROGRAM INVESTMENT COSTS

Detailed Proposed Budget - Solstice Lantern Walk

a. Item	b. Amount Needed via Contract Funding in FY25 (for each item)	c. Amount Contributed by Organization (for each item) <i>*Info provided here reflects all other earned & contributed revenue sources from HAC budget for HMP/HMM</i>	d. Other Funding Sources		e. Total Contract Budget (add columns b-d)
			Amount	Source	
1. Sanitation	\$420				\$420
2. Equipment rental: Lighting/Heating	\$600		\$1,000	Town of Hillsborough	\$1,600
3. Performance Services (pre and post walk entertainment)	\$1,275				\$1,275
4. ticketing fees	\$555				\$555
5. Spiral of Light Supplies/Artist Honorarium/Planning/Building	\$300				\$300

6. Workshop Instructor Fees & Supplies	\$500				\$500
7. Supplies (lantern kits, ground luminaries, etc.)	\$1,000	\$950			\$1,950
8. Permits (Town, County, Signage, Vendors)	\$475				\$475
9. Marketing Services, Advertising, & Promotions	\$1,000	\$630			\$1,630
10. Technology Services & Web Software - SLW specific	\$200	\$1,046			\$1,246
11. Printing & Copying - SLW specific	\$300	\$334			\$634
12. Insurance - SLW specific	\$200	\$280			\$480
13. Office, Storage, & Retail Space - SLW specific	\$175	\$2,310			\$2,485
14. Portion of Staff Salaries Specifically Required to Operate SLW	\$3,000	\$48,961			\$51,961
TOTALS (sum of each column)	\$10,000	\$54,511	\$1,000	Town of Hillsborough	\$65,511 TOTAL PROGRAM INVESTMENT COSTS

Detailed Proposed Budget - HMP/HMM/WOA

a. Item	b. Amount Needed via Contract Funding in FY25 (for each item)	c. Amount Contributed by Organization (for each item) <i>*Info provided here reflects all other earned & contributed revenue sources from HAC budget for HMP/HMM</i>	d. Other Funding Sources		e. Total Contract Budget (add columns b-d)

1. Production expenses, equipment rental, storage, & transportation for HMP puppets & HMM event supplies	\$500	\$500			\$1,000
2. HMP Performance Services	\$3,250	\$3,250			\$6,500
3. HMP/HMM Advertising - paid, print and digital/online	\$500	\$500			\$1,000
4. HMP/HMM Marketing - Signage, Postcards, and Flyers; branded materials	\$500	\$500			\$1,000
5. HMP & HMM Port-a-lets	\$600				\$600
6. HMP & HMM Licenses & Permits (venue reservations, signage permits, vendor fees)	\$1,000				\$1,000
7. Teaching instructors & supplies for art-making/puppet building workshops & activities in lead up to HMP		\$500			\$500
8. Personnel & payroll for HMP program coordination & fulfillment of tourism services (allocated personal costs assoc. with sustaining operations of this program: 20% of Exec. Director's time, 25% of Program & Marketing Director's time, 10% of Gallery & Volunteer Manager's time, 15% of Bookkeeper's time)	\$2,000	\$26,432			\$28,432

9. Administrative expenses & overhead allocated for year-round LFAW program coordination & fulfillment of tourism services (including volunteer stewardship, web services & subscriptions, office supplies, occupancy & storage, insurance, etc.)	\$1,650	\$3,808			\$5,458
12. Volunteer hours Est. 800 hrs. @ \$29.95 (Nat. Average)		\$23,960		Information shared for awareness of volunteer investment, <u>not added into budget totals.</u>	
TOTALS (sum of each column)	\$10,000 (\$5,000 split between FY25 & FY26 for Handmade Parade & Market)	\$35,490			\$45,490 TOTAL PROGRAM INVESTMENT COSTS

