



Special Events Grant Program Guidelines

Updated January 2026



Section I. Introduction & Purpose

About ECGRA

An impact investor, the mission of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) is to elevate Erie County by galvanizing nonprofits and small business toward economic and community development. Since February 2008, ECGRA has invested more than \$67 million in Erie County.

ECGRA was incorporated in February 2008 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the purpose of creating and administering a grantmaking process for gaming funds that come from the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Our mission is to elevate Erie County by galvanizing nonprofits and small business toward economic and community development.

Purpose of the Funding

A maximum of 5% of event(s) budget

Special events promote a sense of community and inclusiveness, and often generate an influx of dollars from outside Erie County resulting in local economic growth and improved quality of place for Erie residents. In turn, events increase our ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce, spur investments from the private sector, stabilize land and housing prices, and increase civic pride. As part of a strategy to strengthen the economy, ECGRA Special Events Grants fund up to 5% of the cost of events that take place within Erie County, are open to the public, and promote the region economically or culturally.

Impact Area: Quality of Place



To promote well-being, foster civic pride, drive tourism, and attract, retain, and mobilize creative talent and innovative businesses through cultural, heritage, service, and recreational organizations and projects.

Section II. Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria

- Tree icon: Applicant is an IRS-designated 501(c)(3), a municipal authority, or a municipality.
- Tree icon: Applicant's headquarters and event are located and take place within Erie County.
- Tree icon: Applicant is in good standing with the IRS and state and local taxing bodies.
- Tree icon: Applicant is in good standing with ECGRA's reporting requirements to date.
- Tree icon: Applicant is current on payment of any mandated workers compensation.
- Tree icon: Applicant is current on payment of unemployment or other required insurances.
- Tree icon: Applicant's event is open to the public. (Admission may be charged.)

Ineligible Organizations

- Tree icon: An airport or transportation facility.
- Tree icon: A healthcare or long-term care facility.
- Tree icon: A public safety organization or facility, including volunteer fire departments.
- Tree icon: An institution that predominantly provides primary or secondary education/training.
- Tree icon: Any organization that was part of the settlement agreement with ECGRA, entered into 12/13/2010.

Eligible Uses of Grant Funds

- | | |
|--|---|
| Tree icon: Marketing, promotion, advertising | Tree icon: Equipment and supplies |
| Tree icon: Facility expense for event | Tree icon: Contracted and professional services |
| Tree icon: Event insurance | Tree icon: Surveys of attendees |

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds*

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Tree icon: Personnel/Staff Time | Tree icon: Travel |
| Tree icon: Advocacy | Tree icon: Personal awards |
| Tree icon: Conference attendance | Tree icon: Staff meals |
| Tree icon: Construction | Tree icon: Flowers |
| Tree icon: Debt service | Tree icon: Executive/Board Insurance |
| Tree icon: Golf/sports tournaments | Tree icon: Personal cell phone |
| Tree icon: Walks/Runs | Tree icon: Gifts |
| Tree icon: Memberships/subscriptions | Tree icon: Purchase of raffle premiums
(e.g. automobile) |
| Tree icon: Research | |

***These items cannot be used in event expense calculation.**

Section III. Budget Form & Cash Match

Each application shall be completed in its entirety to be eligible. It will also demonstrate the following in the form of a budget:

-  Requested amount from ECGRA (**a maximum of 5% of the event(s) budget**)
-  **The maximum grant available under the Special Events Grant Program is \$15,000.**
-  Your agency contribution (match) in the form of cash (do not list in-kind donations)
-  Other agency or funder contribution – include source, cash only
-  Total event cost – cash only

The following are considered cash-match contributions:

-  Cash contributed by your organization
-  Equipment or supplies to be purchased by your organization for event activities
-  Paying for an event brochure and/or its dissemination
-  Grants from other government agencies or foundations (not gaming funds)

The following are considered in-kind contributions and should not be included in the calculation of expenses:

