



FY 2027 Municipal Community Mitigation Fund Grant Application

Application Instructions:

- I. All applications must be received by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission by January 31, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. to be considered for funding for the FY 2027 grant round.
- II. Each municipality may only submit **ONE** application as a Word Document.
- III. Each project must have its own form within the appropriate category. Forms can be found below as Parts A-E. If there is more than one project in a category, please copy the form. All attachments should directly follow the relevant project form.
- IV. Be sure to fill in all the information requested on the application. Applications that are left incomplete will not be accepted.
- V. All applications must submit a detailed scope of work and timeline for implementation for all projects identified in the application.
- VI. All applications must contain appropriate backup materials that support the application.
- VII. The Municipal Grant Manager will be the person responsible for compiling the information for the quarterly reports. The application must be signed by the municipal administrator or an individual with signatory authority. Submit this completed form as well as any relevant attachments to MGCCMF@Massgaming.gov or as a response to the **COMMBUYS Bid BD-26-1068-1068C-1068L-121911**.

For more detailed instructions as well as the full FY 2027 Application Guidelines visit

<https://massgaming.com/about/community-mitigation-fund/>

Municipal Grant Manager Information (Person for filing all Quarterly Reports, etc.):
Applicant: Holyoke
Vendor Code: 2027HolyokeGrant
Name: Stephanie Colon
Title: Mass in motion Coordinator
Email Address: scolon@holyoke.org
Telephone: 413-539-8363
Address: 20 Korean Veterans Plaza Suite 406 Holyoke Ma 01040

Grant Budget Summary

Your community’s FY 2027 proposed allocation can be found at <https://massgaming.com/about/community-mitigation-fund/>.

Use the space below to total all requests by category. Please clarify how many discreet projects your community plans to undertake per category.

Total FY 2027 Allocation:		
Application Totals by Category	# of Projects	Requested Amount
A. Community Planning	3	70000
B. Public Safety		
C. Transportation		
D. Gambling Harm Reduction		
E. Specific Impact		
TOTAL		\$

(Applicants should indicate administrative costs by project where necessary and under specific impact when the funds will be directed across multiple projects.)

Are you requesting a waiver for any program Requirement?

Yes _____

No x

If yes, you must fill out a CMF Municipal Waiver Form. The waiver form can be found as Appendix E to the RFR on COMMBUYS or online at <https://massgaming.com/about/community-mitigation-fund/forms/>.

Applications without a completed waiver form will not be considered for a waiver.

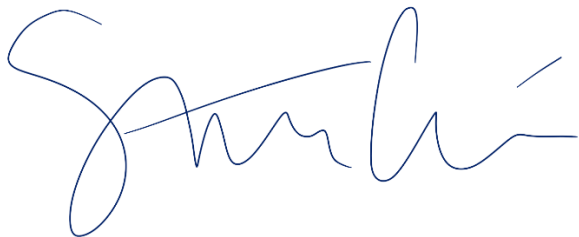
Budget Category Summary

Use the space below to provide an overview of all projects to be covered by this funding. You may add as many items as is pertinent to your application (you can add rows by right clicking on the row and selecting “add row”). Please provide a category, name, brief description, and amount for each item.

Category	Project Name	Description	Amount
A. Community Planning	Explore Holyoke	Continued efforts for the Explore Holyoke website.	\$25000
	Armor Yard 2.0	Adding infrastructure and public art to the armor yard located in the Puerto Rican Cultural District.	\$50,000
B. Public Safety			
C. Transportation			
D. Gambling Harm Reduction			
E. Specific Impact			

Applicant Certification

On behalf of the aforementioned applicant, I hereby certify that the funds that are requested in this application will be used solely for the purposes articulated in this application.



1/30/25

Signature:

Date:

Stephanie Colon Mass in Motion Coordinator

Name and Title of Signatory:

Part A-Community Planning - The application should include sufficient backup information for the review team to fully understand the project(s). This information could include locus maps, requests for proposals, detailed scopes of work, drawings etc.

