



PREPARATIONS FOR MAJOR EVENT SUBGRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP ISSUED: March 4, 2026

PROPOSALS DUE: March 18, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. CT

INSTRUCTIONS: To be considered, proposers must timely deliver three (3) copies of their proposal (in a sealed envelope) by mail or courier to Houston First Corporation, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Suite 200, Houston, TX 77010. Please write "Subgrant" on the outside of the sealed envelope. Late or incomplete submittals will be rejected without further review or consideration.

QUESTIONS: Any questions concerning the content or subject matter of this RFP must be sent by email to bids@houstonfirst.com no later than 11:00 a.m. CT March 13, 2026. Material questions will be answered collectively and made available online at www.houstonfirst.com/do-business. Questions may be combined or edited for clarity or length at the discretion of HFC.

OVERVIEW

In December 2025, a Request for Applications – Local Government Preparations for Major Event Grant was issued by the Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office, a Trusteed Program with the Office of the Governor, for the purpose of promoting economic development, including preparation for statutorily enumerated major events in Texas.

In August 2023, the Republican National Committee (the "RNC") selected Houston, Texas, as the sole site for the 2028 Republican National Convention (the "Convention"). The Convention, being the result of a highly competitive selection process, considering one or more locations outside of the State of Texas.

Houston First Corporation ("HFC") took a leadership role in the bid which led to the RNC's selection of Houston as the site for the Convention. HFC's goal in hosting the Convention is economic development, such that the Convention would be hosted in a manner that showcases Houston to the world and provides an elevated visitor experience to Convention delegates, media and other Convention-related visitors in order to enhance Houston's brand as a world-class destination and increase room nights from group travel (and, consequently, increase hotel occupancy tax and other state and local tax revenues from visitors).

HFC submitted an application for the Local Government Participation for Major Events Grant in December 2025 and received notice of a conditional grant of up to \$95,000,000 from the Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office in January 2026.

HFC proposes to use grant funds for the design, permitting and hard construction costs of improvements of and fixtures for a publicly owned facility to be used as a venue for the Convention. More specifically, the objective of those venue improvements and fixtures would be to benefit the Convention by providing arrival and welcome experience enhancements, upgraded delegate and attendee spaces, in-venue media facilities, and integrated venue technology and security improvements.

HFC issues this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to effectuate such purposes and seeks to make a subaward to a nonprofit organization formed for the tax-exempt purpose of lessening the burdens of government through the promotion of economic development and tourism in connection with hosting the Convention. It is anticipated that the sub-grantee would contract with a venue to be used for the Convention to effectuate those venue improvements and fixtures. The subgrantee would contract with such venue by noncompetitive proposal, with the single source being the venue to be used for the Convention identified in the subgrantee’s proposal.

BACKGROUND

HFC is a local government corporation formed by the City of Houston, Texas (the “City”) in 2011 pursuant to Subchapter D of the Texas Transportation Corporation Act, TEXAS TRANSPORTATION CODE Chapter 431. In forming HFC, the City consolidated its Convention & Entertainment Facilities Department and the Houston Convention Center Hotel Corporation (formed by the City in 2000). Houston City Council approves HFC’s budget annually and the appointment of HFC’s Board of Directors.

HFC’s responsibilities include the development of the destination brand strategy, promoting Houston as a destination worldwide, driving tourism and convention business, producing events that serve the community, collaborating with commercial and industry partners and much more. Additionally, HFC manages over 10 City-owned buildings and other facilities, including the George R. Brown Convention Center, Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, Wortham Theater Center, Miller Outdoor Theatre, Lynn Wyatt Square for the Performing Arts and the Theater District Parking Garage.

QUALIFICATIONS

Proposers must be a nonprofit organization, in good standing, formed in material part for the purpose of lessening the burdens of government through the promotion of economic development and/or tourism in connection with hosting a major event for which grant funding can be used, is listed as a qualifying event in TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE Section 478.0001(3).

The proposer selected shall be required to comply with the Texas Grant Management Standards and all other statutes, requirements, and guidelines applicable by law. The Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office has established that the initial project period may not go beyond August 31, 2027.

