



SPECIAL EVENTS SUPPORT PROGRAM

2020 Guidelines



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

RECREATION AND PARKS
DEPARTMENT

PURPOSE

To create a more efficient, merit-based and transparent process for funding special events in the City of Columbus, the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, launched the Special Events Support Program (SESP) on January 1, 2017.

This process seeks to formalize the various types of requests that the City currently receives on a year-round, rolling basis by establishing an annual funding cycle. The City will make all funding decisions in early spring.

The program provides funding in five categories to Columbus based organizations which have an established reputation for excellence and credibility, which enhance Columbus' overall cultural environment, supports the City's economic vitality and increases the visibility and reputation of Ohio's capital city as a desirable destination for visitors.

An event is defined as a planned social function, occurring either one-time, on an annual basis or as part of a series. Events that celebrate a community, neighborhood, local heritage and/or cultural experiences through the presence of live performances, food and merchandise, and/or interactive exhibits are eligible for funding if they are held in public spaces and are open to the public.

It is the intention of the City to encourage the production of free special events that enhance the quality of life, provide low-cost entertainment and other leisure activities, and contribute to the dynamic atmosphere of the community.

Support from the SESP is contingent on the approval of the City's annual budget and completion of all required agreements and follow-up reporting on the part of the applying organizations. Prior success in receiving an award is no assurance that an organization will be awarded funding in the future. Even though an event may qualify, limited funds may not allow all events to receive financial support from the City.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The CRPD's Office of Special Events administers the program, including advertising the availability of funds, providing technical assistance to applicants, coordinating the review process, and distributing funds. Questions regarding the application process or the program may be directed to:

Ron Keller
CRPD Office of Special Events
1111 East Broad Street, Suite 101
Columbus, Ohio 43205
614-645-3332 or rekeller@columbus.gov

DEADLINE

Formal proposals are due to the Office of Special Events by **March 27, 2020**. No exceptions. Additional details are outlined under Proposal Requirements. Any submission that includes an incomplete proposal or insufficient supporting documentation may be eliminated from consideration.

MAXIMUM REQUEST LEVELS

- Category A Applicants = Up to \$25,000.00
- Category B Applicants = Up to \$15,000.00
- Category C Applicants = Up to \$10,000.00
- Category D Applicants = Up to \$5,000.00

- Category E Applicants = Up to \$2,500.00

Awards are intended to serve as partial support for an event, not the only source.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, an organization **must** submit a written proposal and all required documents by the deadline and **must** meet the following conditions:

- 1-3 year history of events production in Columbus (categories A,B, C and D only);
- Be legally incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation under Section 501 (c) of the United States Internal Revenue Code;
- Recognized by the State of Ohio as an active non-profit organization;
- Organization must supply a valid federal tax ID number with IRS tax determination letter;
- Event takes place during the current calendar year or the first quarter of the following year;
- Event is open to the public and draws a crowd greater than 500 people;
- Event is conducted on public property within the City of Columbus;
- Event's organization or principal officer must be located in the City of Columbus;
- Event is not conducted solely as a fundraiser and is not intended to convey a religious message nor advocate a political position;
- Event must be non-commercial in nature (primary purpose may not be to sell a product or service);
- Organization is not a division/department within the City of Columbus;
- Demonstrates the ability to solicit sponsorship and/or other non-city funding to sustain the event on an ongoing basis and in subsequent years;
- The dollar amount requested in Categories A, B and C may not exceed 50% of the projected event budget;
- Obtain and maintain all necessary licenses, permits and insurance as required by City's event permit policies;
- Only one proposal per year will be accepted from an applicant/organization;
- Event organization or event organizer must not have outstanding balances or issues with any City department for a previous event.

INELIGIBLE EVENTS

- Events managed or coordinated by a City employee or their immediate family;
- Events planned primarily for a fundraising purpose or where participants must pay to participate or to experience the primary features of the event, such as a race or walk with an entry fee;
- Events in which the primary purpose is issuing scholarships or redistribution of event's revenue;
- Activities restricted to members only;
- Private event not open to the public;
- Trade shows, ceremonies, conventions, conferences, job fairs, workshops, etc.;
- Parades and block parties;
- Annual luncheons, holiday parties, birthday parties, etc.;
- Reunions and picnics;
- College, church or school sporting events or fitness/personal training classes;
- Events that have a history of sustained complaints from previous years;
- Events held outside of the corporation limits of Columbus.

