

TRIUMPH GULF COAST, INC. PRE-APPLICATION FORM

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Individual/Entity/Organization: Chris Christmas/ CivicIQ

Proposal Title: Project Roava: AI-powered tourism and community event discovery platform

Amount of Triumph Funds Requested: \$500,000

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$750,000

Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization: Roava is an innovative tech startup creating an AI-powered mobile app for personalized, hyper-local event discovery that connects locals and visitors with events while providing free, granular data insights to cities, counties, and DMOs. Founded by Chris Christmas with deep Northwest Florida roots - including prior leadership at Key Data, a Santa Rosa Beach-based tourism analytics firm - Roava is in limited beta, fully built, and ready for rapid rollout in the Panhandle counties to drive tourism diversification, small business growth, and tech workforce development

Contact Information

Primary Contact: Chris Christmas

Title: CEO

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Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities, organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program: N/A

REQUIRED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Roava is a consumer mobile app built by the CivicIQ team on advanced AI that redefines event discovery for locals and visitors alike. Already developed and in limited beta testing with approximately 100 users actively providing feedback, Roava uses sophisticated AI personalization to match users with hyper-local events; things like neighborhood markets, music performances, cultural gatherings, car shows, trivia nights, community festivals, and more. Unlike traditional event apps that rely on ticketed events, broad categories, or manual curation, Roava's AI analyzes user preferences, behavior, demographics, and real-time data to deliver highly tailored recommendations that were previously challenging or impossible to scale effectively. This enables precise targeting of underrepresented, smaller-scale events in less-developed areas, surfacing hidden gems that big tourism players often overlook. The app supports multiple languages right out of the box, making it accessible to diverse audiences and primed to support international visitation growth.

Businesses benefit effortlessly: no ongoing input is required, and Roava's AI promotes them to the most relevant users based on interests, location, and past engagement, driving attendance and revenue without marketing costs. For residents, it means personalized suggestions that enhance daily life, build community ties, and encourage local spending year-round.

Transformative Impacts Across the Region: Roava addresses core challenges in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla counties: heavy dependence on major beach tourism hubs leaves smaller communities and rural areas underserved, with limited marketing reach and fewer tools for engagement. International visitors, a growing segment in destinations like Destin, Panama City Beach, and Panama City, often seek authentic, localized experiences beyond the beaches. Roava's multilingual support and AI-driven personalization help capture and grow this market by recommending culturally relevant events and providing inclusive access.

Key beneficiaries include:

- **Small Businesses and Event Organizers:** Free, targeted promotion that levels the playing field, especially in underserved counties, boosting attendance, spending, and economic circulation.
- **Residents:** Curated discoveries that improve quality of life, foster social connections, and support year-round local activity.
- **Cities, Counties, and DMOs:** Real-time, granular, *no-cost data* on events, attendee profiles (locals vs. visitors, demographics, interests), and trends across all eight counties. This creates a comprehensive regional dataset, far more extensive and affordable than commercial alternatives (often \$10,000+ annually for basic sets, \$100,000+ for advanced), enabling cross-county benchmarking, smarter planning, and optimized resource allocation. For example, successful strategies in Okaloosa can directly inform initiatives in Franklin or Wakulla. These features promote sustainable tourism diversification, extend seasons, reduce vulnerability to disruptions, and enhance resident experiences while generating measurable economic uplift.

Why This Fits Triumph Gulf Coast Perfectly: Triumph Gulf Coast prioritizes projects that drive economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement in the disproportionately affected counties, per Florida Statute 288.8017, focusing on tourism promotion, workforce skills (especially in information technology and AI), transferable job creation, and verifiable outcomes. Roava delivers on these by introducing cutting-edge AI technology to a region with emerging tech infrastructure, complementing traditional infrastructure investments (like airports and ports) by driving deeper visitor engagement and local vitality.

This isn't just an app, it's a forward-looking platform with national scalability, starting as a beta test here to prove impact before U.S.-wide expansion. We've assessed rollout options across regions, but the Triumph counties resonate strongest: my extensive local experience, including work at Key Data (a Santa Rosa Beach-founded tourism analytics firm still active in the area), has built strong relationships with DMOs in Destin, Panama City Beach, Panama City, and others. These partnerships ensure quick adoption, collaboration, and data-sharing success.

