



Metro East Park and Recreation District

Proudly Serving Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois

FY 2026 Event Sponsorship Grant Program

– Information and Application –

Lead Event Host: _____
(Applicant Name – List only one entity)

Event Name: _____

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis
between July 9, 2025, and May 29, 2026, or until 100% of
the FY26 Grant Program funds are pledged, whichever date is sooner.

Submit completed application and supporting attachments to:

Metro East Park and Recreation District
Attention: Grant Coordinator
104 United Drive
Collinsville, IL 62234

Or submit electronically to:
info@meprd.org

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date and Time Received: _____

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION TO MEPRD AND THE GRANT PROGRAM

1.1. About Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD)

- **Organizational Information:** Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) was formed by voters in November 2000 and is responsible for the development of parks, trails, and recreational facilities in Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois. The District often supplements the efforts of local governments, special districts, and other jurisdictions already engaged in these efforts.
- **MEPRD Mission Statement:** MEPRD shall have as its primary duty the development of a public system of parks and interconnecting trails throughout Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois.

1.2. Grant Program Overview

- **Program Name:** MEPRD FY 2026 Event Sponsorship Grant Program
- **Program Intent and Objectives:** The MEPRD FY 2026 Event Sponsorship Grant Program aims to support events that align with MEPRD's mission by increasing awareness and use of recreational facilities or promoting environmental education within Madison and St. Clair Counties.
- **MEPRD Total Program Funding:** MEPRD has committed \$30,000 to the FY 2026 Event Sponsorship Grant Program.

1.3. Nature of Funding

- Funding provided through this program is a form of financial assistance—not a traditional sponsorship.
- This grant can cover up to 40% of actual, documented out-of-pocket costs, with the award determined solely by these expenses (without deducting any revenue the event might generate from admission fees).

SECTION 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1. Eligible Applicants

- Eligible applicants include public organizations and 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations headquartered in MEPRD's jurisdiction or within 15 miles of MEPRD's jurisdiction.
- The applicant must be the Lead Event Host and be clearly advertised as such at the event.
- No more than one (1) Lead Event Host per application.
- Eligible applicants are limited to one (1) Event Sponsorship Grant award per MEPRD fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), based on the "Award Notification Date."

2.2. Eligible Event Types

- Events involving physical activity (i.e., walking, running, hiking, biking events, to include biathlons and triathlons); or other in-person recreation-related events that promote or make use of public parks, trails, or related facilities in the Metro East. * *In-Person and/or Virtual*
- Events that provide a public benefit related to protecting, preserving, and/or restoring the natural environment and/or the local wildlife within public parks, green space, nature preserves, or wetlands in the Metro east (includes educational and volunteer events/programs). * *In-Person only*

2.3. Core Event Requirements

- **Family-Friendly:** Events, activities, and programs must be family-friendly to be eligible.

- **Event Location:**
 - In-person events (and their activities) must occur entirely within MEPRD’s jurisdiction (Madison and/or St. Clair Counties, IL) and promote or make use of public parks, trails, or outdoor recreation facilities. Events on public streets are also eligible.
 - Virtual event activities must be located entirely within MEPRD’s jurisdiction and should, when feasible, encourage the use of public recreational facilities in the two counties.
- **Event Duration:**
 - In-person recreation-related events should not exceed three (3) consecutive calendar days.
 - Virtual recreation-related events should not exceed thirty-one (31) consecutive calendar days.
 - Recreation-related events must either be a one-day event or multi-day event occurring on consecutive days.
 - Qualifying volunteer / educational events may take the form of either one-day events or *event series* (for the purposes of this program, an “event series” is defined as two or more related sessions—whether held on consecutive days or not—hosted at the same location and occurring within a period of 90 days).
- **Target Audience:** Residents of Madison and St. Clair Counties, IL must be the primary user target market for all events.
- **Public Access:** Events must be open to the public; however, entrance / participant fees are permissible.

SECTION 3. FUNDING DETAIL

3.1. Grant Award Amounts

- Grant requests shall not exceed 40% of the final total out-of-pocket event cost (calculated without deducting any revenue the event might generate from admission fees), an amount not to exceed \$2,500 for both public organizations and nonprofit organizations defined by IRS Code 501(c)(3).

3.2. Reimbursement Basis

- MEPRD’s sponsorship check is disbursed only after the event has concluded and the applicant has submitted a qualifying reimbursement request to MEPRD.

3.3. Use of Awarded Funds

- The funds awarded / disbursed by MEPRD may only be used for documented, eligible direct event costs incurred by the Event Host; and/or towards the qualifying local project/program that the Event Host identified within the Event Sponsorship Grant Application.

