



Effingham Local Grant Guidelines
May 1, 2026 to April 30, 2027

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Visit Effingham's Grant Program is a tool to enhance the economic development of our region through the creation and support of events and marketing tools that attract overnight stays and generate significant visitation to the City of Effingham.

The grant program is designed to provide needed financial support to events that exemplify the mission of Visit Effingham.

The mission of the Effingham Tourism Department is to enhance the economic development of our region through the promotion of tourism and the comprehensive marketing of our destination. Through the establishment of a local convention and visitors bureau, the Tourism Department helps to create business for the City of Effingham and surrounding communities by aggressively promoting the City as an overnight destination and by increasing visitor awareness of the area, which provides an economic benefit to the City.

I. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The grant program provides assistance to planners whose events:

1. Impact overnight stays and increase visitor awareness in the City of Effingham
2. Include a minimum budget of \$1,000 of eligible expenses
3. Open to the public

A higher priority will be given to events held within the city limits of the City of Effingham. However, consideration of events held in Effingham County will be given, if the event planner can demonstrate their event's economic impact in the City of Effingham.

II. GRANT FUNDING

The Effingham Tourism Advisory Board has allocated a maximum of \$60,000 to be distributed through this fiscal year's grant program. Funds will be distributed beginning May 1, 2026, which is the first day of the fiscal year. The Board will consider projects in the order of which they are received and/or based on the day of the event. As a result, once the \$60,000 in funding is granted for the fiscal year, new grant requests will not be considered until the next fiscal year, when new funds are allocated for the program.

Funds requested may be up to 50 percent of eligible grant expenses, which are defined in Section III. Grant requests must be for at least \$250 but may not exceed

\$5,000. Grant funds may be leveraged with other grants, but the total grant awards should not exceed 100 percent of the total project costs.

III. ELIGIBLE GRANT EXPENSES

Eligible grant expenses will be limited to marketing, site fees, talent fees, tracking procedures, and transportation, which are defined below:

- Marketing – Items that promote an event. Examples: advertising, design fees, printing costs, signage, etc.
- Site fees – Cost to secure or rent a facility to serve as a location for the event.
- Talent fees – Fees for artists or entertainment, including musical acts, speakers and guides.
- Tracking procedures – Cost associated with tracking event attendance and overnight stays. Examples: registration cards, survey cards, register to win slips, etc.
- Transportation – Vehicles and modes of transportation used to shuttle attendees to and from hotels located in the City of Effingham.
- Equipment Rental

Non-eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Administrative Costs
- Alcohol, Catering, Food
- Equipment Purchases
- Items developed for resale
- Lodging, meals, mileage
- Raffles and Prizes
- Capital Improvements
- Applicable Taxes

IV. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Grant applications are due into the Effingham Tourism Department at least **60 days** prior to the event.

Applications must be received in the office by 4:30 p.m. on the first Monday of the month for consideration at that month's Tourism Advisory Board meeting, held on the second Wednesday of the month.

Submissions must include a completed application and an itemized budget, including all expenses and revenues related to the event.

Applications should be mailed (or dropped off) at: Effingham Tourism Office, 201 E. Jefferson Ave., Effingham, IL 62401; or emailed to jthoele@effinghamil.com.

V. APPROVAL PROCESS

The Tourism Department staff will review all grant applications and recommendations will be forwarded to the Tourism Advisory Board for approval.

The Tourism Advisory Board will then determine if a grant is to be awarded and the amount of grant funds to be awarded.

Representatives of the event are invited to attend the meeting but are not required to attend. The representative will be asked to leave after the discussion (before the vote). All tourism advisory board members who are directly related to any applications will also be asked to leave the meeting during voting of said event.

Grants awarded by the Tourism Advisory Board will be submitted for payment in the next billing cycle, with payments typically distributed by the City of Effingham on the first and third Friday of each month.

VI. REQUIREMENTS OF ALL GRANT RECIPIENTS

If an event planner receives grant funds for an event, the following requirements **MUST** be met:

- All printed and promotional materials for the event – including website, advertisements, and brochures – must incorporate the Visit Effingham logo and website address (www.VisitEffinghamIL.com). The logo may not be altered and must be proportionate to the overall size of the advertisement.
- If possible, television and newspaper advertisements must include the following statement: “For visitor information, call (800) 772-0750 or visit www.VisitEffinghamIL.com.”
- All grant recipients must submit a final report application provided by the Tourism Office. The report must include an attendance report and overnight stays report of some kind. We encourage you to include a question in the registration packets for participants or ask attendees if they traveled and spent the night in Effingham hotels. Ask us about our comment cards. This information is required for funding in the future. Your final report weighs into your grant application for the following year.
- All grant recipients must submit a final financial statement including the total expenses and revenues. Also, copy of invoices showing the actual costs incurred that were covered by grant funds must be submitted.
- All grant recipients must submit proof of performance for marketing materials, such as tear sheets, copy of brochure, photo of billboard, etc.

All final reports and materials are due to the Tourism Department within 60 days of the end date of the event. If requirements are not met and proper documentation is not received, the event and/or organization will not be eligible for grant funds in the future.

*** If the event is cancelled, grant recipients are required to reimburse the Tourism Department for the full amount. For more information, contact us at 217-342-5310 (Ext 5305) or email Jodi Thoele at jthoele@effinghamil.com. ***