



Marketing Campaign for Special Event or Commemoration (2025-2026)

Category Description

(This category is exclusive to municipalities only.)

Submit a suite of materials (three to five pieces with a common theme) centered on marketing and communications for a specific event, i.e., a parade, holiday festival, ribbon cutting, etc.

Judges will assess criteria such as creativity, effectiveness and overall outcomes, attendance, earned media, etc.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION SUGGESTIONS: Summary of earned media, attendance, event feedback, print, video, digital or social media elements.

Name of Individual Submitting Entry

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Affiliation (Municipality/Organization)

City of Tallahassee

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Entry Title

The Longest Table

Social Media

Facebook.com/CityofTLH, Instagram.com/CityofTLH

Video Link (YouTube or Vimeo)

<https://youtu.be/cFZ99IVDngE?si=eQRtJAfx4FpKR29t>

Supporting Documentation

FMCA Award Entry Supporting Materials - The Longest Table.docx

What are the goals and objectives of the Special Event or Commemoration (include target audience)?

On Oct. 12, 2025, the City of Tallahassee hosted The Longest Table, inviting residents from across the community to gather along Duval Street in downtown Tallahassee for a shared meal and conversation in celebration of its recent All-America City designation. The event provided a free meal from local Tallahassee restaurants and seated guests along one continuous, straight-line table designed to encourage dialogue and new connections.

Unlike a traditional festival or entertainment-driven event, The Longest Table centered on conversation. The intentionally unassigned seating arrangement encouraged residents from different neighborhoods and backgrounds to sit beside one another, share a meal and engage in guided discussions focused on community and collaboration. The event was designed not simply as a celebration, but as an opportunity to bring residents together in a tangible way that reflected Tallahassee's identity as a connected and forward-moving city.

The City had not hosted a Longest Table event since before the COVID-19 pandemic, and in those previous iterations, it had always partnered with other local agencies and nonprofits on the effort. The 2025 event would be a fresh start.

From the outset, the City's Communications Department led the effort to engage and encourage residents to attend The Longest Table. Planned and executed within a one-month timeframe, Communications launched a coordinated, multi-platform marketing campaign designed to quickly build awareness and drive strong community participation.

This began with establishing clear, measurable goals to guide the marketing strategy and evaluate campaign success. The overarching goal of the campaign was to position The Longest Table as an inclusive, citywide gathering for the purpose of sharing a meal and making a meaningful connection. To measure success, Communications identified three primary objectives:

- Generate at least 300 confirmed RSVPs, representing half of anticipated participation, through Talgov.com/LongestTable prior to Oct. 12, 2025, driven specifically through social media and news release promotion.
- Achieve at least 600 in-person attendees on Oct. 12, 2025, consistent with historical participation benchmarks for previous Longest Table events in the community.
- Achieve at least 20,000 total social media impressions across platforms during the four-week promotional campaign leading up to the event.

The target audience included residents from across Tallahassee and Leon County, including neighborhood association members, community advocates, young professionals, families and civic leaders. Messaging reinforced that The Longest Table was free, welcoming and open to all, with a clear emphasis that every resident had a place at the table. By positioning the event as approachable and inclusive, Communications

worked to engage first-time attendees and reflect the diverse voices that make up our community.

With these objectives and the target audience in mind, Communications developed a comprehensive marketing and outreach plan that included visual branding elements, digital media strategy, a dedicated webpage and a social media content calendar to ensure a coordinated rollout across platforms.

Describe the supporting documentation submitted with this entry.

The supporting documentation provides links to the event webpage, media coverage, photo album and more. It shows social media data, examples of feedback from attendees and pre-event survey answer examples.

What is new, innovative or creative about this event?

Unlike a traditional festival or entertainment-driven event, The Longest Table centered on conversation. The event provided a free meal from local Tallahassee restaurants and seated guests along one continuous, straight-line table designed to encourage dialogue and new connections.

Describe how the event was successful (include your evaluation process and metrics).

A dedicated webpage, Talgov.com/LongestTable, was created to serve as the central information hub for the event. The page hosted the RSVP form and included key details such as road closures, parking information, dinner menu options, event background and photos. The RSVP form was intentionally designed to collect useful planning and evaluation data, including how attendees heard about the event, whether they had attended previously and what they were most looking forward to discussing. This structure allowed Communications to measure outreach effectiveness and better understand audience engagement.

The public launch began two weeks before the event with the distribution of a news release, encouraging early RSVPs. The announcement marked the formal kickoff of a coordinated, multi-platform campaign that included 50 social media posts across the City's main and Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Affairs accounts on Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn. A dedicated Facebook event page further centralized event details, streamlined updates and encouraged community sharing.

Promotion extended beyond digital channels. Event details were incorporated into Insight, the City's utility newsletter, and the Neighborhood Affairs newsletter, distributed to neighborhood associations. Printed flyers were produced and delivered to community centers and libraries. Reminder emails were strategically scheduled to RSVP participants, and local media outlets were pitched to broaden reach and reinforce visibility.