3.4. Funding Commitment for Local Project/Program

- A key component of the MEPRD Event Sponsorship Grant Program is a commitment to reinvesting in the community’s recreational assets.
- Recipients must allocate at least ten percent ($\geq 10\%$) of their event’s final net proceeds (calculated as total event revenues *minus* total actual out-of-pocket expenses) toward an improvement or development in a public park or along a public trail; OR to fund a public recreation program, either of which would be defined and identified in the event sponsorship application submitted to and approved by MEPRD. *See also Section 6.4, Fulfilling the Funding Commitment for Local Project/Program.*
- Qualifying projects or programs must be located in Madison and/or St. Clair Counties, Illinois, and must be completed within nine (9) months of the MEPRD-funded event.
- Hosting / funding other recreation-related special events does not satisfy these requirements.

SECTION 4. APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1. Submission Window

- Applications will be accepted on a *first-come, first-served basis* between July 9, 2025, and May 29, 2026; or until 100% of program funds are depleted, whichever comes first.
- Grant applications must be submitted 45 days to 9 months prior to the date of the event.
- Visit MEPRD's website to check the current balance of program funds, at www.meprd.org/funding.

4.2. Submission Requirements

- The application form must be completed in full; incomplete applications will not be considered.
- A line-item expenditure budget showing the expected “out-of-pocket” event costs for the Applicant must be attached to the application. NOTE: the value of donated time, labor, materials, supplies, and equipment should not be included in this total.
- If facilities/trails being used for the event are not owned by the applicant, written approval from these entities must be obtained and attached. *See Section 9, Supporting Documentation Checklist.*

SECTION 5. INELIGIBLE EVENTS AND COSTS

5.1. Ineligible Event Types and Activities

The following event types are ineligible for an Event Sponsorship Grant:

- Political or religious programs/events
- Picnics, parades, firework displays
- Festivals, musicals, concerts
- Golfing events
- Motorized vehicle races, exhibitions, and related events
- Memorials, conferences, exhibits, photo contests
- Fundraising meals, testimonials, or similar events
- Support for individuals, families, or teams (e.g., scholarships, stipends, fellowships, sponsorships).
- Events that discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Any event or activity not listed within the Eligible Event Types in Section 2.2.

5.2. Ineligible Costs and Funding Scenarios

- Events fully funded by other sources (grants, donations, contributions, volunteer labor), resulting in no actual out-of-pocket expenses for the applicant, are ineligible.
- The value of donated time, labor, materials, supplies, and equipment cannot be included as an out-of-pocket expense for the applicant.
- Funds awarded by MEPRD cannot be used to cover general operating expenses not directly related to the MEPRD-sponsored event/program.

SECTION 6. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Award Conditions

- FY26 Event Sponsorship Grant Awards are conditional on the event actually taking place as approved. Reimbursement is contingent upon the event occurring, regardless of event cancellations due to inclement weather, lack of participation, or any other foreseen or unforeseen occurrence.

6.2. Reimbursement Process and Documentation

- A reimbursement packet must be submitted for review and approval by MEPRD within forty-five (45) days following the event for reimbursement to occur.
- The final reimbursement amount is dependent on documentation verifying the actual out-of-pocket event costs (calculated without deducting any revenue the event generated from admission fees) and ensuring compliance with all grant criteria.

6.3. MEPRD Acknowledgement and Publicity

- If an organization is approved for an Event Sponsorship Grant from MEPRD, it must provide acknowledgement of MEPRD's support in relevant marketing materials and giveaways. Examples include, but are not limited to, recognition on signs, t-shirts, flyers, social media, news articles, publications, etc.
- A high-quality vector version of MEPRD's logo can be downloaded at www.meprd.org/about.html. Post-event documentation of this recognition is required.

6.4. Fulfilling the Funding Commitment for Local Project/Program

- The Event Host must ensure that at least 10% of the event's net proceeds are used for the pre-approved project or program benefiting public parks, trails, or recreation in Madison or St. Clair Counties.
- This benefiting project/program must be completed within nine (9) months of the MEPRD-funded event.
- Documentation detailing the use of these funds and the completion of the benefiting project/program, as outlined in the application, will be required as part of the overall grant compliance.

SECTION 7. **APPLICATION FORM**

Please fill out this form in its entirety. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

1. Lead Event Host (only one): _____

2. Event Name: _____

3. Event Date(s): _____

4. Event Location: _____

5. Whose facilities/trails are being used for the event?

** If not owned by applicant, you must attach written approval from these entities to the application.*

6. **Attach a line-item expenditure budget to this application showing the expected “out-of-pocket” event costs for the Applicant** (calculated without deducting any revenue the event might generate from admission fees). Documentation of the applicant’s actual out-of-pocket expenses will need to be documented within the reimbursement request to determine MEPRD’s actual award. The value of donated time, labor, materials, supplies, and equipment should not be included in this total.

Estimated Event Cost: \$ _____

7. The event sponsorship request is limited to no more than 40% of line 6, in accordance with the limitations below. Please check one of the following:

Event Host is a public entity eligible to receive up to \$2,500.

Event Host is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization eligible to receive up to \$2,500.

MEPRD Event Sponsorship Request: \$ _____ which is _____% of Line 6.

