

# 2026 Grants to Communities Process and Evaluation Criteria

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**Erie Town Council**

July 15, 2025

Meredyth Muth, Director of Administrative Services

# Agenda

1. Program History
2. Application Review Process and Calendar
3. Possible Changes for 2026
4. Criteria Changes for 2026
5. Discussion/Direction

# Program History

- **2013** - The program was formalized by resolution and adopted with specific procedures.
- **2022 and 2024** - Those procedures and the evaluation criteria were updated.

Eligibility is restricted to applicants recognized as community service organizations, organized and federally designated for tax purposes as non-profit corporations, and/or chartered chapters of state or national lodges or service organizations that engage in charitable or community service activities, and public schools located in Erie (both in BVSD and SVVSD).

Goal is the supplement an organization's funding, but not to be any organization's primary source of funding.

# Application Review Criteria & Process

- Applications are open Sept. 1 – Nov. 30.
- A staff committee comprised of the Administrative Services Director, three senior leadership members, and the Community Events Coordinator is created to review and score the applications. They consider the established criteria as well as:
  - Past performance
  - Impact on community of the event/service
  - History of event
- Committee makes recommendation to Council.
- Council reviews and approves grantees at a January meeting.
- Grant recipients notified of award and the reporting requirements by Jan. 30.
- Payments made to organizations in February.
- Annual expense report due to the Town by Oct. 30. Failure to submit report will make organization ineligible to apply the following year.

# Possible Process Changes for 2026

- Require balance sheets to verify financial status.
- No organization may apply for more than one grant.
- Establish specific grant levels based on that year's funding, rather than allowing the applicants to request different funding levels. Assuming \$80,000 for next year, it could be something like:
  - Two \$10,000 grants
  - Two \$7,500 grants
  - Four \$5,000 grants
  - Four \$3,000 grants
  - Four \$2,000 grants
  - Five \$1,000 grants
- Revise year-end report questions.

# Criteria Changes for 2026

Each application will be reviewed based on how well the proposal will benefit the Town's residents in relation to any or all the following general criteria:

- Promotion of commerce, industry, and ~~social equity~~ **cultural heritage**
  - Celebration of the Town's culture, history, or heritage.
  - Observance of local, regional, or national historic dates or events.
  - Contribution to the public good in areas of education, safety, health, welfare.

# Criteria Changes for 2026

## Recreational activities

- Expected number of people who will participate or benefit from the program, event, or activity
- Consistency of the applicant's goals with the Town's character, values, and service priorities
- The applicant's historical participation and association with community projects, events, and continued willingness to participate
- The operating and maintenance costs associated with the proposed project
- Anticipated public perception of the association of the Town and the proposed project
- ~~The applicant's regard for and demonstrated success in environmental stewardship, sustainability, accessibility, cultural responsiveness, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)~~ How does the event/service reinforce respect for and demonstrated success in environmental stewardship, sustainability, accessibility, and fairness to all individuals?

# Questions & Discussion