Project Name: <u>Holyoke 2027</u>	
Please provide below the contact information for the individual managing this aspect of the grant.	
Project Contact	Additional Project Contact <i>(if applicable)</i>
Name:Stephanie Colon	Name: Eric Nakajima
Title: Mass in Motion Coordinator	Title: Office of Planning and Economic Development Director
Department: Office of Planning and Economic Development	Department: Office of Planning and Economic Development
Email Address: scolon@holyoke.org	Email Address: nakajimae@holyoke.org
Telephone:413-539-8363	Telephone:
Address:20 Koreans Veterans Plaza Suite 409 Holyoke Massachusetts	Address: 20 Koreans Veterans Plaza Suite 407 Holyoke Massachusetts
<p>I. Please use the space below to identify the impact of the gaming establishment on your municipality. You may use the impacts identified in the FY 2027 Guidelines relevant to this category. If you are using an impact not identified in the guidelines, please use the space below to identify the impact. Please provide documentation or evidence that supports the determination that the operation of the gaming facility caused or is causing the impact (i.e., surveys, data, reports, etc.)</p>	
<p>With the opening of MGM Springfield in Western Massachusetts, the City of Holyoke has experienced a measurable increase in visitor traffic to local businesses and community assets. Throughout calendar year 2025, Holyoke saw a notable rise in attendance at major cultural and community events, many of which attracted visitors who had not previously traveled to the city. Signature events such as the Fiestas Patronales and the St. Patrick’s Day Parade experienced significant growth in attendance, indicating increased regional tourism and expanded visibility for Holyoke as a destination. In addition, Mass Gaming & Community Impact Grant investments at the Armor Yard, located within the Puerto Rican Cultural District, have directly contributed to increased visitation at weekly programming such as Monday Nights at the Armor Yard. These events have drawn both residents and out-of-town visitors, strengthening the district’s role as a cultural and economic hub.</p> <p>This increase in foot traffic has had a positive impact on the local economy, particularly for small businesses within the Puerto Rican Cultural District, which have reported increased customer activity during and following major events. The enhanced visibility of Holyoke, combined with new cultural and recreational assets in the region, has elevated participation across a broad range of community events.</p> <p>Most recently, Holyoke welcomed the highest number of families in over three years to its Three Kings Day celebration, demonstrating a renewed level of regional engagement in culturally significant programming. These trends reflect the direct and indirect impacts of the gaming facility on tourism, community participation, and small business activity within the municipality.</p> <p>Attached you will find a document with the data of visitors to the Explore Holyoke webpage that focuses on supporting the small business in Holyoke and highlighting the assets such as Armor Yard that have seen a significant increase due to the casino.</p>	

II. Please describe the project in detail and how the proposed project will address the impact indicated above. Please include a breakdown of the proposed scope of work, the scope should be sufficiently detailed to allow the review team to understand the steps required for project completion.

The City of Holyoke seeks to continue and expand efforts to manage the growing influx of visitors by investing in key informational platforms and shared community spaces. These efforts include sustaining Explore Holyoke, supporting the Tourism Advisory Committee, and enhancing public gathering areas such as the Armor Yard. As visitation to Holyoke increases, it is essential that residents, visitors, and businesses remain well informed about local resources, events, and opportunities.

Explore Holyoke plays a critical role in coordinating tourism and economic development efforts across the city. The platform helps prevent duplication of work while encouraging collaboration among community partners to deliver unique, inclusive, and accessible programming. To maintain this momentum, the City is requesting additional funding to continue supporting Explore Holyoke and its dedicated social media management. These efforts have directly contributed to economic development outcomes, including a 65% increase in overall website users and a 470–515% growth in consistent engagement over three years, with social media followers increasing from 1,000 to over 4,000. This has assisted in the growth of businesses in the area and offering them an alternative route to traditional marketing techniques at no cost.

As visitor traffic continues to rise, particularly in the Armor Yard through partnerships such as Mass Gaming, the City plans to invest in additional assets to enhance safety, usability, and economic potential in the surrounding neighborhoods. Improvements such as upgraded lighting, new functional public art piece and illuminated structures will extend hours of use, increase accessibility, and support year-round programming. These investments are especially critical during the fall and winter months, when earlier sunsets were identified as a barrier to hosting additional events. Community feedback last fall highlighted strong interest in expanded seasonal programming, which was limited due to inadequate lighting. The infrastructure improvements that will be made seek to support small businesses with more resources and time to activate the space and offer casino patrons and residents a perfect place to live/play/and work in the Holyoke Community.