Detailed Proposed Budget - G&GS

a. Item	b. Amount Needed via Contract Funding in FY25 (for each item)	c. Amount Contributed by Organization (for each item) <i>*Info provided here reflects all other earned & contributed revenue sources from HAC budget for G&GS</i>	d. Other Funding Sources		e. Total Contract Budget (add columns b-d)

1. Marketing & operations for the Gallery & Gift Shop - physical signage, displays, materials, advertising, etc.	\$815				\$815
2. Retail services supplies & equipment - merchandising supplies, technical upgrades, fees	\$185	\$9,278			\$9,463
3. Personnel & payroll for G&GS program coordination & fulfillment of tourism services (allocated personal costs assoc. with sustaining operations of this program: 25% of Exec. Director's time, 10% of Program & Marketing Director's time, 70% of Gallery & Volunteer Manager's time, 50% of Bookkeeper's time)	\$2,000	\$65,604			\$67,604
4. Administrative expenses & overhead allocated for year-round G&GS program coordination & fulfillment of tourism services (including volunteer stewardship, web services & subscriptions, office supplies, occupancy & storage, insurance, etc.)	\$2,000	\$19,486			\$21,486
5. Volunteer hours Est. 1200 hrs. @ \$29.95 (Nat. Average)		\$35,940		Information shared for awareness of volunteer investment, <u>not added into budget totals.</u>	

TOTALS (sum of each column)	\$5,000 (for year-round operations of G&GS)	\$85,777		\$90,777 TOTAL PROGRAM INVESTMENT COSTS (Does not include artist commissions covered through consignment sales of artwork)
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Signatures

I hereby certify that the information contained in this proposal is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I have reviewed the Town of Hillsborough's Non-profit Guidelines and our organization is in compliance.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Signature: 	Date: 3/27/24
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Printed Name: Heather Tatreau

BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Signature: 	Date: 3/27/24
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Printed Name: Joshua Collins

FY25 Tourism Contract Budget Increase Justification Form: Last Friday and The Art Walk

Explain any increase in the requested contract line item amounts or any added line items from the previous fiscal year. Use multiple sheets for multiple budget increases or requests. For example, if you're asking for additional funds for marketing AND additional funding for a new staff member, you would submit two separate budget justification forms, one for each line item.

Request Overview:

We need to increase our budget for Last Fridays and the Art Walk to keep up with rising costs and increased crowds. Having the right number of port-a-lets and staff members at our high traffic events is crucial to serving our attendees. We need to increase our advertising and marketing budget to meet rising costs and continue to attract tourists from outside of the town with targeted ads. These essential needs will cost a combined total of \$2,200 more than last fiscal year and support tourism in Hillsborough.

We would like to increase the number of performers that we hire at our busiest LFAW events. Currently, we only have enough budgeted for one hour of live music on our main lawn each month. Some possible uses of more money in our performance budget are an increase in hours we offer music on the main lawn, hiring a dance company to teach a group lesson to attendees, and providing entertainment in West Hillsborough during LFAW. More entertainment means that attendees will stay longer and ultimately, will spend more tourist dollars. We also see this as a way to expand LFAWs and encourage non-residents to see Hillsborough as a destination for weekend arts and entertainment. The more we offer, the more we are able to appeal to a wider audience. We are requesting an increase of \$2,400 to our performance budget in FY25.

We would like to hire professional photographers more often at our LFAW events to capture the spirit of the events. These photographs can be used for promotion on our website, in the news, and on marketing materials. Video content can be shared immediately via social media to increase attendance. Having professional photographs have been instrumental in gathering the visual materials needed to apply for funding and advertise events. With more bandwidth, we can cover more of the events around town and help promote local businesses. We are requesting an increase of \$400 to our photography budget in FY25.

