



CD-LEG-2025-04-26-14:21:00

COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

April 9, 2026

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin St, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

RE: Erie County Hospitality Center Access Policy

Dear Honorable Members,

Please find enclosed a resolution from the Department of Law seeking legislative authorization to use the Erie County Hospitality Center exclusively to encourage and foster economic development, tourism, and public awareness for the City of Buffalo, the County, and the State of New York, as well as for other charitable or public functions as determined by the County in its discretion.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, please reach out to my office at 716-858-8500.

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.

Erie County Executive

MCP/jt
Enclosure

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Law
Re: Erie County Hospitality Center Access Policy
Date: April 2, 2026

SUMMARY

Erie County (“County”) has been granted access pursuant to the Stadium Lease between Erie County Stadium Corporation and Bills Stadium and Events Company, LLC, to a Hospitality Center (“Center”) at Highmark Stadium. The County has been granted exclusive use of the Center, including sixteen tickets and four parking passes for each Buffalo Bills game at Highmark Stadium. In order to ensure fairness as to how the tickets are used, the County has created a Hospitality Center Access Policy (“Policy”). A copy of the Policy is attached to this resolution.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

This Policy is intended primarily, though not exclusively, to promote and support charitable organizations serving the County, along with certain economic development activities, while ensuring that the Center is used in a manner consistent with the public purposes set forth in the Stadium Lease and in compliance with applicable law, including restrictions governing gifts and the use of public resources, and to establish clear standards for its proper and lawful use.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Not authorizing the Policy would limit meaningful opportunities for charitable organizations to engage in the community, gain recognition, and support their missions. It would also reduce the region’s ability to showcase itself to visitors, partners, and investors—hindering tourism, economic development, and overall community growth across Buffalo, Erie County, and New York State.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Upon approval of this resolution, the County Executive will commence implementation of the Policy. The County will then focus on promoting the program, monitoring usage and impact, and conducting regular evaluations to ensure compliance.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:
DEPARTMENT OF LAW

RE: Erie County Hospitality Center Access Policy

WHEREAS, Erie County ("County") has been granted access pursuant to the Stadium Lease between Erie County Stadium Corporation and Bills Stadium and Events Company, LLC, to a Hospitality Center ("Center") at the new Buffalo Bills Stadium also commonly referred to as "Highmark Stadium"; and

WHEREAS, the County has been granted exclusive use of the Center, including sixteen tickets and four parking passes for each Buffalo Bills game at Highmark Stadium; and

WHEREAS, a County Hospitality Access Policy regarding the use of the Center has been created to designate use for charitable organizations, economic development, tourism, and public functions; and

WHEREAS, a random selection application or "lottery" process will be established under sole discretion of the County Executive's Office for ticket allocations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Hospitality Access Policy, attached hereto as Exhibit "A", is hereby approved and adopted by this Honorable Body; and be it hereby

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Office of the County Executive, the Departments of Law, Public Works and Budget.

ERIE COUNTY HOSPITALITY CENTER ACCESS POLICY

1. Statement of Intent.

Erie County (the “County”) has been granted access, pursuant to the Stadium Lease between Erie County Stadium Corporation and Bills Stadium and Events Company, LLC, to a hospitality center at Highmark Stadium (the “Center”). The County has been granted exclusive use of the Center, including sixteen (16) tickets and four (4) parking passes for each Buffalo Bills game at Highmark Stadium. Under said Lease, the Center is to be used to encourage and foster economic development, tourism, and public awareness for the City of Buffalo, the County, and the State of New York, as well as for other charitable or public functions as determined by the County in its discretion.

This policy is intended primarily, though not exclusively, to promote and support charitable organizations serving Erie County, along with certain economic development activities, while ensuring that the Center is used in a manner consistent with the public purposes set forth in the Lease and in compliance with applicable law, including restrictions governing gifts and the use of public resources, and to establish clear standards for its proper and lawful use.

The Erie County Legislature may amend this policy as needed.