8. Lead Event Host FEIN: _____

9. Lead Event Host Address: _____

10. Contact Person Information:

a. Contact Name: _____

b. Office Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

c. Email: _____

11. List other event sponsors: _____

12. How will MEPRD be advertised/featured at the event? (post-event documentation required)

13. Please describe the event and how it meets the criteria listed in MEPRD’s application:

14. Funding Commitment for Project/Program Improvements

At least 10% of the event net proceeds must be committed by the Event Host to a project-specific development/improvement in a public park or along a public trail, or to fund a public recreational program, in Madison or St. Clair Counties, IL, to be completed within 9 months after the MEPRD grant-funded event. *Please note that funding other special events does not satisfy these requirements.*

- **Percentage Allocation:** _____ % (must be ≥ 10%)
Enter the percentage (%) of the event’s net proceeds that the Event Host will dedicate to a project-specific improvement or public recreation program. NOTE: Net proceeds are calculated as total event revenues minus total actual out-of-pocket expenses; documentation of which will need to be included in the reimbursement request submitted to MEPRD.

- **Intended Use of Funds:** _____
Specify what the funds will be used for—e.g., an improvement or a new addition to a public park, an enhancement to a public trail, or support for a public recreational program—and the intended recipient, if different from the Event Host.

- **Please describe in detail the project or program that will benefit from the sponsored event** using the space provided on the next page or attach a separate sheet if more space is needed.
Your description should include:
 - *Who:* Identify the recipient or beneficiary.
 - *What:* Describe the specific improvement, development, or program.
 - *When:* Provide the timeline for implementation. (must be completed ≤ 9 months after the event)
 - *Where:* Specify the location. (must be within Madison or St. Clair Counties, IL)
 - *How:* Explain the methods and steps for execution.
 - *Cost:* Include the estimated budget or cost breakdown.

** CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE **

14. Funding Commitment for Project/Program Improvements — *CONTINUED*

15. Supporting Documentation Checklist

Please attach the following documents with your application:

- Detailed Expense Budget**
Attach a line-item expenditure budget showing all the eligible, anticipated out-of-pocket costs required to host the event. Do not include donated: time, labor, materials, supplies or equipment; nor anticipated revenue generated by admission fees.

- Confirmation of permission for the project/program that will benefit from the sponsored event.**
Attach a letter of support from the governing board or executive of the recipient agency, organization, or department for the project or program that was identified in the “Funding Commitment for Local Project/Program” section of the application, confirming that permission has been granted to receive and use these funds for the purpose(s) stated.

* If the recipient is the applicant/event host, include a letter of support from your governing board or executive confirming the commitment.

- Written approval from the owner of the facility, trail(s), or park(s) being used for the event.**
If the event is held at a facility, trail, or park not owned by the applicant/event host, please attach written approval from the owner confirming that the event may use the premises. NOTE: If owned by the applicant/event host, you may skip this section.

**Metro East Park and Recreation District
Certification Statement and Indemnification Agreement/Release**

I certify that I am duly designated to represent the Lead Event Host, a.k.a. the Applicant, as well as the Event, that the information presented in this event sponsorship grant application and related attachments is true and correct, and that the Lead Event Host listed below is the exclusive Lead Event Host for the Event.

I certify that if selected to receive a Sponsorship Grant, said Lead Event Host will provide advertising for MEPRD and will only use funds for the approved Event in compliance with MEPRD's requirements listed in this sponsorship application.

I certify that if selected to receive a Sponsorship Grant, said Lead Event Host will contribute the percentage of net proceeds specified by the Lead Event Host in this Application ($\geq 10\%$ of the event net proceeds) to assist in the development of parks, trails, and/or recreational programs within Madison or St. Clair Counties in Illinois, as specified in this sponsorship application.

I further certify understanding that a reimbursement packet must be submitted for review and approval by MEPRD within 45 days following the event for reimbursement to occur, and that the final reimbursement amount is dependent on documentation of actual event costs and compliance with criteria outlined herein and is conditional on the event actually taking place, regardless of event cancellations due to inclement weather, lack of participation, or any other foreseen or unforeseen occurrence.

I acknowledge that MEPRD's Sponsorship Grant amount is ultimately determined by actual out-of-pocket expenses by the Applicant which may be less than but shall not exceed the amount requested in the Application.

In addition, the undersigned agrees to indemnify and hold MEPRD harmless from any claim, cause of action, suit or complaint for damages or injuries, including death, arising out of the Event and/or the participation therein or use thereof, and the undersigned further releases MEPRD from any claim, cause of action, suit, or complaint for damages or injuries, including death, arising out of the Event and/or the participation therein or use thereof.

The undersigned acknowledges and represents that he/she has the authority and permission to execute this Certification Statement and Indemnification Agreement/Release and to bind the undersigned Lead Event Host thereby:

Name of Lead Event Host: _____

Print Name: _____

Print Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Submit completed application and supporting attachments to: Metro East Park and Recreation District
Attn: Grant Coordinator
104 United Drive, Collinsville, IL 62234

Or submit these items electronically to: info@meprd.org