Prioritize Requests as 1, 2, or 3 (1=Must do; 2=Should do; and 3=Could do):

Performance Services - 2

Port-a-lets - 1

Advertising and Marketing - 1

Photography - 2

Personnel - 1

Line-items where funds are requested (number from budget and description of line-item):

Line items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9 of the LFAW budget:

1. Performance Services - \$2,400 increase requested

2. Port-a-lets - \$314 increase requested

4-5. (and line 5 combined) Advertising and Marketing - \$450 increase requested

6. Photography - \$400 increase requested
9. Personnel - \$1,436 increase requested
TOTAL increase requested - \$5,000

Describe request:

Please see the overview section above.

Discuss how the request links to the Strategic Tourism Plan Goals/Implementation Projects:

The monthly LFAW outlined above is directly connected to, and an example of, the following strategies outlined in the Town of Hillsborough's current strategic tourism plan:

- Incrementally grow the tourism base and expand the types of tourists that visit Hillsborough by providing information, creative marketing, consistent communications, and interesting arts, music, outdoor, and cultural events.
- Market Hillsborough as a beautiful and charming small town with a long, rich history, vibrant art and music scene, great outdoor recreation opportunities, and delicious food and beverage.
- Maintain and work to expand the economic vibrancy and diversity in business types of our town-wide commercial community.
- Foster and support long term strategic tourism planning while continuing to grow and improve the Tourism Program.
- Maintain a vibrant, friendly, clean, and attractive destination to keep visitors coming here and returning year after year.

Alternatives & impact if request is not funded:

If the increased funding for port-a-lets, personnel, and advertising/marketing is not funded, we will not be able to keep up with demand for LFAW. Staff will need to spend time securing funding elsewhere, jeopardizing the quality of our programming.

If the performance budget is not increased, we will maintain our offerings from last season. However, without growth in programming, attendees may lose interest and crowds may not be as robust. We have an opportunity for meaningful growth with this budget increase. We also have an opportunity for documenting our impact by hiring more photographers for LFAWs. Without an increase in budget here, we risk stagnation.

Additional information:

Thank you for your support of the Hillsborough Arts Council over the years. Our mission and purpose for existence is to build our community through the arts, and partnership with the Town of Hillsborough is essential for us to fulfill the needs of the artists, visitors, and arts supporters whom we serve. We are honored to be part of the creative fabric & identity of Hillsborough, and we look forward to working together to ensure Hillsborough is recognized across the state as a premier tourist destination and a historical, cultural, and artistic gem.

FY25 Tourism Contract Budget Increase Justification Form: Solstice Lantern Walk

Explain any increase in the requested contract line item amounts or any added line items from the previous fiscal year. **Use multiple sheets for multiple budget increases or requests.** For example, if you're asking for additional funds for marketing AND additional funding for a new staff member, you would submit two separate budget justification forms, one for each line item.

Request Overview:

The Solstice Lantern Walk (SLW) is one of the most widely known cultural events in Hillsborough, as demonstrated by a feature in Our State Magazine. This event has a strong track record of bringing thousands of visitors, residents, and tourists to town to enjoy the handmade lanterns and share their own creations. We have helped make Hillsborough a holiday cultural destination with the continuation of last year's successful Maker Market, the addition of food trucks, having greater collaboration with the Tourism Board, Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, local businesses/restaurants, Hillsborough's impressive network of artists, and more.

For the past two fiscal years, the Tourism Board has supported the annual Solstice Lantern Walk in the amount of \$10,000 each year through a special project grant. This funding has proved essential to the operation and growth of the event. This event grew from 3,000 to 4,500 attendees in the last year alone, with an estimated 3,105 tourists attending the 2023 SLW. We anticipate continued growth, and thus, need continued funding for this yearly event. We respectfully request sustaining support in our Tourism Board Partnership Contract in the amount of \$10,000 to continue to offer this event each year.