A key focus of the campaign was maintaining consistent branding across all promotional and on-site materials. Communications developed branded wayfinding signage, name tags, table runners and a custom conversation-starter card deck that reflected the same look and tone used in digital promotion. This consistency helped create a seamless experience from online awareness to in-person participation.

On event day, Communications staffed an information booth, coordinated volunteers and captured professional photo and video content to support live event social media coverage, post-event storytelling and future promotion. Midway through the event, a brief All-America City celebration featured remarks from the mayor, high-energy music and confetti cannons, creating a shared moment of recognition and community pride before attendees returned to conversation.

The campaign exceeded expectations across all measurable categories. The City received 1,087 RSVP responses, quickly surpassing the 300-response objective. Of those respondents, 926 were first-time attendees and 161 were returning guests, demonstrating success with engaging new audiences. 282 attendees learned about the event through the news release, 281 through friends or family, 281 through social media, 96 through local news and 69 through community groups. This balanced distribution

confirmed the success of the multi-channel strategy.

Prior to the event, 29 social media posts were published across City platforms, generating 68,559 impressions and 2,168 engagements — surpassing the pre-event objective of 20,000 impressions. The Facebook event page received 275 responses, and the event webpage recorded 9,586 pageviews from 6,604 unique visitors, demonstrating strong interest and effective traffic conversion to the RSVP form.

On Oct. 12, more than 1,000 residents attended The Longest Table, exceeding the 600-attendee benchmark. Guests filled the length of Duval Street and actively engaged in guided conversations about the future of our community through the conversation-starter card deck.

As of Nov. 7, total social media performance across social media accounts reached 813,822 impressions and 58,197 engagements, including 17,233 reactions, 1,904 comments, 1,733 shares, 2,747 link clicks and 15,649 video views. A significant portion of this reach resulted from a single Facebook post shared during the event that generated widespread engagement and prompted comments from other communities inquiring about hosting similar events.

The campaign also generated strong earned media coverage. The Longest Table was featured across all major local media outlets, resulting in 14 news stories. Collectively, this coverage reached an estimated audience of 250,392 and generated a calculated publicity value of \$8,254.

Beyond quantitative performance metrics, the success of The Longest Table was reflected in strong community partnerships and positive feedback. Communications worked closely with Leadership Tallahassee to recruit volunteer Table Captains who served as conversation leaders, reinforcing the event's theme of civic collaboration and engagement. Following the event, Communications distributed a survey to Table Captains to gather feedback on conversation themes, emerging ideas and meaningful takeaways. Responses reflected thoughtful dialogue centered on community growth, neighborhood connection and shared priorities for Tallahassee's future.

Five local Tallahassee restaurants were hired to cater the event, supporting small businesses while providing a variety of dining options. Participating restaurants were incorporated into promotional materials, extending the campaign's reach through cross-promotion.

The event's impact also extended beyond the local community. Following coverage of the event by local media and on social media, two additional cities contacted the City of Tallahassee seeking guidance on how to plan, market and host a similar event in their communities. One city, Valdosta, Ga., traveled to Tallahassee to meet with staff and learn about the planning and communications framework behind The Longest Table.

The outstanding results achieved reflect the effectiveness of a coordinated, multi-channel strategy supported by consistent branding, clear messaging and intentional data tracking. Even with a tight planning timeline, the campaign generated strong visibility, exceeded established benchmarks and successfully encouraged residents to participate in The Longest Table.

Recognizing the diversity of our communication departments across the state, in the space below, discuss the factors that set your community and submission apart i.e, department size, overall budget spend, innovative and creative techniques utilized, impact on community and size of city/county as examples.

The City of Tallahassee – Florida's Capital City – is a full-service municipality and the largest single provider of municipal services in Florida's Big Bend region. It is also one of the largest employers, with roughly 4,000 people serving the community they call home. The City's mission is to be the national leader in the delivery of public service and has a robust five-year Strategic Plan to help guide programs and services toward that goal. As a full-service municipality, the City owns and operates the utilities systems

(electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, stormwater); police; fire; Tallahassee International Airport; parks and recreation; the animal shelter; streets and traffic control; solid waste management; and much more. It is the only municipality in Leon County. Roughly 200,000 people call Tallahassee home. Additionally, more than 60,000 students study at the two major public universities located here. The City's annual budget for Fiscal Year 2024 is roughly \$1 billion. To help communicate this breadth of services, the City of Tallahassee has a strong focus on communications and outreach efforts. The Communications Department is a cohesive team comprised of 18 professionals skilled in various areas including marketing, public relations, citizen engagement, web/graphic design, photography and videography.

Hard costs related to marketing for this event included event signage, the custom card decks, the custom table runner and other similar items with event branding. The graphics and video were all created in-house.