2. Definitions.

a. Bills. For the purposes of this Policy, “Bills” shall mean Buffalo Bills Holdings, LLC and its affiliates, including Bills Stadium and Events Company, LLC and Buffalo Bills, LLC.

b. Center. For the purposes of this Policy, “Center” shall mean the Erie County, Hospitality Center at Highmark Stadium, as further defined in Section 1.

c. Charitable Organizations. For the purposes of this Policy, “Charitable Organizations” shall mean not-for profit organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes and qualify as an entity described in Section 501(c)(3) and other sections of the United States Internal Revenue Code for a minimum of five years immediately preceding entry into the Lottery, that has its principal place of business in Erie County and provides services to the residents of Erie County.

d. County. For the purposes of this Policy, “County” shall mean Erie County, New York.

e. Formal Guest. “Formal Guest” shall mean a County official who receives and possesses a ticket to the Center for the purpose of attending a Bills game, including any pre-season, regular season, or playoff game.

f. Economic Development Organizations shall mean the Erie County Industrial Development Agency, Visit Buffalo Niagara and Empire State Development Corporation.

g. Games. For the purposes of this Policy, “Games” shall mean any Home Game or Home Playoff Game.

h. Home Game. For the purposes of this Policy, “Home Game” shall mean any Regular Season Game between the Bills and any other NFL team, which is designated by the NFL in its official schedule as a “home game” for the Bills and is played at Highmark Stadium.

i. Home Playoff Game. For the purposes of this Policy, “Home Playoff Game” shall mean any Post-Season Game between the Bills and any other NFL team, which is designated by the NFL in its official post-season schedule as a “home game” for the Bills and is played at Highmark Stadium, but excluding any Super Bowl in which the Bills are a participant.

j. Informal Guest. For the purposes of this Policy, “Informal Guest” shall mean a County official who attends a Game, and visits the Center in the course of his or her public duties as directed by the Public Works Commissioner of Erie County and whose use of the Center includes but is not limited to ensuring compliance with the Policy, any Bills’ rules or regulations, and any other laws, rules, or regulations arising out of or relating to the Policy. Informal Guests are expected to enter the stadium without the use of Center tickets or parking. This definition shall not apply to any New York State Officials.

k. Lease. “Lease” shall mean the Stadium Lease Between Erie County Stadium Corporation and Bills Stadium and Events Company, LLC which is dated March 29, 2023.

l. Lottery. “Lottery shall mean a random selection process as determined by the Department of Information and Support Services to allocate Ticket Materials for Pre-Season Games, Regular Season Games and Post Season Games. The Lottery process, in the sole discretion of the County Executive’s Office, may be conducted in one or more methods for each type of game but shall in all circumstances allocate Ticket Materials to eligible recipients on a random basis. The assignment of Games with which each Charitable Organization shall receive tickets and parking passes to shall be random, with no organization being given preference and each having an equal likelihood to be distributed Tickets Materials for all Games. To ensure no preference is given, Department of Information and Support Services, in consultation with the County Attorney, shall create a selection process that ensures randomness. Each Lottery for pre-season and regular season games shall be completed no later than August 1 preceding the season.

m. Policy. “Policy” shall mean the Erie County Hospitality Access Center Policy.

n. Post-Season Games. “Post-Season Games” shall mean the total schedule of all play off, championship and “Super Bowl” football games played by NFL Teams.

o. Pre-Season Games. “Pre-Season Games” shall mean the total schedule of all football games played at Highmark Stadium between the Bills and another NFL team in a given NFL Season prior to the commencement of the Regular Season Games.

p. Regular Season Games. “Regular Season Games” shall mean the total schedule of all football games played by NFL teams used by the NFL to determine which NFL teams participate in Post-Season Games.

q. Ticket Materials. For the purposes of this Policy, “Ticket Materials” shall collectively mean the sixteen (16) tickets and four (4) parking passes allotted to the Center for each Pre Season, Regular Season and Post Season Bills game.

r. Department of Information and Support Services. Department of Information and Support Services shall mean the Erie County Department of Information and Support Services (“DISS”).

s. County Attorney. County Attorney shall mean the County Attorney for Erie County.

t. Department of Personnel. Department of Personnel shall mean the Erie County Department of Personnel.

u. County Executive’s Office. County Executive’s Office shall mean those County employees directly supervised by the County Executive and the County Executive’s Chief of Staff.

3. Center Allocation.

a. Reserved Tickets.

