

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendation to approve revisions to the Tourist Development Council (TDC) recommended guidelines for payment or reimbursement of expenses related to attracting a group meeting to Collier County, and for County Finance to pay expenses covered by these guidelines up to an annual total program cost of \$150,000

OBJECTIVE: To recommend staff requested revisions to guidelines for payment or reimbursement of travel expenses to meeting planners, group meeting hotels, travel journalists and travel agents.

CONSIDERATIONS: The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the use of emergency advertising funds in the amount of \$500,000 on February 22, 2011 to support a special promotion to increase the number of meeting planners selecting our destination for their meetings and events. On January 10, 2012, the BCC approved the guidelines recommended (8-0) by the TDC on November 28, 2011. Staff had requested the BCC approve some enhancements to those guidelines developed through input from meeting planners and by a sales committee of Collier meeting hotel sales professionals. The BCC requested that staff review those enhancements with the TDC and bring them back to the BCC for approval at a future meeting.

Below are the suggested changes and enhancements to the Group Meeting Planner Guidelines:

- Add the term “Fam” (short for Familiarization Trips) to the title of the guidelines and wherever the word “Site” is used. The wording should read “Site/Fam” in all Guidelines bullet points.
- To the first paragraph of the Guidelines, add the sentence “It covers in-market Fam/Site trips for groups of planners seeing the destination and being hosted by area hotels, attractions and destination venues and includes all types of transportation.”
- In the fifth bullet point, add the sentence “Site/Fam reimbursement to hotels and attractions or restaurants/venues hosting multiple planners for specific events will qualify for reimbursement.”
- In the eighth bullet point, add the sentence “A tourism department staff members’ County Purchasing card will be used for some payments in instances where practical.”
- Bullet # 13 should read: “All transportation and other expenses from the planner(s) or their client (s) will be booked by a travel agent of the planner’s choice or by a Collier County local Travel Agent.”
- Add new bullet # 16 to read; “Another qualification that would justify planners on a Site/Fam would be if they are already in the destination with

- a group of planners for another event and a pre or post Site/Fam is planned around their attendance.”
- Add bullet point # 23: “If the specific planner has had a recent site in the destination, they may not qualify for a second site. The CVB staff will look at each set of circumstances to qualify the planner for a return trip.”
 - Add bullet # 24: “Clients of planners who are decision makers or contract signers can also qualify for site/fam reimbursements.”
 - Add bullet # 25: “Hotels may apply for Site/Fam funding assistance if they are bringing a group of planners/ clients in at the same time hosting events for them locally.”

FISCAL IMPACT: The budget of \$150,000 for this use of tourist tax emergency funding is in the approved FY 12 Fund 196 budget.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPACT: There is no impact to the Growth Management Plan from this action.

ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS: The Tourist Development Council (TDC) recommended approval of the original guidelines (8-0) at their November 28, 2011 regular meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the Tourist Development Council recommended guidelines for payment of meeting planner travel and other expenses related to attracting a group meeting to Collier County and authorize County Finance to pay expenses covered by these guidelines up to a total annual program cost of \$150,000.

PREPARED BY: Jack Wert, Tourism Director

ATTACHMENTS: In-Market Meeting Planner Site/Fam Guidelines



In-Market Meeting Planner Site/Fam Guidelines FY 12 Budget \$150,000.00

These guidelines cover support of in-market Sites and Familiarization (Fam) trips for the purpose of bringing meeting planners to the destination. It covers both hotel specific Sites and Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) planned destination Sites. It covers in market Fam trips for groups of planners seeing the destination and being hosted by area hotels, attractions and destination venues and includes all types of transportation.

In order to qualify for funding for assistance with a Site/Fam the following criteria must be followed:

The CVB will offer transportation reimbursement as an added incentive for group meeting planners to encourage them to visit the destination when comparing our area to other competing destinations. The planner must have an open, active Request for Proposal (RFP) with one of our group meeting properties. All submissions for CVB Sites/Fams funding should be sent via email to Debide@colliergov.net and cc: JackWert@colliergov.net. We will respond to each request within 72 hours.

