



Sports & Exhibition Authority

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SPORTS EVENT FUNDING (SEF) PROGRAM GUIDELINES

revised December 2023

The Sports Event Funding (SEF) Program is a vehicle of the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (SEA) that provides grants and loans to support Eligible Sports Events.

The application form, application deadlines and other information will be posted on the SEA website (<http://www.pgh-sea.com/index.php?path=sef>). Applications are accepted twice a year, approximately January 15 and July 15.

Applicants. Eligible applicants are:

- (a) SportsPITTSBURGH, as the entity overseeing the local support for the event, or
- (b) the existing legal entity or organization that would contract to hold the event (must have been in existence for at least two (2) years).

Defined terms. Defined terms used herein include, but are not limited to, the following:

Eligible Sports Event - shall mean (a) a Major Sporting Event at Heinz Field, PNC Park, PPG Paints Arena, the Convention Center, or other location in Allegheny County, or (b) a sports related conference at the Convention Center. The term “Eligible Sports Event” does not include awards dinners, banquets, walks or fundraising events.

Major Sporting Event shall mean a professional or amateur sports, athletic or esports event, that is regulated and sanctioned by a regional, national or international organization or association, and that provides significant economic impact for Allegheny County.

SportsPITTSBURGH - shall mean VisitPITTSBURGH, acting through its sports development department.

VisitPITTSBURGH - shall mean the Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau, Inc., d/b/a VisitPITTSBURGH, being the entity that, pursuant to the PA Tourist Promotion Law (73 P.S. 401 et seq.) is recognized by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development as Allegheny County’s tourist promotion agency.

Financial assistance. The financial assistance may be provided as a grant or a loan, for eligible expenses, in an amount not in excess of \$75,000, for events scheduled to take place sixty (60) days after the application period ends and within two (2) years of the date of application. Disbursements will be made on a reimbursement basis only, after the event has occurred and the final report has been made and accepted. Requests for amounts over \$75,000 may be considered by action of the SEA board, on a case-by case basis.

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, payments to vendors, advertising, marketing, venue rental or expense, equipment rental, production costs, and fees and costs for officiants.

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to, travel costs, solicitation efforts, lobbying fees, banquet or award dinner costs, meals or dining other than for the participants on the dates of the event as described in the application, items that are purchased for resale, promotional merchandise, prizes given to participants, alcoholic beverages, salaries, and overhead.

Basic application requirements. An application must provide the following basic information:

- (a) Applicant/ event holder's name, mailing address, e-mail address, telephone number, contact person, and federal employer identification number,
- (b) A detailed description of the event, including plan for promotion,
- (c) Whether it is a new event or a repeat event. Is it an annual event?
- (d) The date(s) the proposed event will be held,
- (e) The location where the event will be held,
- (f) The event budget, including the amount and source of all funds, and the specific costs to be covered with Sports Event Subaccount funds,
- (g) Detailed information and projections sufficient to enable the SEA Sports Commission and SEA to accurately assess the economic impact of the event, such as the estimated numbers of participants, event staff, and spectators/ attendees¹, expected total Allegheny County hotel room nights, other local spending, and state and local taxes to be generated. If the applicant/event holder has previously held substantially similar events, the same information with respect to such prior events. Attendance and other participant information shall be broken down by distance of travel (local [within or up to 50 miles outside of Allegheny County], day trip [50 – 100 miles outside of Allegheny County], and overnight stays [more than 100 miles outside Allegheny County]),
- (h) Estimated quality and quantity of advertising, media and promotional coverage the event will provide,
- (i) Demonstrated local support for the event,
- (j) If the event has previously been held in Allegheny County, provide a history,
- (k) Evidence of experience and financial stability of the entity holding the event, and
- (l) Such other items included in the application form or requested by the SEA Sports Commission or the SEA.

The following could preclude eligibility:

- (a) The event holder's status on delinquencies or defaults on federal, state or local taxes, pending litigation or delinquencies or defaults on any publicly or privately financed loan,

¹ A spectator/attendee is counted once, even if they attend on multiple days.