FUNDING CATEGORIES

Eligibility for funding consideration is defined under five categories. Applicant organizations must meet these minimum requirements:

Category A (Regional Impact)

- A total average annual budget of at least \$200,000.00;
- A minimum consecutive three-year track record of producing the event;
- Effective marketing strategies for regional markets beyond Columbus Metro Area;
- A venue footprint that includes multiple public venues (parks and streets);
- Recruits 50 or more vendors;
- Generates a minimum of \$25,000 in cash sponsorships, grants or private sources;
- Attendance greater than 75,000.

Category B (Citywide Impact)

- A total average annual budget of at least \$100,000.00;
- A minimum consecutive two-year track record of producing the event;
- Effective marketing strategies for citywide market within Columbus Metro Area;
- A venue footprint that includes a public venue;
- Recruits 25-50 vendors;
- Generates a minimum of \$15,000 in cash sponsorships, grants or private sources;
- Attendance between 25,000-75,000

Category C (Community Impact)

- A total average annual budget of at least \$25,000.00;
- A minimum consecutive one-year track record of producing the event;
- Effective marketing strategies for neighborhood or community within Columbus;
- A venue footprint that includes a public venue;
- Recruits 10-25 vendors;
- Generates a minimum of \$10,000 in cash sponsorships, grants or private sources;
- Attendance between 10,000-25,000.

Category D (Neighborhood Impact)

- A total average annual budget of at least \$5,000.00;
- A minimum consecutive one-year track record of producing the event;
- Effective marketing strategies for neighborhood or community within Columbus;
- A venue footprint that includes a public venue;
- Recruits 1-10 vendors;
- Attendance between 500-10,000

Category E (First Time Impact)

- No minimum budget, attendance or vendors required;
- New and innovative events will be considered;
- A venue footprint that includes a public venue.

ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

CRPD Office of Special Events staff will review for completeness and eligibility of all proposals that meet the deadline. Staff will separate eligible proposals into categories based on the event budget, venue footprint, number of vendors, event marketing strategies, funding sources and attendance. Proposals that pass this initial review will then be evaluated for their strengths by a separate SESP Review Panel.

SESP REVIEW PANEL

The SESP Review Panel is appointed by the Director of the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department and consists of a representative from City Council, Recreation and Parks Commission, CRPD Business Administrator, and CRPD Special Events Coordinator. The SESP Review Panel will evaluate proposals and will utilize a standardized score sheet to determine funding levels.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

- Event production costs;
- Equipment rental;
- Expendable supplies/materials;
- Marketing;
- Printing;
- Publications;
- Venue rental;
- Security;
- First aid;
- Current year city services.

DISALLOWABLE EXPENSES

- Proposal preparation;
- Staff salaries and benefits;
- Travel or transportation costs;
- Beauty or talent contests;
- Hospitality costs (food, beverages, decorations);
- Charitable donations;
- Cash awards, prizes or plaques;
- Scholarships;
- Late fees, fines or penalties;
- Interest payments on loans;
- Reduction of deficits;
- Rental of commercial storage space;
- Capital improvements;
- Previous years' city invoices.

REVIEW CRITERIA

- Overall event concept and purpose;
- Clarity of event's nature, structure and vision;
- Feasibility of the event;

- Organization's capacity to successfully hold the event;
- Community support for the event;
- Extent of local or regional marketing efforts;
- The need for City funds vs. the applicant's ability to leverage other funding;
- Ability to enhance community engagement, cultural diversity, and attract visitors;
- Effectiveness at reinforcing and promoting Columbus' positive image;
- Strategy to grow and have lasting power as an event;
- Merit of marketing plan and use of social media;
- Fiscal stability and administrative ability;
- Economic impact potential;
- Environmental impact;
- Method of measuring attendance and demographics;
- City's experience with the event, the organization or the organizer;
- Cooperation with City departments;
- Overall quality of proposal.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Please submit a typed proposal of no more than eight (8) pages, following the outline below. Please use readable font size (10 or greater) and style. Soft copies of the proposal and required supportive documents must be submitted in PDF or JPEG formats. Hard copies can be dropped off or mailed.