Prioritize Requests as 1, 2, or 3 (1=Must do; 2=Should do; and 3=Could do):

Sanitation - 1
Equipment rental - 1
Performance services - 1
Ticketing fees - 1
Spiral of Light supplies, planning, building - 1
Workshop instructor fees and supplies (lantern building) - 1
Supplies (lantern kits, ground luminaries, etc) - 1
Permits - 1
Marketing services - 1
Technology services - 1
Printing and copying - 1
Insurance - 1
Office, storage, retail space (SLW specific) - 1
Portion of staff salaries specifically required to operate SLW - 1

Each of these line items are essential for providing the level of quality we have built into the reputation of this event, which keeps attendees coming back year over year and attracting new participants.

Line-item where funds are requested (number from budget and description of line-item):

Line items 1-14 of the SLW budget:

1. Sanitation - \$420
2. Equipment rental (lighting/heating) - \$600
3. Performance services (entertainment) - \$1,275
4. Ticketing fees - \$555
5. Spiral of Light supplies, planning, building - \$300
6. Workshop instructor fees and supplies (lantern building) - \$500
7. Supplies (lantern kits, ground luminaries, etc) - \$1,000
8. Permits - \$475
9. Marketing services - \$1,000
10. Technology services - \$200
11. Printing and copying - \$300
12. Insurance - \$200
13. Office, storage, retail space (SLW specific) - \$175
14. Portion of staff salaries specifically required to operate SLW - \$3,000

TOTAL request - \$10,000 (total budget = \$65,511)

Describe request:

We are asking for support with a fraction of the overall costs that HAC incurs to operate this essential tourism event. Additional funding comes from the Town of Hillsborough and HAC fundraising efforts in the amount of \$55,511 to meet the total cost to run this program. HAC has proven to successfully invest funding from the Tourism Board's Special Project Grant for the operation of the Solstice Lantern Walk over the past two years. We are now asking for sustained funding to help ensure we can continue to drive revenue, tourism, and community impact with this yearly event.

Our overall operation plan will remain the same in FY25. However, each year, we seek to make the event even better and more efficient in its operation. SLW 2024 will have more designated viewing areas, off-ramps for shorter walk alternatives, and we will revisit the route to consider ways to include West Hillsborough.

Discuss how the request links to the Strategic Tourism Plan Goals/Implementation Projects:

The yearly Solstice Lantern Walk outlined above is directly connected to, and an example of, the following strategies outlined in the Town of Hillsborough's current strategic tourism plan:

- Incrementally grow the tourism base and expand the types of tourists that visit Hillsborough by providing information, creative marketing, consistent communications, and interesting arts, music, outdoor, and cultural events.
- Market Hillsborough as a beautiful and charming small town with a long, rich history, vibrant art and music scene, great outdoor recreation opportunities, and delicious food and beverage.
- Maintain and work to expand the economic vibrancy and diversity in business types of our town-wide commercial community.
- Foster and support long term strategic tourism planning while continuing to grow and improve the Tourism Program.

- Maintain a vibrant, friendly, clean, and attractive destination to keep visitors coming here and returning year after year.

Alternatives & impact if request is not funded:

Tourism Board funding of a portion of the operating costs of the Solstice Lantern Walk is essential to keeping this event going, maintaining a quality experience to meet participant expectations, and addressing the challenges of inevitable growth. Without a yearly investment of \$10,000 from the Tourism Board, our staff would need to reallocate their time toward finding private funding. This would take away from crucial planning time needed to execute this event. I fear that the quality of the SLW would suffer, which would have a negative impact on tourism in Hillsborough.

Additional information:

Thank you for your support of the Hillsborough Arts Council over the years. Our mission and purpose for existence is to build our community through the arts, and partnership with the Town of Hillsborough is essential for us to fulfill the needs of the artists, visitors, and arts supporters whom we serve. We are honored to be part of the creative fabric & identity of Hillsborough, and we look forward to working together to ensure Hillsborough is recognized across the state as a premier tourist destination and a historical, cultural, and artistic gem.

For more details about the SLW, please refer to our 2024 end of project report.