(i) Tickets Reserved for Use by County Civil Servants. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, the County shall reserve, for distribution to all full time civil servants employed by the County, Ticket Materials for all Pre-Season Games. The Department of Personnel will generate the eligible list. Such list shall not include any elected official, their staffs or any County employee designated as a management confidential. The County Executive’s Office will conduct a Lottery to choose among those eligible.

(ii) Tickets Reserved for Economic Development. Ticket Materials for three (3) Games per season shall be reserved for the purpose of fostering economic development. Ticket Materials under this Section 3(a)(ii) shall be reserved for the Economic Development Organizations, with (1) Game being reserved for each organization each year. The Game each organization shall attend is subject to the Lottery selection process in Section 4(a)(iii) and subsequent Distribution in Section 4(b). Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 4(a)(iii) regarding the number tickets allocated to Charitable Organizations, each Economic Development Organization shall receive 16 tickets and four parking passes for the game that is assigned to it

through the Lottery. Furthermore, the Economic Development Organizations are not required to provide the documents and certifications required of Charitable Organizations in Section 4(a)(ii).

b. Charitable Organizations. Ticket Materials for all remaining Games not reserved pursuant to Section 3(a)(i-ii) shall be allocated to Charitable Organizations.

4. Lottery and Distribution. At all times, County Executive's Office shall be charged with all responsibilities and duties related to the management and operation of the Lottery and distribution of Ticket Materials in accordance with this Policy.

a. Lottery Procedures. The procedures described under this Section 4(a) shall take place prior to the commencement of each season, except for the allocation of post season games which may take place during the season. The results of the Lottery shall apply only to that season. No Charitable Organization or county employee shall have any rights to Ticket Materials for Games beyond the season it was selected for, independent of whether the Game it was selected for occurred.

(i) Application. Charitable Organizations may apply for the Lottery prior to each season, at a time and in a form determined by the County Executive's Office. By applying, Charitable Organizations must acknowledge and agree (1) that in the event it wins the Lottery, it shall accept, only for its use, all Ticket Materials for the Game it is selected for; and (2) to the terms of this Policy and all related agreements. The County Executive's office reserves the right to establish its own criteria for application approval, including what criteria it considers when determining whether or not to approve an application, but in no event shall such criteria (1) contradict or violate this policy or (2) violate the terms of the Lease. All such policies and procedures to the maximum extent feasible shall ensure that the Lottery and allocation of Ticket Materials is fair, unbiased, and complies with this Policy.

(ii) Application Materials. In addition to all other requirements in the application, which is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, any Charitable Organization applying for the Lottery shall provide the following materials: (1) a statement of final determination or valid temporary designation that it has been determined by the Internal Revenue Service to be a organization described in Section 501(c)(3); (2) the organization's previous 5 years of completed and filed Form 990's; (3) documentation showing the organization is based in Erie County and serves the residents of Erie County; (4) a statement of intent for use of the tickets should they be selected; (5) confirmation that they have not been awarded Ticket Materials in the previous 3 seasons.

(iii) DISS shall be responsible for creating an online application portal where all above Application Materials may be submitted.

(iv) Selection. Once the deadline for applications has passed, all Charitable Organization whose applications were approved shall be entered into a Lottery to determine who is awarded Ticket Materials for each Game allotted under Section 3(b). Two Charitable

Organizations shall be selected for each Game allocated under Section 3(b), with each Charitable Organization being allotted eight (8) tickets and two (2) parking passes. The total number of Charitable Organizations randomly selected as winners in the Lottery shall equal twice the number of Games allocated under Section 3(b).

b. Distribution Procedures. After completion of the Lottery Procedures and once all Games for the upcoming season are allotted, including the games reserved for the Economic Development Organizations, Ticket Materials for all Games in the upcoming season shall be distributed in a two-part process. First, each Economic Development Organization shall be randomly assigned to one Game in the upcoming season, and each organization shall receive all Ticket Materials for its corresponding Game. Second, all remaining Games shall be split into two sections, A and B. Each Charitable Organization shall then be assigned a Game and corresponding section, signifying for which Game each Charitable Organization shall receive its eight (8) tickets and two (2) parking passes.

