



Special Events Funding Application (SEFA)

Bureau of Communications ■ Office of Special Events ■ 30 Church St., 203A ■ Rochester, NY 14614-1287
cityofrochester.gov/sefa

Table of Contents

Section One- What is the Special Events Funding Application (SEFA) and Why Does the City Support Special Events?..... Pg. 2

Section Two – How the City Provides Support..... Pg. 2

Section Three- Who is Involved?..... Pg. 3

Section Four- Event Eligibility..... Pg. 3

Section Five- Event Ineligibility Pg. 3

Section Six- Special Considerations..... Pg. 4

Section Seven- Review Criteria Pg. 4

Section Eight – Proposal RequirementsPg. 5-6

IMPORTANT DATES AND INSTRUCTIONS

Application Deadline:

- **February 3, 2025 at noon.**
 - **The entire SEFA submission must be received by the deadline. Any submission that includes an incomplete application or insufficient supporting documentation may be eliminated from consideration.**
- **The proposal and excel budget document must be sent via email to kara.osipovitch@cityofrochester.gov .**

Internal Review:

- February - April

Funding Decisions Announced:

- May

Essential Information:

- Events applying under this cycle **must take place between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026**, which is the City’s upcoming fiscal year (FY26).
- Events applying for support shall use this application and abide by its deadlines.
 - **NOTE:** The City has limited public resources available and is the steward of those limited funds. It is within the City’s sole discretion to determine which events to sponsor, whether to approve recurring events and to determine the level of support for every Event.

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION SUBMISSION:

- Regardless of funding, to obtain a permit to have the event, you must submit the associated special event application online no later than 4 months prior to the event. *More info at www.cityofrochester.gov/eventpermit.*

Section One – What is the Special Events Funding Application and Why Does the City support Special Events?

The Special Events Funding Application (SEFA) was created to assist the City of Rochester’s Bureau of Communications and Special Events in its annual review of eligible events that request City sponsorship. It is the intention of the City to encourage the production of free and low cost special events that enhance quality of life, provide entertainment and other leisure activities, promote local economic health, attract visitors, and contribute to the dynamic atmosphere of the community (“Events”). All funding requests will be considered as a part of this annual, competitive application process.

Section Two – How the City Provides Support and What an Entity Needs to Receive It

The City support is a cash grant (that is established via a sponsorship contract with the City), along with City-determined in-kind equipment rental from the Department of Environmental Services, in-kind public safety services, and in-kind parking meter bagging. The Office of Special Events and its appropriate departmental partners will determine the final specific in-kind support based upon the needs of each event.

Please be aware:

- **The City will NOT disburse funds to a fiduciary.**
- **Entering a contract with the City requires that the entity:**
 1. **Has its own legal standing- a 501c3, an LLC. To ensure you are eligible to apply for funding, first check that your organization is listed with New York State. <https://apps.dos.ny.gov/publicInquiry/#search>.**
 2. **Is the same entity named on the general liability, worker’s compensation, and disability insurances.**
 3. **Is the same entity that applies for and holds the special event permit.**
- **If the Event cannot meet these requirements, it should not apply for funding. The City reserves the right to deny funding if the organizer cannot meet these terms.**
- **Events are hereby advised that due to timing of events and the City funds becoming available on July 1, most times, City funding will be paid out very close to or after the event takes place. Applicants should be prepared to provide their own funding for expenses that must be paid before the event.**
- **Note: The City may also determine that it will support an event with in-kind value that can be applied to equipment rental, venue rental, duplicating, and other support it may determine.**

Section Three – Who is Involved?

The Bureau of Communications and Special Events (the “Bureau”) is responsible for the administration of the Special Events Funding Application and the subsequent internal review of the applications.

Before recommending sponsorship for approval by the Mayor and City Council, the Bureau may contact external stakeholders, including neighborhood organizations, community groups, and the business community, as well as internal departments that will be impacted by the event or participate in its coordination, such as the Rochester Police Department and Rochester Fire Department.

After review, the Bureau will make funding recommendations to the Mayor’s Office, which makes final decisions. All funding is subject to City Council’s final approval of the operating budget in May each year.

Section Four – Event Eligibility

Qualifying Events (must meet EACH criteria below):

1. Events that take place in Fiscal Year 2026: between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026. Events held outside of the funding year cannot apply. No exceptions.
 2. Events located in the City of Rochester on City-owned property like parks, streets, and sidewalks.
 3. Events that are open to and of interest to the general public, and **serve at least 2,000 people.**
 4. Events that feature a free or low cost component on City property.
 5. Events that utilize both private and City property must meet the minimum attendance requirements and the free or low-cost requirement on City property.
 6. Events organized by an entity with legal standing. No fiduciaries can be used. Entities **MUST** be able to provide general liability insurance, proof of worker’s compensation & disability insurance (or a NYS waiver). See section 2.
-

Section Five – Event Ineligibility

Ineligible Events:

- Parades
- Moving athletic events (walks, runs, bike rides) that charge an entry fee
- Block parties
- Events on private property
- Trade shows, conventions, conferences, workshops, etc.
- Indoor concerts, shows, theatres, theatrical performances, exhibits etc.
- Annual luncheons, conferences, holiday parties, etc.
- Class or family reunions
- Sports tournaments, school or athletic leagues, etc.
- First-year events (unless they are occurring for a unique one-time purpose i.e. a celebration for a historic reason, or unless they’ve had established success in other locations)

This is a partial list. It is within the City’s sole discretion to determine the eligibility of an Event.

