



2026 Tourism Development Grant Application Guidelines

Eligible Organizations:

Regional tourism venues which are a nonprofit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, political subdivision, or a municipal authority.

Eligible Activities:

The main goal of the Lehigh County Tourism Development Grant Program is to assist organizations promoting regional level tourism venues which encourage visitors to plan overnight stays in our local hotels.

The 2026 Tourism Development Grants will be awarded for projects occurring in Lehigh County that encourage substantially large events or which improve facilities, are regional in nature, and have the potential to draw significant numbers of people. Capital projects (but not general maintenance) that will promote tourism, events or conventions are also acceptable.

Priority will be given to those organizations that partner with Discover Lehigh Valley to increase the success in marketing their events. Documentation of partnership will be required. **Details are provided in the Eligibility Requirements #6 below.**

The 2026 Tourism Development Grant is a reimbursement grant. Sufficient documentation supporting expenses incurred are required in order to be reimbursement for the organization's grant award. Reimbursement requirements **may be found in the Eligibility Requirements #8 below.**



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Eligibility Requirements:

1. Your organization's 2026 Tourism Development Grant application will be evaluated on the venue's ability to attract visitors to Lehigh County.
2. An organization requesting a 2026 Tourism Development Grant must be a nonprofit organization under **Section 501(c)(3)** of the Internal Revenue Code, be a political subdivision, or be a municipal authority.
3. Funding is contingent upon the availability of County resources.
4. Organizations that receive Tourism Development Grant funding **are not** eligible to receive any other grant funding from Lehigh County **in the same year for the same project**.
5. Applicants must be in the financial position to provide, either in real dollars or services through private, non-governmental funding, **three dollars (\$3.00) for every one dollar (\$1.00) of County funds awarded by the 2026 Tourism Development Grant**. Any organization receiving two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) **or less** from the 2026 Tourism Development Grant **is exempt** from this matching requirement.
6. Organizations which partner with Discover Lehigh Valley to collaborate on marketing strategies to increase the event's success must complete a **Discover Lehigh Valley Partnership Form** that is included in the 2026 Tourism Development Grant Application packet. The form outlines the intended collaboration at the time the application is submitted. In addition to this Partnership Form, after the event, proof of partnership must also be included with the request for reimbursement. An example of this proof would be invoices and canceled checks from joint advertising.



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PRIOR to submitting your grant application, please contact Bree Nidds, Chief Operating Officer, Discover Lehigh Valley, bree@discoverlehighvalley.com or 610-810-1676 to discuss your project.

7. If the venue spans Lehigh and Northampton Counties, a **one-to-one** dollar match from Northampton County is required.
8. Any project awarded a 2026 Tourism Development Grant **must be completed within TWO years (by December 31, 2027)** and will be paid on a reimbursement basis.

Reimbursement requirements to submit once project is completed:

- a. A signed, formal letter on the organization's letterhead requesting reimbursement. This request must include the organization's Tax ID#, amount of reimbursement requested, description of approved project and an explanation of the documentation being submitted and how it relates to the reimbursement requested and the approved grant. It is important to include the success of the event.
- b. Copies of paid invoices and paid receipts along with correlated canceled checks which prove payment of the invoices and expenses submitted for reimbursement.
- c. When applicable for salaries, employee timesheets reflecting actual time worked for event/project.



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9. Taxes

a.) A requesting organization must be current with any taxes due the County. Grants will not be dispersed until delinquent taxes are paid in full. Delinquent taxes owed by an organization shall herein be defined as “the point when the taxes owed shall become the responsibility of the Tax Claim Bureau to collect.”

b.) If an organization becomes delinquent on taxes owed the County during a year when said organization is budgeted to receive a grant, grant funds shall be withheld in lieu of taxes until taxes are paid in full.

10. If an applicant organization is a lessee of Lehigh County, the applicant organization’s rent must be paid in full as provided for in the terms of the lease agreement.

Financial Information:

For all grant requests over \$2,500.00: In addition to the previous eligibility requirements, as per Ordinance 2017-131, the following information will be posted on the County website and **MUST** be submitted with the application with each item in #1-#5 below **LABELED** and sent as **SEPARATE PDF ATTACHMENTS**.

1. The current and previous fiscal years’ budgets which include the actual revenues and expenditures for the previous year.
2. The **positions** of all employees, officers and board members who receive \$50,000.00 or more in annual compensation, including bonuses, from the organization requesting.
3. The total compensation of the organization’s five (5) highest compensated individuals.



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4. A list of all funding sources from the previous year along with the total amount received from each funding source.
5. A list of all funding sources for the current year, and a list of all pending applications for funding, **INCLUDING** the amount being requested.

Please Note: As per Ordinance 2017-131, “Organizations which cannot comply with these provisions must obtain a waiver recommended by the County Executive and approved by motion of the Board of Commissioners to be eligible to be considered for grant funding.” A **Waiver for Financial Information Form** is included in the grant application.