- (b) A felony conviction or other serious crime on behalf of any director or principal in a corporation, or partner in a partnership, or
- (c) Non-compliance of an applicant or event holder with the Conflict of Interest requirements established by the PA Ethics Commission.

Submission, review and recommendation of applications. Applications are first reviewed and evaluated by the SEA Sports Commission, a committee of the SEA. The SEA Sports Commission will determine whether or not to recommend an application for funding by the SEA. In making a recommendation to the SEA board, the SEA Sports Commission may include terms or conditions of the recommendation. The SEA board will consider for funding only those applications that have been recommended by the SEA Sports Commission. The SEA board will consider funding only to the extent of unallocated funds on hand its Sports Event Subaccount.

The application review process includes financial, business and public impact evaluations. Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and evaluated on a number of criteria including, but not limited to:

- (a) Economic impact
 - o Impact of the event on the Allegheny County, regional and state economies, with Allegheny County economic impact being favored,
 - o Potential to attract visitors from outside Allegheny County and out-of-state visitors,
 - o Whether the event provides high-value exposure to the region,
- (b) Funding need, leveraged funds ratio
 - o Level of private sector investment leveraged,
 - o The financial need of the event,
- (c) Strategic importance
 - o Whether the event will assist the region in maintaining or growing its competitive position/ reputation in the sports event market,
 - o Whether the event would occur in a hard to fill period in the tourism calendar for the region,
 - o Whether an event will utilize the Convention Center (increased public benefit is attributed to events that utilize the Convention Center),
 - o Whether it is a new event, a new event to the region, or a larger event than previously held,
- (d) Event quality, likelihood of success
 - o Quality of the event,
 - o Event readiness,
 - o Experience and expertise of responsible individuals/parties, and other factors supporting the likelihood of success,
- (e) Diversity, accessibility and sustainability
 - o Diversity, inclusion, equity, accessibility and environmental sustainability initiatives of the event/ event holder,
 - o Does the event have an accessibility coordinator and a plan to make the event accessible to people with disabilities?
 - o Does the event have a minority/ women business enterprises and workforce diversity plan?²

² It is the policy of the SEA that applicants demonstrate a good faith effort to obtain the participation of Minority (25%) and Women (10%) Business Enterprises for the event. “Minority Business Enterprise” (MBE) and “Women Business Enterprise”

- Does the event have an environmental sustainability plan?

Economic impact may be calculated as total estimated attendance, multiplied by daily attendee spending, multiplied by average length of Allegheny County hotel stay. If an applicant wishes that an alternative formula for calculating economic impact be considered, the applicant shall supply a credible source for using such alternative formula. The SEA Sports Commission and SEA may consider estimates of economic impact provided by SportsPITTSBURGH and/or other sources.

In the course of the review, additional information and/or changes from the provisions provided in the submitted application may be requested, and such additional information or changes, if provided, shall become part of the application.

Funding terms. The SEA board shall make the final funding decision on each recommended application. Upon approval for funding by the SEA board, a notification letter followed by a funding agreement will be issued explaining the terms and conditions of the financial assistance. The notification letter must be signed and returned to the SEA within 30 days.

The funding agreement will detail requirements to be complied with, including but not limited to requirements for insurance, event budgets, close-out report³ and disbursement request due within 90 days of event completion, and maintenance of records. The funding agreement will also include the terms and conditions under which the financial assistance must be repaid, or penalties incurred for any misuse of the financial assistance.

The funding agreement must be fully executed prior to the event taking place. Costs incurred prior to the application date are not eligible for reimbursement.

The SEA may waive any provision of these guidelines based upon a determination of public benefit.

(WBE) means businesses certified as such, and for the type of work to be performed, by Allegheny County, Port Authority of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the U.S. Small Business Administration or other certification acceptable to the SEA.

³ If the SEF funding commitment is for more than \$75,000, the event close-out report is to include a program audit performed by an independent auditor, detailing the expenditure of the SEF program funds.