



## **Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT)**

### **Sports and Entertainment Events Fund Grant Program Monthly Report to the Legislature April 2026**

#### **Background of Grant Program**

The Sports and Entertainment Events Fund (“the Fund”) was established by Chapter 73 of the Acts of 2025 (“the Act”) to support major sports or entertainment events through a competitive grant program. The Fund is administered by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT). The same Act funded the grant program with \$10 million to support costs related to the 2026 FIFA World Cup. This is the first round of grants for this new program.

By law, no more than 50% of the balance of the Fund may go to one recipient in a calendar year. Priorities of the Fund include direct and economic impacts on the Commonwealth’s tourism industry, promotion of the Commonwealth in national and international media, and geographic equity.

This report is submitted pursuant to the requirements set out in the Act.

#### **Outline of Application and Award Process**

This round of funding was open to municipalities and non-profits to support FIFA World Cup matches and the official Fan Festival, as well as public safety costs supporting team home bases, base camps, and watch parties. Eligible expenses, which must be matched 1:1 by the grantee, include transportation, public safety, wayfinding, services for persons with disabilities, volunteer support, event services, sports marketing, and construction, functioning, or operation of an event.

The Request for Response was released on February 2, 2026 and a webinar with 136 attendees was held on February 11, 2026. Two question and answer documents were produced by MOTT to help applicants best craft their submissions. Fifty-one applications were received prior to the deadline of March 4, 2026. The total amount of grant funding requested was \$22,957,065. The total amount of grant funding requested specifically for watch parties totaled \$12,783,046.

MOTT staff members scored the applications using the rubric below, while also screening for applicant eligibility. During the review process, MOTT reviewing staff met with other state agency staff who have been closely involved in FIFA World Cup planning and could provide helpful feedback and context (EOPSS/MEMA, DCR, MassDOT, and MBTA).

Scoring Rubric:

Viability (35%)

- Thoughtful budget
- Ability to provide matching funds
- Appropriate timeline
- Has held relevant meetings and secured or made progress on local, state, or federal permits required to implement the proposal
- Applied for viewing license
- Demonstrated local support (can include up to two letters of support—a letter of support is strongly encouraged if the event does not have all necessary permits in place and/or is being held on property that the applicant does not own. Non-municipal applicants are required to provide a letter of support from the municipal CEO.)
- Public safety and security plan in place and reviewed by authorities
- Transportation and parking plan in place and reviewed by authorities
- Alignment/partnership with local and regional agencies and organizations

Economic Impact and Need (35%)

- Articulation of need
- Avoidance of state costs
- Risks if funding is not awarded
- Expected return-on-investment for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Direct and indirect economic impacts on the tourism industry (Note: A tourist is defined as somebody who travels more than 50 miles or spends a paid overnight at their destination)
- Promotion of Massachusetts in national and international media
- Marketing plan

Clarity and Vision (20%)

- Clarity and vision of how the proposal is a good fit for the inaugural rounds of Sports and Entertainment Events Fund Grants
- How success will be measured
- Unique attributes of proposal

Geographic Equity Other State Priorities (10%)

- Location of proposal within a Designated Cultural District (Chapter 10, Section 58A)
- Includes commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of American Independence in Massachusetts

- Sustainability elements
- Equity and inclusion efforts, including for persons with disabilities

**Grant Awards and Expenditure Timelines**

Below are the Sports and Entertainment Events Fund grant program recipients and dollar amount of the award, as announced on March 23, 2026.

Once contracting is complete, awardees have until August 31, 2026 to make grant expenditures and spend matching funds. MOTT continues to work with grant award recipients to refine their budgets based on actual grant amounts, produce the required paperwork and grant reporting throughout the grant period of performance, and maintain compliance with FIFA public viewing rules including securing a viewing license, if applicable.

<b>Awardee</b>	<b>Grant Award</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Expenditures reimbursed as of April 27, 2026</b>
Boston Soccer 2026	\$4,225,000.00	Boston and Foxborough	FWC26 Boston Host City Authority events delivery	\$1,500,000
City of Boston	\$100,000.00	Boston	City of Boston Celebration & Neighborhood Activation Proposal	
City of Brockton	\$175,000.00	Brockton	City of Champions Fan Zone	
City of Cambridge	\$65,000.00	Cambridge	Cambridge United - Where the World Comes Together	
City of Chelsea	\$175,000.00	Chelsea	Fiesta Fútbol '26 Chelsea	
City of Easthampton	\$100,000.00	Easthampton	Millside Park Watch Party & USA250 Festival	
City of Everett	\$10,000.00	Everett	Everett Community Watch Party	
City of Greenfield	\$10,000.00	Greenfield	Greenfield Watch Party	
City of Worcester	\$120,000.00	Worcester	Worcester Watch Parties	
Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association	\$120,000.00	Barnstable, Brockton, Fall River, Fitchburg, Lawrence, Leominster,	2026 Mass Youth Soccer Festivals	

		New Bedford, Northampton, Pittsfield, and Worcester		
Meet Boston	\$4,600,000.00	Boston	FWC26 Boston Event Production Costs	\$1,909,073.51
MetroWest Tourism and Visitors Bureau	\$120,000.00	Franklin and Marlborough	MetroWest Regional Fan Zone	
Revolutionary Valley Regional Tourism Council and the Latinx Center of Lowell	\$75,000.00	Lowell	The Lowell-Watch Party Series	
Town of Burlington	\$15,000.00	Burlington	Gather on the Pitch: Community Watch Party 2026	
Town of Lexington	\$25,000.00	Lexington	Lexington Watch Party	
Town of Weymouth*	\$40,000.00	Weymouth	Weymouth Watch Party	
U.S. Haitian Chamber of Commerce	\$25,000.00	Boston, Canton, Everett, and Randolph	Massachusetts Haitian Community-Multi-Game Watch Party Series	
Total	\$10,000,000.00			\$3,409,073.51

\*The Town of Weymouth informed MOTT on April 23 that it will be withdrawing from the awarded grant, due to “project conditions and implementation considerations” changing. At the time of this communication, the Town was not under contract with MOTT for this grant program.