



The Big Parade General Information
September 13-29, 2024

Parade Standards & Regulations

Eastern States Exposition (ESE) is always on the lookout for the region’s best marching bands, floats and performance groups to entertain the 1.6 million spectators that attend The Big E annually.

The following items pertain to all areas of parade participation. Primary participation categories include, but may not be limited to, marching bands, color guard, show vehicles, specialty floats, costumed characters and performance groups. Individual members or contingents from nonprofit organizations that do not fall into any of the above categories can apply to be considered for a showcase opportunity on the ESE Trolley.

In order to participate in The Big Parade, all organizations, affiliates and individuals must agree to and abide by the terms and conditions outlined in this document. Failure to comply may result in an immediate ban from participating in present or future events.

ESE retains the right to refuse any Parade application; and remove any contingent from the line-of-march at any time for safety reasons, indecorous behavior, or structural instability. **No call, no shows will not be accepted to participate in future years.**

Parade Standards and Regulations are subject to updates at any point.

The information in this document only pertains to general participation in The Big Parade. For information on the Mardi Gras Reveler Experience, visit www.thebige.com/parade.

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Application Process

- Submitting an application via TheBigE.com is the only way to apply to be considered for The Big Parade and does not guarantee selection.
- The contact listed on the application must be a representative directly associated with the individual, organization or school applying. Do not use the application to submit recommendations.
- Entry application deadline is **Friday, June 28, 2024**. All submissions must be received by 11:59pm ET. Late applications will not be accepted—no exceptions.
- Applications will be evaluated, and participants will be selected at the sole discretion of The Big Parade Officials. The process is unbiased and not politically motivated. ESE strives to provide the best program possible for its patrons.
- Upon approval of an application, successful applicants will be notified of acceptance via email. All entries must receive written approval by The Big Parade Officials. Individuals or entities that show up without receiving proper acceptance will be denied entry. Regrets may not be sent.
- Prospective participants must fill out all required fields on the application and select at least three (3) date options. Applicants that select less than three (3) date options will not be prioritized.
- Applications will be prioritized for applicants directly associated with respective dates on the schedule of State & Special Days (e.g., West Springfield High School Marching Band on Salute to West Springfield Day).
- If performer or vehicle counts change following the entry submission and acceptance, additions must receive written approval by The Big Parade officials prior to engagement.
- Upon acceptance, representative is required to sign and return additional Terms & Conditions and ESE Insurance Waiver prior to date of engagement. Additional documentation is required for vehicles. See Vehicles section on pgs. 3-4 for more information.

Marching Bands

- A limited number of marching band applicants will be selected to play on any given day of the Fair.
- Bands are selected based on criteria including musicianship, marching ability, uniqueness, entertainment value or special interest. Bands with the ability to perform field show maneuvers while marching forward are encouraged to apply.
- Bands of any size and type can apply (e.g., marching bands, drum and bugle corps, brass and percussion bands, bag pipes, etc.). The Big Parade has welcomed high schools, colleges, universities and military bands. Middle school or junior high bands can apply but may not be selected due to experience level.
- Marching bands are permitted to add accompanying color guard or drill team to contingent. Information regarding color guard or drill team must be included in the Marching Band section of the application. Separate applications for accompanying contingents will be not accepted.
- Marching bands and accompanying contingents are required to march the Parade route in formation and maintain a continuous forward motion with the Parade. The route does not offer a showcase area to stop and perform.
- Storrowton Green performances have been eliminated for Marching Bands.
- High School Marching Bands and accompanying contingents that are eligible or have been contacted to receive a travel stipend from ESE Trustee grants must indicate that on the application.

