

Washington County Gaming Commission Grant Application Guidelines
2026 Funding Cycle
Office of Grant Management
100 W. Washington Street, Suite 1601
Hagerstown, MD 21740
240-313-2040

In 1995, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation enabling tip jar gaming in Washington County. Monies collected from tip jars are deposited into a dedicated Gaming Fund account to be allocated to local charities. By statute, 50% of the Gaming Funds are allocated to the Washington County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association, with the remaining allocated to local charitable organizations applying annually to the Gaming Commission.

Each April, the Gaming Commission Grant applications are released and submitted applications are reviewed by the Gaming Commission. The Gaming Commission reviews all applications and makes funding recommendations after a funding hearing and workshop are held, with final awards announced in August. All Gaming Fund allocation decisions are final and are made at the Gaming Commission's sole discretion.

General Eligibility

- 501(c)(3) charitable organizations with valid status, located in Washington County and providing support, which generally benefits any of the following purposes within Washington County: Health and Human Services, emergency services, animal welfare, civic and community activities, athletic/recreational activities, educational and cultural activities.

Ineligible Organizations and/or requests

- Churches (religious entities) are not eligible to receive funds. Separate organizations that operate within a church facility and possess their own 501(c)(3) status *may* be eligible, e.g. a homeless shelter or food pantry distribution site.
- Organizations holding an annual tip jar operator's license
- Political or governmental organizations or sub-organizations
- Umbrella organizations (with the exception of the United Way of Washington County)

Policies Affecting Eligibility

- An applicant must provide its services without discrimination on the basis of race, creed, sex, age, color, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, or disability.
- All funds must be used exclusively in Washington County and cannot be distributed outside of the County.
- Organization must be a corporation, limited liability company, or an unincorporated association. In order for a corporation to receive funding, its articles of incorporation or organization must not be "forfeited" or "not in good standing" with the State Department of Taxation. Applicants can check their status prior to submission on the State Department of Assessments and Taxation website: <https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch> . **Applicants are required to provide a screen shot of this page with their grant application.**
- Unincorporated associations must complete a Notice of Responsible Person form in order to be considered for funding. This form is available on the Office of Grant Management website or can be emailed by request.

- The Washington County Board of Education and Washington County Public Schools are considered political/government organizations and therefore cannot benefit from Gaming Funds. Accordingly, a booster organization or other entity, whose purpose is to support school-based programs or extracurricular activities, cannot receive funding for real property, goods, or materials that become the property of the Washington County Board of Education or Washington County Public Schools. If the booster organization or other entity intends to retain ownership of these items, the Request for Funding packet must include a letter signed by the Superintendent of Schools (or his/her designee) which indicates that Washington County Public Schools will hold no ownership rights to the real property, goods, or materials. Booster organizations or other entities can request funds for activity fees, transportation or like purposes without the need to include the referenced letter.

Application Period and Award Timeline

- Completed applications are to be submitted to the Office of Grant Management (OGM) no later than **3:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 30, 2026**. Please email your electronic copy to cahrens@washco-md.net and CC to jmackereth@washco-md.net prior to your submission of 6 hard copies (including all attachments) to the County Administration Building. Hard copies may be mailed or dropped off in person but must be received in the OGM by the deadline. No applications, additions, or corrections will be accepted after April 30, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. **There will be no exceptions to this policy.**
- A Funding Hearing will be held on **Thursday June 9, 2026**. While it is not required that an applicant appear for a hearing, it is encouraged. The Commission utilizes these hearings to ask questions they may have, or clear up issues that may adversely affect their funding decisions. Each organization will be limited to 5 minutes for their presentation. An organization may schedule a hearing time with the Office of Grant Management the day they submit their FY 26 hard copy application and any day after submission up to **May 29, 2026**. Early scheduling is recommended as time slots do fill up quickly.
- Funding awards will be announced during the Board of County Commissioners meeting in August 2026, with a press release issued soon after. Award and denial letters will be sent out and funds disbursed several weeks after the announcement.
- **The grant performance period for Gaming Commission grants is one year from award announcement (typically in early August). Any funds not spent within the performance period must be returned to the Fund. Organizations who find they are unable to spend funds as indicated in the grant application are encouraged to contact the Office of Grant Management as soon as possible to discuss a budget modification.**

Funding Application Submission

- Distributions from the Gaming Fund may not exceed \$100,000 per application. Organizations may apply for multiple projects by submitting separate applications for each project.
- A person legally authorized to obligate the applying organization must sign the application. This is usually the President, Executive Director, CEO, Chairman, etc. Should a person not commonly recognized as a person with this authority sign the application, the Gaming Commission may require confirmation of that person's authority. Once authority is established to be valid, the application will be considered.
- The Gaming Commission may request additional information for clarification to assist with their funding decision.
- Please refer to the 2026 Washington County Gaming Commission Grant Application Instructions and Checklist for detailed instructions.

Factors Considered by Gaming Commission

Please note that applications that conform to all the criteria are not guaranteed full or partial awards. Beyond the basic eligibility requirements, the Gaming Commission considers numerous factors when making their funding decisions. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Type of service rendered to the community (health, sports, entertainment, etc.)
- The number of persons served.
- The cost per client/person served.
- Whether the viability of the organization is dependent on Gaming Commission funding.
- The information contained in the organization's financial report.
- Completeness and clarity of the application packet.
- Proof that funds received previously were expended for approved purposes.
- Whether the organization has demonstrated efforts to become self-supportive through fundraising activities and other means.
- The total amount of Gaming Funds available for distribution.
- Amount of funding an organization receives from other sources (government, grants, fundraising, etc.)

Public Documents

Please be aware that any and all applications submitted, as well as supporting documentation may be considered public documents. As such, all applications and supporting documents may be viewable and obtainable by the public under the provisions of the Public Information Act, MD Code Ann., State Government Article 10-613.

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