



Venango County Tourism Event Support Grant 2026 GUIDELINES

Open call for Non-Profit Tourism Event applications from January 31, 2026 until March 31, 2026.

Up to \$2,000 available for multi-day events. Up to \$1,000 available for single day events taking place May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2027.

Funds are intended for advanced marketing of an event to increase attendance and ideally overnight stays in Venango County.

A portion of the Venango County Hotel Tax has been set aside to fund a grant program specifically established to support special events taking place in Venango County that bring in tourists. The purpose of this grant program is to increase overnight stays and overall tourism visitation within Venango County. Grants are awarded based on merit as determined by a subcommittee of the Oil Region Alliance Tourism Promotion and Advisory Council with final approval from the Venango County Commissioners. Grants are administered by the Oil Region Alliance, Venango County's designated destination marketing organization (DMO).

Grants (up to \$1,000 for single-day events, up to \$2,000 for multi-day events) may be requested for any tourism-oriented special event sponsored by a non-profit organization located within Venango County that submits a completed application during the application period (January 31, 2026-March 31, 2026). Applications must show how overnight stays and tourism visitation will be increased through the usage of these funds. For-profit entities are not eligible for grants.

Eligible Uses include advertising and marketing programs targeted to media that will reach residents at least 50 miles outside of Venango County, including but not limited to television, radio, newsprint, paid social media, rack cards, digital ads, and magazines.

Ineligible Uses include advertisement in local publications such as high school sports programs, local newspapers, local radio, local online ads, etc. Grant funds cannot be used for beautification, restoration, or development of an asset. Grants will not be awarded for standard or event operating expenses or religious or political purposes.

Applications will be reviewed in early April with grant awards being announced by April 10, 2026.

Award amounts must be utilized within 12 months of the award date. If the funds are not used within the 12-month period, applicants must return the entire amount to the ORA Tourism Council's Grant Review Subcommittee along with an explanation of why the funds were not used, unless a request for extension has been formally submitted in advance and accepted by the committee.

The same organization may apply for grants for more than one event, but each application must be prioritized with #1 as the most desired grant and subsequent priorities numbered sequentially. Applications for events hosted by multiple organizations will not count against those individual organizations' applications. However, there can only be one application per event.

Applications and/or awards of Tourism Event Support Grants do not count against an organization's application for the Tourism Mini Marketing Printing Matching Grant, also administered by the Oil Region Alliance for tourism entities.

Nothing shall prevent the Venango County Tourism Grant Subcommittee from withholding part or all monies available for annual awards, should that entity feel that insufficient requests have been made justifying exhaustion of those funds. Should funds be remaining at the end of any single fiscal year, those funds need not again be awarded.

It should not be presumed that any applicant will be awarded a grant on an annual basis, nor should the availability of these grant awards be considered an annual part of any applicant's budget.

In the event that a member of the Tourism Council Subcommittee serves on the Board or as an employee of the applicant organization or event, or is affiliated in another manner, it is mandatory that said member remove his or herself from that review and decision-making process.

Awardees shall publicly acknowledge the Venango County Tourism Event Support Grant program through all reasonable vehicles as a stipulation of accepting such awards. "This project/event was made possible in part by a Venango County Tourism Event Support Grant." This notice must be placed on any brochure, website, or literature produced for the event being funded. "Venango County Tourism" must be noted as a sponsor along with either the Venango County seal or Oil Region National Heritage Area logo.

As a provision of accepting these monies, awardees must provide adequate proof that the funds received were used for their intended purpose. A final project report is required within sixty (60) days of the completion of the project.

The report must include:

- Nonprofit's name, contact person's name and title, mailing address, phone number, and email address.
- Summary of the completed project
- Copies of receipts/invoices and marketing materials (An itemized list of grant expenses supported by receipts. These expenses should match those proposed in the grant application. If not, a detailed explanation is required.)
- Any discrepancies between planned vs. actual marketing activities with an explanation.
- If physical or electronic marketing materials were purchased, submit one of each with the report.
- *Report the number of visitors/tourists who attended the event or activity from outside a 50-mile radius and/or stayed overnight and the process and information gathered to support the number reported.*
- Describe why the grant outcomes warrant the Committee and Commissioners funding future grants for the non-profit.

Grant awards will be presented to each recipient via the Oil Region Alliance.

The Tourism Event Support Grant Review Subcommittee will review the criteria and guidelines annually to enhance, amend, or dissolve said guidelines.

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