



**Local Sports Destination Enhancement Grant Application**

**GRANT APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

Requested Amount: \$ 50,000

Organization Name: National Hot Rod Association

Authorized Contact Name and Phone Number: Tanner Watkins (618-445-1754)

Board President Name and Contact Number: Kasey Coler (317-969-3500)

Project / Activity Name: NHRA Gatornationals

Project / Activity Dates: March 5-8, 2026

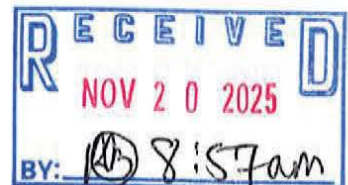
Mailing Address: 1211 N CR 225

City: Gainesville

State: Florida

Zip Code: 32609

Email Address: twatkins@nhra.com/gainesvillraceway@nhra.com





## Local Sports Destination Enhancement Grant Application

**Please attach the following:**

- Grant Application Cover Page
- Addenda Question and Answers; initialed

**Required Budget Documents**

- A statement of revenues and expenses for the most recently completed fiscal year.
- A complete copy of your filed most recently filed IRS Form 990
- Detailed project / event budget for applicants whose primary organizational purpose or mission is not to attract audience members and for governmental and educational institutions. (Note: funding request amounts will be based on that figure rather than the organizational budget.)

**Required Organizational Documents**

- Authorized Signatory** – Provide proof of persons authorized to sign contracts by submitting a Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations registration copy, board resolution or other evidentiary document.
- Board of Directors** – Provide a list indicating officers and all directors’ contact information including business and home addresses and telephone numbers.
- Current **State of Florida Solicitation License** from the Florida Department of Agriculture.

**Application Documents**

- Up to 5 letters of support.

Additional supporting documents, attach examples of past brochures, programs, reviews, advertising, social media posts, and social media metrics and engagement reports.

**Attendance (40 points)**

1. Attendance Ratio Score Calculation (see chart below). (34 points)

Funding request divided by attendance = Ratio Score

4.0 and below = 34 points | 4.1 – 9.9 = 30 points | 10-14.9 = 25 points | 15 and higher = 20 points

Examples:

Funding Request	Attendance	Ratio	Points
\$10,000	20,000	.5	34 points
\$50,000	50,000	1	34 points
\$35,000	6,000	5.8	30 points
\$25,000	2,000	12.5	25 points
\$10,000	500	20	20 points
\$5,000	100	50	20 points

Calculate  
Your Ratio  
Here →

\$50,000                      100,000                      0.5                      34 pts.



## Local Sports Destination Enhancement Grant Application

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2. Detailed explanation of how attendance estimates were determined. (2 points – 250 words)

Attendance for the 2025 Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals is determined by total daily attendance, which includes ticket buyers, suite holders and their guests, paid participants and their crews, and vendors.

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3. Attendance over previous two years with evaluation report of how is attendance is tracked and verified based on ticket sales, research, surveys, etc. (4 points – 300 words)

Attached ticketing document provides a confidential look at ticket sales/fan attendance periodically at the Gatornationals. (Note: Years before/after Covid show impact on event, plus latest 2025 numbers).

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**Local Sports Destination Enhancement Grant Application**

**Merit and Support (30 points)**

- 1. History of the organization and its contribution to sporting activities in Alachua County.  
(10 points – 400 words)

The National Hot Rod Association (a 501C-6 Organization) has hosted racing at Gainesville Raceway for more than 50 years, the first year being in 1969. The National Hot Rod Association purchased the facility more than 30 years ago in an effort to provide those that have a "need for speed" a safe place to race, while also making sure that the NHRA Gatornationals has a secure future. In addition to drag racing, Gainesville Raceway hosts an assortment of additional events which includes bicycling competitions, high school graduations, police training and more. The facility has been a long-time partner with Alachua County and base on upcoming re-investment, we plan to be long term partners in the future.

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- 2. Significance of the sporting event in the community and the quality of the proposed project.  
(10 points– 400 words)

The NHRA Gatornationals is a longstanding professional motorsports event which has been supported by the community in a variety of ways. A local booster group was created in order to ensure community connections are maintained via charitable contributions, plus Gainesville Raceway plays host to one of the largest Chamber of Commerce mixer functions of the year, at no cost to the Chamber. From the NHRA perspective, the Gatornationals is the second-largest event on the NHRA Mission Foods Drag Racing Series national touring schedule. Continued substantial community support has lifted this event to Crown Jewel status in NHRA drag racing, while also positioning the event as a signature opportunity for our TV partners at FOX Sports to promote Alachua County and the surrounding community throughout eight-plus hours of weekend broadcasts.