- The CVB must have funding available in the fiscal year budget that the Site or Fam will occur.
- Site/Fam planning must be done with CVB staff support and knowledge.
- The CVB staff must be allowed to attend the Site/Fam (as available) or an event that is part of the Site/Fam and be able to provide destination marketing materials, CVB collateral, welcome gifts and to deliver a welcome presentation of up to 5 minutes to the planner.
- The request for funding must be delivered to the CVB staff in writing for a specific amount documented with written estimates.
- The request for funding cannot be for rooms or other hotel in kind trade or for on-site restaurant expenses. Site/Fam reimbursement to hotels and attractions or restaurants/venues hosting multiple planners for specific events will qualify for reimbursement.
- The request for funding must include the number of people expected in attendance, an attendee list (will be held in confidence by the CVB) that includes planner name, Company, email and phone for follow up tracking and accountability by the CVB. Participant list will be shared with all County entities who participated in the Site/Fam.
- No funding for "over the top events" will be approved- events must be "industry practical".
- All funding requests and estimates must be received by the CVB in advance of the event so that Purchase Orders' can be requested and in place prior to the Site/Fam. A tourism department staff members' County Purchasing card will be used for some payments in instances when practical.
- All approved funding requests must be tracked by the hosting hotel and reports sent to the CVB monthly on ROI (Return on Investment) or potential

FLORIDA'S™
LAST PARADISE

Convention &
Visitors Bureau
2800 N. Horseshoe Drive
Naples, FL 34104
Phone: 239-252-2384
Fax: 239-252-2404
www.ParadiseCoast.com



ROI, including dates, room nights and revenue potential, and potential Food & Beverage (F&B). Planner company name and contact information must also be provided with this information.

- Lost business reports will also be required by the hotels if the planner does not contract the group in their hotel.
- The Site/Fam participants must have the potential to bring future group business to Collier County and must have an open RFP with at least one Collier hotel.
- Allowable Site/Fam transportation expenses will include the lowest available Coach Airfare, airport transfers, mileage reimbursement at the current County rate, or other transportation means to get the planner(s)/Clients to the County.
- All transportation and other expenses from the planner(s) or their client (s) will be booked by a travel agent of the planner's choice or by a Collier County local Travel Agent.
- The CVB has the authority to plan Site/Fam itineraries with the greater good of the County in mind showing multiple hotels to the planner that fit the RFP parameters, and offsite venues, restaurants, attractions and other venues that would entice the planner to book the destination.
- Our destination needs to be on the planner "Short list".
- Another qualification that would justify planners on a Site/Fam would be if they are already in the destination with a group of planners for another event and a pre or post Site/Fam is planned around their attendance.
- Planners need to fly into RSW Southwest Florida International Airport if at all possible, with Ft. Lauderdale or Miami as possible alternatives.
- Hotels will work with the CVB to coordinate these Sites/Fams and in hosting planner complimentary accommodations, meals in kind and transportation assistance.
- On occasion, hotels will be requested to assist in planning Sites/Fams to the destination if the CVB is not available for this assistance.
- The CVB will inform planners who send their RFP's to the CVB for distribution to our area hotels that this Site/Fam "free" transportation is available and encourage them to come to the area for the Site/Fam.
- The hotels may also request CVB Site/Fam transportation funding for Sites/Fams with planners that they have open RFP's with that need an extra incentive to close the contract.
- A 50 room night minimum is required for planners to receive transportation incentives from the CVB or hotel partners.
- If the specific planner has had a recent Site/Fam in the destination, they may not qualify for a second site/fam. The CVB staff will look at each set of circumstances to qualify the planner for a return trip.
- Clients of planners who are decision makers or contract signers can also qualify for Site/Fam reimbursements.
- Hotels may apply for Site/Fam funding assistance if they are bringing a group of planners/clients in at the same time hosting events for them locally.

FLORIDA'S™
LAST PARADISE

Convention &
Visitors Bureau
2800 N. Horseshoe Drive
Naples, FL 34104
Phone: 239-252-2384
Fax: 239-252-2404
www.ParadiseCoast.com



Other Tourism Industry Partner Sites/**Fams**:

- Local Transportation Companies may apply to receive Site/**Fam** and RFP enhancement funding if transportation is the key issue to close the contract.
- Collier Transportation companies may apply for assistance of up to 50% of their retail cost. Reimbursements will be for no more than 50% of actual retail cost for the service.
- Off-site event venues may also apply for transportation funding to get planners Sites/**Fams** to their venues in order to help close the sale and go to contract.
- In-kind services or donations are expected from all tourism partners participating in the Site/**Fam**.
- Group market media may also be invited to attend, photograph events and interview planners and would qualify for transportation funding. (This does not apply to all media, only group market).

FLORIDA'S™
LAST PARADISE

Convention &
Visitors Bureau
2800 N. Horseshoe Drive
Naples, FL 34104
Phone: 239-252-2384
Fax: 239-252-2404
www.ParadiseCoast.com