Event Background (max. 4 pages)

- List organization's history, mission, goals and contact information.
- Describe the purpose and objectives of the event.
- List the date that the event was founded, the current dates, venue location, and past attendance.
- Identify the event's target audiences, demographics, and whether patrons are local or visitors;
- List number of years the event has received City funds and the total amount;
- Explain the unique offerings the event provides the community;
- Give details of the event including duration, hours, anticipated street closures, number of vendors, type of vendors, activities for patrons, number of stages, type of performances, etc.;

Event's Value & Benefits

- Discuss the district/neighborhood the event takes place in and if applicable, include evidence of that area's support for the event;
- Explain the economic benefit/impact the event has on Columbus;
- Amount of city sponsorship you are requesting;
- Explain the anticipated benefits to both the organization and the City if funded;
- What other sources of funding does this event have, including any in-kind support?
- List all potential or secured event sponsors;
- List all grants, either secured or in process, including the amount;
- Describe additional fundraising efforts being implemented for the event;
- Describe organization's collaborative efforts with other charitable agencies;
- What marketing and promotional benefits will the City receive?
- What steps will you take to implement and promote the event?
- What results do you expect to achieve from the event?

- What improvements do you anticipate making for next year?
- How will you measure the anticipated outcome?

Proposal Support Documents

- Include copies of the following required documents:
 - IRS letter of non-profit tax-exempt status;
 - List of Board of Directors/Officers and their affiliation;
 - Current year event budget;
 - Most recent financial statement (not tax return or year-end audit);
- Include a signed statement that all City bills will be paid in the current year.

One (1) SIGNED original proposal or one (1) electronic submission with required attachments (items listed above) must be submitted for consideration.

PROPOSAL TIMELINE

- Submit formal written proposal by **March 27, 2020**;
- Funding amount determined and awarded by SESP Review Panel for Categories A, B & C;
- All applicants are notified of the results of their funding requests by April 15;
- Register as a city vendor online at <http://vendors.columbus.gov>
- Agreement signed by both parties;
- An invoice must be submitted for payment to occur;
- A city check should be processed within 60 days after agreement is signed;
- Status reports must be submitted showing the City listed as an event sponsor;
- City conducts site inspection during the event.

FINAL REPORT

A final report is required from each event receiving funding and must be submitted within 90 days of completion of the event. The final report should include:

- A one page typed summary of the event;
- Attendance figures, number of vendors and volunteers;
- A one page budget for the event, including details on how SESP funds were used;
- Samples of advertising or promotional materials including: tear sheets, photographs, videos, etc.;
- A list of media coverage and sponsors;
- A list of organizations that benefitted financially from the event;
- Economic Impact statement, if available;
- Audience demographic breakdown.

ACKNOWLEDGING CITY SUPPORT

Recipients must acknowledge the City's financial support in all appropriate materials and media. The acknowledgement should read, **"Supported in part by the Special Events Support Program from the City of Columbus"** or similar language, unless the City is a part of a list of supporters. In the latter case, the acknowledgement may say simply **"City of Columbus."** Recipients must display the City's logo whenever other sponsor logos are displayed, and in accordance with City logo use guidelines. Print ready logo images will be provided by the City.

FUNDING STIPULATIONS

- All submitted proposals become the exclusive property of the City and a matter of public record.
- If the award is less than the amount requested, the applicant may choose to cancel the event and must notify the CRPD Office of Special Events. If the event is held, the applicant may decide to reduce the scope and scale of the event, but must notify the CRPD Office of Special Events of all changes.
- In the event a recipient chooses to decline SESP funds that have already been allocated or decides to cancel the event, all funds must be returned immediately.
- Failure to use SESP funds as specified in the signed agreement shall result in penalties up to and including a full refund of grant amount.
- Failure to submit a final report within 90 days of the completion of the event is unacceptable and shall result in the applicant not being allowed to submit a proposal in the following year of the funding cycle.
- Organizations cannot transfer SESP funds from one event to another event or a charitable organization without a written request and approval by the City.
- Organizations that do not comply with all deadlines and procedures may be ineligible to receive SESP funding in future years.

NOTE: The City of Columbus is guided subjectively by its review criteria. No one attribute is controlling. As the City has limited public resources available and is the steward of those funds, it is in the City's sole discretion to determine which events it sponsors, if its sponsorship recurs year to year, and if the level of sponsorship increases or decreases.

CITY OBLIGATION

The City of Columbus and the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department are only a financial contributor to the event and not a promoter or co-producer of the event. The City will not be liable for any debts incurred for the event. In making an award, the City does not assume any liability or responsibility for the ultimate financial success of the event.

Revised 1/6/2020