Section Six – Special Considerations

1. Preference may be given to organizations located in the City of Rochester.
 2. Preference may be given to organizations with nonprofit, §501 (c)(3) status.
 3. Preference may be given to Events that have been previously funded or otherwise supported by the City.
-

Section Seven – Review Criteria

1. Overall Event concept and purpose
2. Expected attendance, event duration, breadth of free or low-cost offerings on City property.
3. Community/cultural benefit of the Event.
4. Economic benefit/impact of the Event, including the community's return on investment from the Event. Events can bring increased spending to our city and provide jobs.
5. Diversity.
6. Community support for the Event.
7. The feasibility of the Event and the likelihood of its success, given the Event's resources and staff.
8. The City's experience with the Event, the organization, or the organizer in the past including but not limited to timeliness of application and supporting documentation submission, timeliness of contract and reporting requirements, & bill payment.
 - a. **NOTE:** If events have not provided the City with completed contracts, insurance, endorsement pages, or worker's compensation documents within the time frame requested, this will be taken into consideration and may disqualify from or affect level of future support.
9. The applicant's ability to leverage other types of revenue, sponsorships, and support to supplement City support

NOTE: THE CITY HAS LIMITED PUBLIC RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND IS THE STEWARD OF THOSE LIMITED FUNDS. IT IS IN THE CITY'S SOLE DISCRETION TO DETERMINE WHICH EVENTS TO SPONSOR, WHETHER TO APPROVE RECURRING EVENTS, AND TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF FUNDING.

Section Eight – Proposal Requirements

Proposals must be submitted with clearly labeled sections that follow the outline below:

1. Executive Summary (limited to 300 words):

- a. Fill out the [online summary form](#).
- b. Provide the name and email address of the main point of contact for the Event.
- c. **NEW: Attach a copy of the general liability insurance required by the City to enter into a funding contract. The insured party must be identical to the contract's signatory and event's applicant/main organizer.**
 - i. **Example: Community Fun Group is organizing a free festival. Community Fun Group is the insured party. Community Fun Group staff fills out the online permit application.**
- d. List the requested funding amount.
- e. Provide the name, title in the organization, and mailing address *for the individual who would be the signatory on a potential funding contract*.
- f. Provide information on the Event's organizational structure- promoter/producer, community group, board, and logistics staff.

2. Community/Cultural Impact Statement (limited to 300 words):

- a. Explain the Event's primary purpose (i.e. music, arts & crafts, family, cultural, etc.).
- b. Explain the unique offerings the Event provides to the community and how it differs from other events in Rochester.
- c. Describe the quadrant/neighborhood of the city where the Event takes place and explain why it is important or beneficial to the neighborhood for the Event to be held in that location.

3. Free or Low Cost (\$20 or less) Offerings (limited to 300 words):

- a. Describe in detail the free or low-cost offerings that the City funding will support.

4. Event Detail (limited to 1000 words):

- a. Provide a detailed description of the Event including duration, hours, anticipated street closures, number of vendors, type of vendors, number of stages/performances, etc.

5. Economic Impact & Tourism Statement:

- a. Explain the economic impact the Event has on Rochester. Even smaller, more locally focused events have impacts on the economy. Specifically address:
 - i. Projected spending per attendee and include a clear formula/methodology behind the information. The City is looking for actual data the Event gathers that can support a claim that the event provides an economic impact in the city of Rochester.
 - ii. Projected number of City of Rochester-based vendors, subcontractors, and talent employed/utilized by the Event. Provide a detailed list. Examples: food vendors, craft vendors, staging company, bathroom company, cleaning crew, marketing, etc.
 - iii. If the Event attracts out of town attendees, provide data on number of hotel rooms booked related to the event (i.e. attendees, vendors, talent).
 - iv. If the Event elevates Rochester nationally or internationally. Does it drive positive national news coverage? Is it noted in any national rankings/lists?

6. Diversity Statement (limit to 300 words):

- a. This review considers the unique diversity each Event brings to the community. Provide a statement that speaks to the Event's diversity in multiple aspects- attendees, event staff, vendors, talent.

7. Neighborhood Support:

- a. Provide evidence of support from the neighborhood/quadrant in the form of letters or written statements from relevant sources like nearby neighborhood associations, business associations, or other stakeholders in the area who support the Event.
- b. List and describe partnerships with other organizations involved in the event.

8. Event Feasibility and Success (limited to 300 words):

- a. Provide names and titles of the Event's main coordinators: promoter, major subcontractors, vendors, board members (if applicable), neighborhood group/leaders (if applicable), and describe the relevant experience for each.

9. Event History:

- a. Provide the date that the Event originally began.
- b. List dates, locations, and attendance for the last 5 years of the Event.
- c. List City funding amounts, including any in-kind support, for the last 5 years of the Event.

10. Certification Section and Other Current City Funding Sources:

- a. Submit a statement that the Event is willing to be audited by the City's Office of Public Integrity or by a third-party auditor (required).
- b. List any other City funds (including contracts for service, grants or loans) received by the Event promoter in both the current and upcoming fiscal year, identifying the originating department, a description of the funding, an amount, and the status of the contract, grant, or loan.
- c. Submit a statement agreeing that if selected for funding, the Event agreement and supporting documentation will be returned to the City within 20 days of receipt (required).
- d. Submit a statement agreeing that if required by the Rochester Police Department, a New York State licensed security company will be employed (required).

11. Other Funding Sources:

- a. List the event's title sponsor and its amount/level of sponsorship.
- b. List the **source and amount** of all non-City event sponsors, either potential or secured.
- c. List all grants- either secured or in process- including the amount and the granting agency.

12. Plan for City Recognition:

- a. Provide a comprehensive promotion plan that will showcase the City as a sponsor of the event- including but not limited to: paid advertising plan, social media posts, on-site signage, stage banners, etc.