-  Personnel time given to the project
-  Person on loan from another organization
-  Use of existing equipment or supplies
-  Use of existing laboratory equipment or facilities
-  Waived or unrecovered indirect cost amount
-  Office space
-  Donated or volunteer labor
-  Donated materials, food, or beverages

Section IV. Approval Process & Terms

Application Assistance

Application for ECGRA Special Events Grants shall be completed online at:

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=ecgra>

Program inquiries should be directed to:

Tom Maggio
ECGRA Grants Manager
(814) 897-2694
tmaggio@ecgra.org

Pre-approval Process

Receipt: Upon submission of the application and required supporting material, ECGRA staff, working with the board's review committee, will determine eligibility.

Review: The review committee will evaluate the application and determine if it meets the required parameters outlined by the board.

Approval: ECGRA's board of directors will receive funding recommendations from the review committee.

Notification: ECGRA will notify all applicants via email.

Post-approval Process

Following approval by the ECGRA board of directors, the executive director will issue a letter of agreement to the grantee, which must be digitally signed by an officer of the organization and returned within 30 days. The agreement may detail additional requirements with which the grantee must comply, including but not limited to project audit, financial grant closeout report, maintenance of records, public relations, and any other information the board or staff deem relevant.

The grant contract agreement and any subsequent amendments will not be executed until all the following have been resolved to the satisfaction of the executive director:

-  The grantee must be in compliance with ECGRA's policies on audits relative to the submission of closeout reports on any previous contracts with ECGRA, regardless of the program or funding source.
-  The grantee must provide all supplemental documentation requested by ECGRA.
-  The grantee must be in compliance with IRS reporting standards.
-  The grantee must be current in payment of all federal, state, and local taxes unless it has entered into an agreement satisfactory to the respective taxing authority and is fully in compliance with the terms thereof.
-  The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or against any applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, handicap, national origin, age, or sex.

After the grant agreement has been fully executed and the proper documentation provided to ECGRA, the payment to the grantee will be made by an electronic funds transfer or by check.

ECGRA will monitor the activities of the applicant and the grant contract agreement to ensure that the grantee fulfills the conditions of the grant. This may include a site visit or random audit of income and expenses. Upon request and as required by the agreement, the grantee must furnish ECGRA with all data, reports, contracts, documents, and other information relevant to the activities of the applicant.

Contract Terms

-  Grant contracts for Special Events Grant Program funding shall be for a period of 12 months, retroactive to January 1, 2026
-  One (1) option to extend the terms of the contract for a period of six (6) months may be granted by ECGRA. Detailed, written justification for the contract extension shall be submitted to ECGRA for review and consideration.
-  If the funds allocated to the applicant are not expended on or before the expiration of the grant contract, including the extension period, the unused portion of funds shall be returned to ECGRA.
-  **In the event of an overestimated budget (upon which the 5% grant award was based), the excess grant portion shall be returned to ECGRA upon request by ECGRA staff.**

Closeout Requirements

-  All recipients of funds are required to submit an online closeout report quantifying the approved deliverables.
-  All grant recipients will be required to submit financial documentation as part of the online closeout report. **This includes a QuickBooks or Excel report with expenses and proof of payment.**
-  Special Event closeout reports are due no later than January 31st of the following year.
-  **Non-compliance** with these requirements may prevent the grantee from obtaining funding or payment from any ECGRA grant program and/or funding from ECGRA's programmatic partners.
-  If it is determined that the grantee provided any material misrepresentations or that funds were used for activities not permitted under the terms of the grant contract agreement, the grant contract agreement will be considered in default and immediate repayment will be demanded. In addition, the matter may be referred to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

Section V. 2026 Grant Schedule

-  January 1, 2026 – Application process opens.
-  February 28, 2026 – Applications must be submitted by midnight.
-  March 19, 2026 – ECGRA’s board of directors will make the final review and approve funding recommendations.
-  April 2, 2026 - Last day to submit signed agreement letter online.
-  January 31, 2027, last day to submit a closeout report online.

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