Specialty Floats

- Floats may not exceed 25' length, 8' width and 12' height for maneuverability and safety reasons. The float must be able to navigate required turns.
- Floats must be self-contained. No riders or articles can hang over the sides of float or vehicle.
- Reference Vehicles for information on float towing vehicles, pg. 3.
- If float has a designated area for riders, a list of participating individuals must be submitted prior to date of engagement. (Reference Parade Escorts, pg. 4)
- Overnight parking must be approved in advance by The Big Parade Officials. Unless otherwise discussed, floats must arrive day of engagement and must be removed immediately from the grounds following conclusion of the parade.

Costumed Characters

- Costumed characters can elect to walk the one-mile Parade route, ride in a vehicle or request a seat on ESE's trolley. Vehicles must be provided by sponsoring entity and need to follow the standards detailed in the Vehicles section.
- In most instances, Mascots for sports teams, etc., are exempt from the Promotion of Product, Service or For-Profit Company regulations outlined on pg. 4. Other costumed characters associated with a for-profit company will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- A maximum of two handlers are permitted per costumed character. Handlers must follow rules as outlined in Parade Escorts.

Performance Groups

- Performance Group pertains to any unit with a displayed routine (e.g., dance teams, stunt performers, puppeteers, etc.).
- All performance group participants must be high school-aged or older.
- Drill teams and cheerleading squads not associated with a marching band can apply under this category. For younger groups, we recommend applying for a [Community Performance](#) slot on the Storrowton Green.
- If unit consists of individuals on foot, the unit must travel the route in formation and maintain a continuous forward motion with the Parade.
- The route does not offer a showcase area to stop and perform.
- Groups must wear representative attire, so the unit appears cohesive. Signage is permitted pending approval.

Vehicles

- All vehicles must be registered and properly insured. Vehicle owner must provide evidence of valid registration and insurance coverage upon acceptance of application.
- Individuals driving the vehicles must be 18 years or older with valid driver's license. Drivers must provide photocopy of license prior to date of engagement.
- Vehicle driver plus one is permitted in the Parade. This additionally pertains to float-towing vehicles. No individuals are permitted to ride in the bed of trucks.
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Vehicles (Continued)

- Show vehicles must be antique, collector, classic, custom or specialty. Any year, make and model are welcome to apply. Car clubs are encouraged to apply. No utility vehicles.
- Cars utilized to drive costumed characters in the parade must meet show vehicle criteria.
- Float towing vehicles do not have to be show vehicles, but they must abide by a show ready standard, including no visible body rust, cleanliness and free from advertising decals, etc.
- Any vehicle with major safety concerns such as leaking or improper fuel storage may not be permitted to enter the premises.
- Any vehicle that breaks down and cannot proceed in the Parade shall be immediately removed to the nearest pull off location. If repair is feasible prior to Parade conclusion, the vehicle will be allowed to re-enter the Parade after the last unit has passed, or at the direction of the Parade Marshal. If the vehicle is unable to be repaired, the situation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Motorcycle contingents are limited to 10.

Parade Escorts

- Supply wagons are permitted for marching bands, performance groups and costumed characters marching the Parade route. All wagons are subject to a security check upon entry to the fairgrounds. If wagons contain prohibited items, they will not be allowed to enter the grounds.
- Escorts are not permitted to walk in line with the Parade unit. All escorts must walk on the side of the respective contingent.
- Escorts must wear some sort of representative attire or come equipped with signage, so the outfit appears cohesive.
- Float escorts are limited to 2-6 participants. Escorts must be in matching uniform cohesive with float and must be approved prior to date of engagement.

Parade Staging & Line of March

- All participants must advance with The Big Parade Officials no less than four (4) weeks prior to scheduled date of engagement. Contact information will be provided following acceptance of application.
- The Big Parade takes place at 6pm ET, daily. Participants must arrive and report to the staging area one (1) hour prior to parade start. Upon arrival, participants must check in with Parade Marshal.
- All contingents must be approved upon arrival and are not permitted to enter the line-of-march until instructed to do so by the Parade Marshal. ESE retains the right to reject any participant for any reason.
- No person is permitted to ride on a float, in a vehicle or march in a contingent other than those selected and designated.
- The parade staging area does not have dressing rooms or private facilities for participants to utilize, please plan accordingly.

