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# Wisconsin Legislative Council

## ACT MEMO

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**2023 Wisconsin Act 169**  
[2023 Senate Bill 810]

**Opportunities and Events Grant  
Program for WEDC**

### BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is a semi-public entity created to assist business development in Wisconsin through the use of grants, loans, and tax credits.

### 2023 WISCONSIN ACT 169

2023 Wisconsin Act 169 requires WEDC to establish and administer an economic development program for the purpose of attracting major opportunities and events to Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup> WEDC is directed to do the following:

- Create an application for eligible applicants<sup>2</sup> which must include an estimate of projected direct and indirect economic benefits, as well as a related cost-benefit analysis for the opportunity or event.
- Award grants to eligible applicants for major opportunities or events that will draw national exposure and drive economic development and visitors to this state.
- Submit an annual report to the Joint Committee on Finance (JCF) that includes a description of each grant awarded.

WEDC may only award a grant to an eligible applicant if the applicant has secured funding from nonstate sources equal to the amount of the proposed grant.

Eligible applicants may use grant funds to bid against other states or jurisdictions outside Wisconsin to attract an opportunity or event to Wisconsin. Eligible applicants may also use grant funds to host an opportunity that the eligible applicant secured through a competitive bid against other states or jurisdictions outside Wisconsin. In addition, eligible applicants must spend all grant money received from WEDC to attract or host, or both, a major opportunity or event that is open to the public.

The act also specifies WEDC may consult with the Department of Tourism to implement the grant program.

**Effective date:** March 23, 2024

For a full history of the bill, visit the Legislature's [bill history page](#).

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<sup>1</sup> 2023 Wisconsin Act 169 does not appropriate any funds for the purposes of the new grant program. However, 2023 Wisconsin Act 19, the 2023-25 biennial budget act, included an appropriation to JCF to provide supplemental funding to a variety of agencies. This appropriation included \$10 million for an opportunity attraction and promotion fund. Further information on the JCF appropriation for agency supplements is available on page 235 of [Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Summary of Provisions: 2023 Wisconsin Act 19 \(July 2023\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> “Eligible applicant” is defined by the act to include any of the following in Wisconsin: (a) a city, village, town, or county; (b) an American Indian tribe or band in this state; (c) an area visitor and convention bureau; (d) a business improvement district; or (e) a private entity.