5. Miscellaneous.

a. Lottery Waiting Period. If a Charitable Organization is selected in the lottery, it shall be ineligible to apply to the lottery for the following three (3) seasons thereafter, independent of whether it was distributed Ticket Materials or whether the Game it was selected for occurred. For purposes of clarity, the Economic Development Corporations shall receive Tickets each year, notwithstanding the provisions of this subdivision.

b. Redistribution. No Charitable Organization shall resell any of the distributed tickets. Nothing in this policy prevents a Charitable Organization from raffling off the distributed tickets so long as the proceeds from the raffle are used for its own charitable purposes. Any raffle shall be consistent with New York Gaming and other applicable laws and regulations. No County employee awarded Ticket Materials pursuant to section 3(a)(i) shall transfer their ticket to anyone else.

c. Food and Beverage. Any Charitable Organization using the Center may contract with the Bills hospitality staff for food and beverage. In no event shall the County be responsible for providing food or beverages in the Center or paying for food and beverages ordered by a Charitable Organization.

d. Violations. Any person or organization that violates any section of this Policy shall be ineligible for future use of the Center and may be subject to further sanctions by Erie County Stadium Corporation and/or the Bills.

e. Children.

(i) Supervision. Any organization using the Center shall be responsible for adequate supervision of children in the Center.

f. Alcohol. No alcoholic beverages shall be served in the Center.

g. Cannabis Products. No cannabis products shall be present or used in the Center at any time.

h. Tobacco and Similar Products. No tobacco products, vaping devices, or similar products shall be present or used in the Center at any time.

i. Waiver. No attendee shall hold the County responsible for any potential cause of action arising out of use of the Center.

j. Stadium Rules. All attendees shall comply with all of the Bills' rules and regulations.

k. County Officials.

(i) Formal Guest. If a County Official is attending a Bills game as a Formal Guest, that Official shall reimburse the face value of the ticket, as determined by the Buffalo Bills, in the form of a payment to the charitable organization awarded the Ticketing Materials, in accordance with applicable Public Officer law. The County Official shall also be responsible for 1/16th of the cost of any food and beverage ordered to the Center for that Bills game.

(ii) Informal Guest. If a County Official is attending a Bills game without a ticket to the Center and enters the Center to perform their duties as an Informal Guest, that official is not required to reimburse the face value of a ticket, or to contribute to food and beverage expenses.

l. Other Stadium Events. The County Executive's Office reserves the right to create a policy for other events at Highmark Stadium that are not Bills home games.

m. Political Events. The center shall not be used for political events, including but not limited to fundraisers in support or opposition to any candidate for political office; in support or opposition to any public policy issue. Nor can the center be made available for any political party, political committee or political action committee.



[Home](#)

Hospitality Center Access

Erie County has been granted access to a hospitality center at Highmark Stadium.

[Erie County Hospitality Center Access Policy \(link to policy\)](#)

Changed 04/09/2025 9:18 am

Erie County Civil Servants

Full time Erie County Civil Servants complete and submit this form:

First Name *

Last Name *

Employee ID *

Department *

Email *

must use erie.gov address

Phone Number *

Submit

Charitable Organizations

Charitable Organizations based in Erie County and serving the residents of Erie County complete and submit this form:

First Name *

Last Name *

Registered/Legal Name of Organization *

Address *

Address 2

City/Town *

State/Province *

- Select -

ZIP/Postal Code *

Email *

Phone Number *

Statement of Designation *

Browse... No file selected.

Statement of final determination or valid temporary designation that it has been determined by the Internal Revenue Service to be a organization described in Section 501(c)(3)

One file only

1 MB limit

Allowed type(s): pdf

Completed & Filed Form 990 *

Click the **Browse** button to upload a file. After uploading, click the **Browse** button again to upload additional files.

Browse... No files selected.

Previous 5 years of completed and filed Form 990

Maximum 5 files

5 MB limit

Allowed type(s): pdf

Erie County Documentation *

Browse... No file selected.

Documentation showing the organization is based in Erie County and serves the residents of Erie County

One file only

1 MB limit

Allowed type(s): pdf

Statement of Intent *

200 word(s) remaining

Statement of intent for use of the tickets should they be selected

Have you been awarded Ticket Materials in the previous 3 seasons? *

Yes

No

Confirmation that they have not been awarded Ticket Materials in the previous 3 seasons

Submit

EXHIBIT A