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### Local Sports Destination Enhancement Grant Application

3. Community support, grants, collaborations and/or in-kind contributions. (5 points – 300 words)  
A majority of in-kind support we receive in the community is via the Chamber of Commerce. We choose not to pursue many of the grants and support that are offered throughout Alachua County and the State of Florida, allowing many other fellow not-for-profits to further expand their endeavors and support. This grant does speak to the nature of the NHRA Gatornationals, which includes welcoming guests from all across the United States to Alachua County to celebrate a deeply-rooted tradition - in the form of the NHRA Gatornationals.

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4. Up to 5 letters of support. (5 points – Attach.)

- Excellent: 25-30 points:** Organizational timeline and contributions clearly demonstrate growth, sustainability, and expansion with specific examples. Projects are well-defined, achievable, unique, and reflect excellence. Clear evidence the organization follows best practices in multi-sourced funding strategies with examples of diversified and broad-based community support.
- Good: 20-24 points:** Organizational timeline and contributions are defined. Projects are defined and achievable. Funding strategies provide examples of outside support.
- Fair: 15-19 points:** Little evidence of contributions, sustainability or growth. Programs are not well-defined or achievable. Outside funding sources are lacking and there is little evidence of broader community support.

### Marketing and Advertising Plan (30 points)

1. Describe the organization’s marketing plan, including out-of-county marketing, and how the proposed event will be promoted to tourists. (15 points—500 words)  
The 2026 NHRA Gatornationals at Gainesville Raceway marketing plan will be designed to attract visitors from all across Florida to Gainesville for this 50-year-plus tradition. We will leverage our television partner FOX to uniquely promote the Gainesville area in-event while targeting nearby Jacksonville, Tampa, and/or Orlando via our television media buy to bring in out-of-county attendees pre-event. This does not preclude us from pursuing other markets potentially, as well, including Daytona, Tallahassee and West Palm Beach, as we have in the past.

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### Local Sports Destination Enhancement Grant Application

2. Provide a detailed description with budget breakdown of how 25% of requested grant funding will be spent to attract tourists. (10 points – 400 words)

Tentative 2026 Media Buy Budget:

\$70,000 - Regional Television (Gainesville, Orlando, Jacksonville, Tampa)

\$65,000 - Regional and National Digital

\$50,000 - Print, OOH, and Miscellaneous Marketing Efforts

Of the \$50,000 requested grant funding, \$12,500 or more will be earmarked for specific out-of-county targeting for marketing efforts.

3. Additional supporting documents, attach examples of past brochures, programs, reviews, advertising, social media posts, and social media metrics and engagement reports. (5 points – Attach.)

**Excellent: 25-30 points:** Well-defined marketing plan to attract and grow attendance. Includes strategic use of multiple platforms (social, radio, web, etc.). Articulates understanding of target markets and the demographic profile of attendees. Includes plans for editorial press coverage. Clearly defines a return on investment for marketing and advertising expenditures.

**Good: 20-24 points:** Marketing plan to attract and grow attendance. Includes multiple platforms (social, radio, web, etc.).

**Fair: 15-19 points:** Undefined marketing plan to attract and grow attendance.



### Local Sports Destination Enhancement Grant Application

Please initial next to each item below, signifying that you have read and understand the conditions of the Local Sports Destination Enhancement Grant program.

- KC I attest that all information in the application is accurate and that the events and activities to be considered for funding are in compliance with the Alachua County Code of Ordinances and grant program criteria.
- KC I attest that if awarded, the funding provided by way of this program or agreement will not be used in aid of a program or event whose purpose is to promote the religion of the provider, be significantly sectarian in nature, involve religious indoctrination, require participation in religious ritual, or encourage the preference of a religion.
- KC I attest that if awarded, the funding will not support or include discriminatory acts or practices, including discrimination based on race; color; national origin; religion; sex; marital status; age; disability; sexual orientation; gender identify or expression.
- KC I understand that all printed and/or digital collateral and advertisements must include the Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, FL logo as one of the event sponsors and on any and all advertising/marketing materials, the event website (with link to VisitGainesville.com), programs, and any newsletters or email notifications promoting the event.
- KC I understand that the event will credit Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, FL at the level equal to the award amount. For example, if the award is \$15,000.00 and that is a gold level sponsor, Visit Gainesville Alachua County is to be listed as a gold sponsor.
- KC Tickets for the appropriate level sponsorship must be provided to Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, FL for promotional activities.
- KC I understand that all reporting requirements must be satisfied to receive reimbursement funding.
- KC I understand that the event must be ADA accessible.
- KC I understand that a statement on letterhead that the applicant is a governmental entity or a copy of the Organization’s Active Status from Sunbiz.org must be attached to be eligible for funding.
- KC I certify that my event is within the boundaries of Alachua County.
- KC I acknowledge that this application and grant documents submitted to the County, become public records subject to the provisions of Chapter 199, F.S., Florida Public Records Law.

Kasey Coler  
Signature of authorizing official (Board Chair)

Tanner Watkins  
Signature of Contact Person