Economic and Workforce Outcomes: Roava will create 5-10 net-new tech jobs within 12-18 months, with immediate hires (3-5 staff) in the area for roles in data analytics, AI tuning, user support, and community outreach. Talent will be sourced from local institutions like the University of West Florida and Northwest Florida State College, building AI and IT skills aligned with Triumph's targeted industries.

Tourism benefits could include 15-20% increases in event attendance and spending in pilot areas (based on comparable AI-personalized platforms), extending economic activity beyond peak seasons. The free data provision delivers high ROI for stakeholders, scaling with user growth to support data-driven decisions that amplify visitor experiences and regional growth.

Use of Funds and Rapid Timeline: Funds will accelerate the beta rollout across the eight counties, tuning the AI for local events and preferences, enhancing multilingual features, and expanding marketing, and support immediate local staffing. With the product fully built and beta-tested, selection of this area enables deployment within 30 days: rapid onboarding, localized AI refinements, and measurable rollout of user growth, job creation, tourism metrics, and data insights. Outcomes will align with Triumph's economist reviews, emphasizing verifiable results like adoption rates, economic impact, and workforce gains.

Roava positions Northwest Florida as a pioneer in AI-driven, inclusive tourism and community innovation, leveraging regional strengths for sustainable prosperity. By serving as our beta hub, these counties gain first-mover advantages in tech-enabled diversification. We're eager to partner and deliver lasting, transformative value.

Please Select the Proposal's Eligibility Category(s)

Pursuant to Section 288.8017, Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. was created to make awards from available funds to projects or programs that meet the priorities for economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties. The disproportionately affected counties are: Bay County, Escambia County, Franklin County, Gulf County, Okaloosa County, Santa Rosa County, Walton County, or Wakulla County. *See*, Section 288.08012.

1. From the choices below, please check the box that describes the purpose of the proposed project or program (check all that apply):
 - Ad valorem tax rate reduction within disproportionately affected counties;
 - Local match requirements of s. 288.0655 for projects in the disproportionately affected counties;
 - Public infrastructure projects for construction, expansion, or maintenance which are shown to enhance economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties;
 - Grants to local governments in the disproportionately affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts Assistance Program;
 - X Grants to support programs that prepare students for future occupations and careers at K-20 institutions that have campuses in the disproportionately affected counties. Eligible programs include those that increase students' technology skills and knowledge; encourage industry certifications; provide rigorous, alternative pathways for students to meet high school graduation requirements; strengthen career readiness initiatives; fund high-demand programs of emphasis at the bachelor's and master's level designated by the Board of Governors; and, similar to or the same as talent retention programs created by the Chancellor of the State University System and the Commission of Education, encourage students with interest or aptitude for science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medical disciplines to pursue postsecondary education at a state university or a Florida College System institution within the disproportionately affected counties;
 - Grants to support programs that provide participants in the disproportionately affected counties with transferable, sustainable workforce skills that are not confined to a single employer; and
 - X Grants to the tourism entity created under s. 288.1226 for the purpose of advertising and promoting tourism and Fresh From Florida, and grants to promote workforce and infrastructure, on behalf of all of the disproportionately affected counties.

Please Select the Priorities this Proposal's Outcomes will Achieve

1. Please check the box if the proposed project or program will meet any of the following priorities (check all that apply):
- Generate maximum estimated economic benefits, based on tools and models not generally employed by economic input-output analyses, including cost-benefit, return-on-investment, or dynamic scoring techniques to determine how the long-term economic growth potential of the disproportionately affected counties may be enhanced by the investment.
 - Increase household income in the disproportionately affected counties above national average household income.
 - Leverage or further enhance key regional assets, including educational institutions, research facilities, and military bases.
 - Partner with local governments to provide funds, infrastructure, land, or other assistance for the project.
 - Benefit the environment in add. to economy.
 - Provide outcome measures.
 - Partner with K-20 educational institutions or school districts located within the disproportionately affected counties as of January 1, 2017.
 - Are recommended by the board of county commissioners of the county in which the project or program will be located.
 - Partner with convention and visitor bureaus, tourist development councils, or chambers of commerce located within the disproportionately affected counties.