

FY26 One-Time Allocation Request – University Bands/Spirit Travel

The Spirit of Houston has been grateful for the travel funding provided by SFAC over recent years. This funding has permitted the Spirit of Houston to send the full Spirit of Houston to the TCU game, a large pep band and spirit group to the OU Game, state wide marching band contests (Bands of America McAllen Regional and Bands of America San Antonio Super Regional), pep band travel to neutral site basketball exhibition (UH vs Auburn), Wind Ensemble travel to San Antonio to perform at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference, Cheer travel to Daytona, FL for NCA Cheer National Championships, and Dance travel to Las Vegas, NV for the Pro-Action Dance Intensive.

The ability to attend these events has been a vital part of the Spirit of Houston experience and what we have been able to contribute to the university in recent years. While the support of our athletic programs is the driving point for travel to football games and other athletic events, the visibility at both these events and other performances such as marching contests, cheer competitions, and other community events is one of the most valuable recruiting tools for both our organization and the University of Houston. Our organization has seen incredible growth due to our travel in both our student numbers and talent in all groups, as well as in our presence and visibility on social media platforms. Our band is the largest we have had in recent memory, and likely all time for the university, and this is a direct reflection of the visibility created for the Spirit of Houston and funded by SFAC.

To this end, we request a one-time allocation of \$165,000 for travel related expenses during FY 2026. This allocation will help to both grow our presence across the state and nationally as well as making up for lost experiences over the last year. The ability to do this will no doubt show great results in our recruiting for our own group, the University of Houston, and for the presence of our school in normally unseen areas and venues. The plan would be to continue the travel experience of this year, including in-state or adjacent football travel, basketball exhibition performances, cheer and dance training and competition, and multiple exhibition and recruiting performances statewide for the marching band and dance team. This amount would provide support for the organization in a way that we believe would pay great dividends for our students, their potential audiences, and for the University of Houston for which we are ambassadors.