An award cannot be made to an entity subject to suspension or debarment as indicated on the Texas Debarred Vendor List or System for Award Management.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposers are asked to provide a thoughtful, RFP-specific response expressing their interest and communicating effectively why the proposer should be selected. At a minimum, each proposal must include all of the following:

1. Documentation of eligibility criteria;

2. Narrative of the subgrant proposal, including objectives;
3. Timeline to accomplish the subgrant purpose;
4. A preliminary budget;
5. A statement that the proposer is validly formed and not subject to federal or state suspension or debarment;
6. Acknowledgement of the proposer's obligation to comply with the Texas Grant Management Standard and applicable law; and
7. Contact information for the proposer's designated representative.

GRANT FUND PROHIBITIONS

Proposers are advised that grant funds cannot be used on salaries; expenses related to office space; recruitment and promotion activities that result in a business relocation to a community outside the State of Texas; indirect costs; supporting a match requirement for any other grant obtained by the organization; expenses which the grantee has submitted, or will submit, for reimbursement by another source; any other expenses for which payment is prohibited by the Texas Grant Management Standards, or other applicable statutes, requirements, and guidelines; or any other expenses HFC or the Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office identifies as inappropriate or unallowable within the proposal or during the grant management process.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Each proposal received by HFC will be reviewed by staff or a review group selected by HFC, and evaluated based on the following weighted criteria:

Quality of Narrative and Proposal	40%
Timeline Effectiveness/Risk	30%
Reasonableness of Preliminary Budget	30%

The proposer receiving the highest score based on the foregoing criteria will be recommended to the Board of Directors. The selected proposer will be required to sign a comprehensive subgrant agreement with HFC to receive the funds, which shall incorporate the Texas Grant Management Standards and contain additional requirements not specifically enumerated in this RFP.

This RFP does not commit HFC to award a subgrant, enter into a contract, or pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal. HFC reserves the right to request clarifications and additional information from some or all proposers. By submitting their proposal, each proposer represents to HFC that they have complied with the requirements of Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code.

PROTEST PROCEDURES

Any protest relating to the form, terms and conditions, selection criteria, specifications, exhibits, or any other material content of this RFP must be filed by the actual or potential proposer with the Purchasing Agent no later than five business days prior to the Submission Deadline. If the protest consists of a dispute regarding the proposer recommended to the HFC Board of Directors, or

otherwise relates to the alleged misapplication of selection criteria, then the Purchasing Agent must receive the protest from an actual proposer after the Submission Deadline, but at least one business day prior to consideration of a resolution resulting from this RFP by the HFC Board of Directors. All protests must be made in writing and delivered to Houston First Corporation, Attn: Purchasing Agent, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Ste. 200, Houston, TX 77010. To be considered by HFC, protests must be timely received and include, at a minimum, all of the following information: (a) the name, address and contact information for the proposer, with sufficient information to establish that a bona fide proposer is the person or entity filing the protest; (b) the full title of the RFP; (c) material grounds for the protest, including the provisions of the RFP and the applicable law or regulation that serves as the basis for the protest; (d) a statement of the specific relief requested by the proposer; (e) reference to and attachment of any pertinent documents or sources relied upon by the proposer that such party seeks to have HFC consider; and, (f) an affidavit attached to support any factual allegations stated in the submission.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HFC is subject to the Texas Public Information Act ("TPIA"). Information submitted to HFC is subject to release under the provisions of the TPIA set forth in Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. Each page where confidential or proprietary information appears must be labeled as such clearly and unambiguously. Proposers will be advised of any request for public information that implicates their materials and may, in accordance with applicable law, elect to assert objections to disclosure with the Texas Attorney General at their cost and expense.

RFP PACKETS

A complete copy of this RFP is available online at www.houstonfirst.com/do-business. This RFP provides the information necessary to prepare and submit a proposal for consideration by HFC. Any revisions or clarifications subsequently issued by HFC will be available online with this RFP.

WITHDRAWAL; ERROR

Proposals may be withdrawn due to errors or for any other reason by a written request received by bids@houstonfirst.com prior to the Submission Deadline.