Political Agendas & Protests

- The Big Parade is an entertainment attraction for all fairgoers. It is not an opportunity for groups or persons to advance a political agenda or engage in protest, regardless of the cause. Any demonstration that could be viewed as advancing a political cause or engaging in a protest of any kind, will not be tolerated.

Presentation Policy

- No explicit language or graphic content is permitted. Lewd or vulgar language cannot be spoken, nor depicted on any signage, during the procession.
- All units must appear in full uniform or costume, including accompanying parade escorts. Participants may wear the attire of their choice; however, attire must be appropriate for an all-ages event. Nudity or indecent attire of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Contingents cannot advocate, oppose or depict any political, religious or social issues.
- Contingents are not permitted to spray water, or other liquids, confetti, etc.

Promotion of Product, Service or For-Profit Company

- Units that directly advertise the sale of a product, service or for-profit company are not considered for general parade participation. If ESE elects to open participation in this category, an entry fee will be instated. Sponsorship opportunities are available for The Big E. Contact sales@thebige.com for more information.
- Signage featuring business names or commercial advertising that is imprinted or mounted on vehicles or floats is not permitted.

Distribution & Solicitation Policy

- Distribution of materials along the parade route is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, merchandise, literature, candy or other objects being thrown or handed out from floats or distributed by other persons associated with the float and/or unit while the Parade is in progress.
- Parade participants may not solicit anything from onlookers. Violation of this policy will result in immediate ejection from ESE.

Sound Policy

- Unless directed otherwise, music or amplified noise of any kind (e.g., recorded music, blowing of sirens or vehicle horns) cannot be used as it may interfere with bands marching ahead or behind the float. Failure to comply may result in removal from the Parade.

Age Requirements

- No child under 13 years of age is allowed to participate without adult supervision.
- Performance group participants must be high school-age or older.
- Height limit may be implemented on a case-by-case basis for vehicles, specialty floats, etc.

Drug/Alcohol & Smoking Policy

- Smoking is prohibited in The Big Parade and staging area. All forms of tobacco use including cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, vaping and marijuana are prohibited.
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs by participants prior to and during the parade is prohibited. Individuals appearing intoxicated will be denied parade participation.
- Any parade participant caught with alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs will be pulled out of the parade and result in disqualification of your group from future participation.

Credentials

- Parade credentials and/or entry information will be distributed to parties prior to participation date. Proper credentials are required to gain access to the fairgrounds and parade staging area.
- Participants are prohibited from making unauthorized copies of any credentials. The discovery of counterfeit credentials, or unauthorized changes made to original credentials, will result in an immediate and permanent ban of the individual or organization from The Big Parade and future ESE events.
- Credentials are not transferable. They are only valid for confirmed date of engagement.

Liability & Insurance

- ESE requires participants to carry general liability insurance coverage and for ESE to be listed as additional insured on such policy, and a workers' compensation policy, if applicable.
- In the absence of a general liability and/or workers' compensation coverage as a result of being a member or partner of an LLC or LLP, or the sole proprietor of an unincorporated business opting not to maintain workers' compensation coverage for themselves, Participant is eligible for ESE Insurance Waiver.

Cancellation Policy

- ESE retains the right to cancel the event at any time, in part or in full, without liability.
- The Big Parade is a rain-or-shine event. However, inclement weather can force the cancellation of the Parade. If the parade is cancelled due to weather conditions, participants will be notified.
- In the event the parade is cancelled, participants will not be able to obtain a rescheduled date. An unforeseen cancellation does not guarantee acceptance for the parade the following year, but applicants will be prioritized in this circumstance.
- If a participant is forced to cancel their appearance, please notify The Big Parade Officials at earliest convenience.
- No call, no shows will not be invited to participate in future years. No exceptions.

Contact Information

General Inquiries:
parade@thebigparade.com