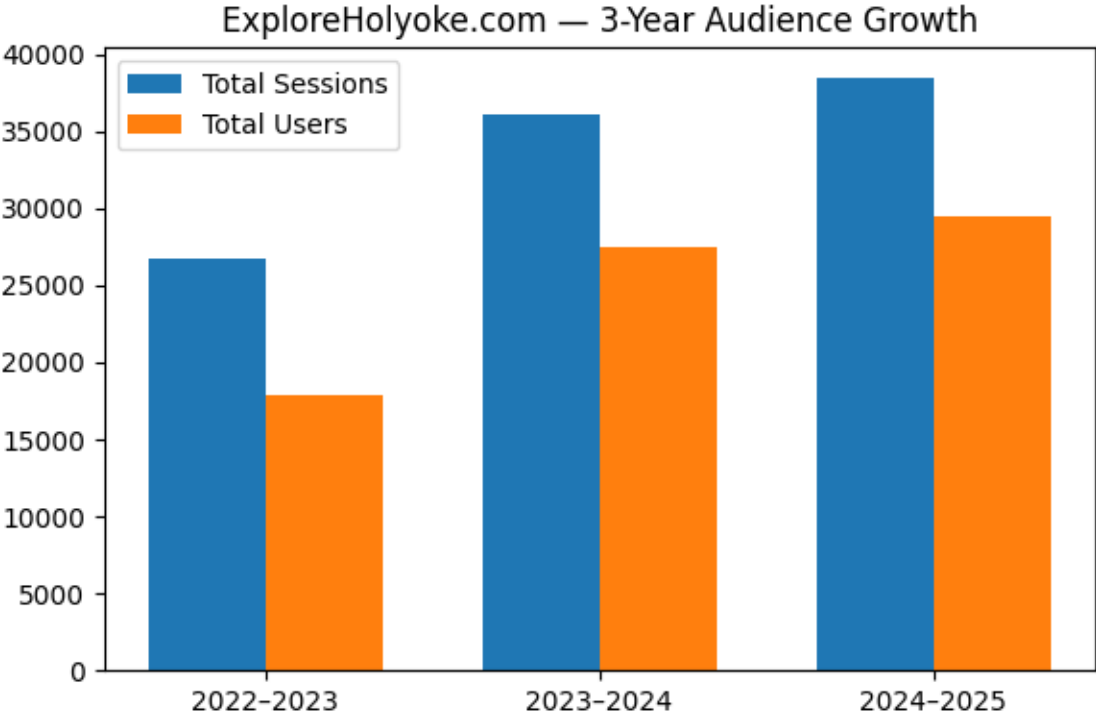
This project is essential to sustain tourism growth while ensuring public safety, maximizing shared spaces, and continuing the collaborative, community-centered work already underway in Holyoke.

Proposed MGC Grant Budget

Please use the following table to outline the project budget. Please include as an attachment any requests for proposals, quotes, or estimates that would quantify the costs associated with the mitigation.

Description of Purchase/Work	Timeline	QTY	Budget
Lighting	Fall 2026		\$15000
Infrastrucure Changes	Fall 2026		\$20000
Public art	Spring 2027		\$15000
ExploreHolyoke Management			\$25000
	TOTAL:		\$75000

ExploreHolyoke.com — 3-Year Digital Growth Overview



Headline Numbers (3-Year View)

Year	Total Sessions	Total Users
2022-2023	26,727	17,872
2023-2024	36,033	27,449
2024-2025	38,492	29,538

3-Year Growth Totals
Sessions: +11,765 (+44%)
Users: +11,666 (+65%)

This is a very strong stat to lead with.

Key 3-Year Insights (Plain Language, Decision-Maker Friendly)

1. ExploreHolyoke.com Has Become a Primary Discovery Tool

Organic Search grew from 44% of traffic → consistently over 53%

Shows improved SEO, stronger destination searches, and better content depth
People are actively looking for Holyoke

2. Brand Awareness Has Sharply Increased

Direct traffic remains high across all three years

Massive jump after 2022–23 indicates:

- More repeat visitors
- Stronger name recognition
- Successful promotion via events, campaigns, and partnerships

3. Social Media Is Driving Early Discovery

In 2022–23, Organic Social accounted for 14–18% of traffic/users

Over time, those users increasingly return via Direct and Organic Search

This shows social is working as a top-of-funnel, not a vanity metric

4. Growth Is Stabilizing (In a Good Way)

Early years show rapid expansion

Most recent year shows healthy, sustainable growth

This is exactly what sponsors and municipalities want to see:

- Not a spike
- A durable, long-term platform

Executive Summary for TAC, OPED & Sponsors

Over the past three years, ExploreHolyoke.com has demonstrated consistent and meaningful growth, with total users increasing by more than 65% and total sessions rising by 44%. The platform has evolved into a primary digital hub for Holyoke, driven by strong organic search visibility and significant gains in direct traffic—clear indicators of rising brand awareness, repeat visitation, and community trust. This sustained performance positions Explore Holyoke as a high-value, long-term asset for tourism promotion, economic development, and sponsorship investment.