



EVENT GRANT RULES – FY27

Part of the City of Waterloo Hotel-Motel Tax Grant process

Experience Waterloo, on behalf of the City of Waterloo, is accepting grant requests for multi-day event that will have a positive economic impact on Waterloo during the second half of Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026).

APPLICATION STANDARDS

- Visitor Event Grants may apply for no more than \$20,000.
 - Events that draw **greater than 50%** of its attendance from outside of Black Hawk County.
- Community Events may only apply for a maximum of \$6,000 in funding through this grant.
 - Waterloo based events that draw **less than 50%** of its attendance from outside of Black Hawk County.
- The Experience Waterloo Board reserves the right to assign funding levels in any particular grant cycle based on the total number of applications, total funds requested and total funds available.
- Event grants will be issued biannually. Application deadlines are:
 - April 1, 2026 (*for events happening between* July 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026).

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) in order to apply.
- All project printed materials, signage or advertising must contain Experience Waterloo & City of Waterloo logos.
- Applicants must provide available sponsorship solicitation if available and assigned Experience Waterloo at appropriate level upon grant award.
- In the event that the event(s) included in an application “materially change” from the original application, said application will be re-evaluated by the Experience Waterloo Board and funding may be adjusted appropriately based on the revised evaluation.
 - A material change will be defined as a change to the economic impact of more than 25%.
- Applicants must show matching funds of 50% or more for the project. Only funds directly involved with the project may be used as matching dollars.
- Events must provide PDF version of existing budget if available. If PDF budget is not available, applicants should complete the budget section of the online application.

POST-EVENT RULES

- Grant funds will be paid only after the project has occurred and reimbursable expenses are confirmed with Experience Waterloo staff. Copies of invoices and proof of payment must be provided.
- Funds may be used solely for fundable items defined within this document.
- Funding must be used for the project designated on this application or funding may be forfeited. Any changes in the project must be approved prior to the project occurring.
- Funding is for events that occur between the dates of July 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026.

FUNDABLE ITEMS

- Advertising and marketing (Print/Electronic/Billboard).
- Direct mail campaign expenses related to the event/project. Includes materials, design and postage.
- Entertainment related to the event/project.
- Officials & speaker honorariums, fees & travel expenses
- Printed materials that promote visits to the event/project prior to the event occurring.
- Itemized Prize funds and/or purses

- Bid money for events, tournaments, conventions, etc.
- Basic facility rental costs
- Event-related security and safety services.
- Marketing and design services.
- Transportation to and around Waterloo for the event.

NON-FUNDABLE ITEMS

- Any capital, equipment or operational expenses, including salaries, wages or administrative fees.
- Any non-marketing or event logistics professional services
- Travel expenses of staff and guests are not expressly listed as fundable.
- Corporate merchandise (commonly referred to as “Swag)
- Toll-free phone numbers, in-house postage, or material inventory.
- Interest or reduction of deficits or loans.
- Anything contrary to state or federal law or local ordinance.
- All food and beverage.

*** Project-related expenses that are non-fundable may be shown as matching funds ***

FUNDING SCALE BASED ON ECONOMIC IMPACT

Funding caps for “Visitor” and “Community” will be established based from the projected economic impact as calculated by the Destination’s International Economic Impact Calculator. Board members of Experience Waterloo will determine funding levels to recommend to the Waterloo City Council based on the overall economic impact & need of each event.

PROJECTED ECONOMIC IMPACT	VISITOR EVENT	COMMUNITY EVENT
\$1,00,000+	\$20,000	\$6,000
\$800K - \$1M	\$15,000	\$4,000
\$600K - \$800K	\$10,000	\$3,000
\$400K - \$600K	\$5,000	\$2,000
\$125K - \$400K	\$2,500	\$1,000

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Grant applications are online at experiencewaterloo.com. The online application must be used or the application will not be considered. The application should be completed and submitted based on the deadlines listed below.

TIMELINE

March 1-30, 2026	Applications available on experiencewaterloo.com
April 1, 2026	Applications due to Experience Waterloo
April 2026	Board meets and makes recommendations to City Council
May 2026	Partners notified of funding results
July 1, 2026	Funds available after completion of project
30 Days Post Event.	One electronic copy of evaluation form/final report

Note: Awarded grant money will be distributed in full from the City of Waterloo approximately one month following the recipient’s submission of one hard copy and one electronic copy of the completed project evaluation form for the funded project. Evaluations are to be returned within 60 days of the completion of the event or project. Failure to provide this final report will result in the delay or loss of grant funds. Failure to utilize grant funds for the use(s) provided in this grant application may result in funding being disallowed, reduced or delayed. Use of approved funds for non-fundable items will result in funding being disallowed or reduced.