

TO: Department Heads

SUBJECT: PUBLIC EVENTS GRANT PROGRAM

PURPOSE

To establish the Public Events Grant Program and provide guidelines for disbursement of discretionary funds associated with public programs, activities, services, and public events held within the City of Santa Cruz (City) by qualified Applicants/Sponsors. Grants are intended to provide an opportunity for organizations and individuals to receive financial support for permitted events that contribute to the vibrancy and well-being of the Santa Cruz community. The City of Santa Cruz recognizes the value of public events in promoting social cohesion, economic vitality, and community pride.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Applicant/Sponsor

The person or organized entity that completes the [Public Events Permit Application](#), acts as the primary contact, and assumes financial and liability risk for the public event.

Fees

City fees associated with facility rentals and/or permits issued by City departments, not limited to Fire, Parks and Recreation, Police, and Public Works for public events.

Public Event

A public event is any large, organized gathering—from a festival or market to a smaller community celebration—held on public property (e.g. City streets, sidewalks, or parks). These events are defined by their use of public space and their impact on the community, such as closing a road, drawing a crowd, or requiring City services to keep the area safe and accessible.

Public Events Committee

The Public Events Committee (Committee) will provide determination of fee reductions, waivers, and special considerations. The Committee will consist of the Assistant City Manager and at least one representative from the City Manager's Office, and one representative from the Parks and Recreation Department. The Committee shall ensure that all procedures set forth in this APO are followed. To ensure a streamlined and consistent process, the Committee is authorized to evaluate all eligible applications based on the criteria set forth below.

PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

In the event the total requested reimbursements exceed the available program budget for a given cycle, the Committee will prioritize applications that:

- Are applying for the first time and have not received support from the City in the past;

- Are free to the public or utilize specific outreach strategies to engage underrepresented groups;
- Are held in under-resourced public spaces or parks;
- Are submitted by grassroots organizations, emerging non-profits, and first-time applicants to prevent the concentration of program funds among a limited number of recurring or highly established entities;
- Benefit the residents of Santa Cruz;
- Commit to tracking event attendance;
- Contain an educational component;
- Create revenue-generating opportunities for local businesses;
- Demonstrate a clear nexus to the City's Health in All Policies and City Council approved Strategic Plan desired outcomes, i.e. events that foster social connection, promote physical activity, and provide access to healthy environments for populations currently experiencing health inequities;
- Demonstrate a high level of organizational readiness and a commitment to minimizing the burden on public resources (e.g. robust waste management or traffic plans);
- Have a high number of expected attendees;
- Involve more than one (1) Santa Cruz community group (in event organization and/or participation); and
- Raise the profile of Santa Cruz through prominent acknowledgment of its support and assistance in event marketing materials and at the event itself.

Events that are organized primarily for the benefit, enjoyment, and/or education of City residents and visitors will be prioritized over events that are primarily organized to generate private party profit or generate funds for a charity/non-profit

AWARD DETERMINATION

Baseline Approval: If program funding is sufficient to meet all requests, the Committee may approve all applications that meet the minimum eligibility and safety requirements.

Competitive Ranking: If funding is limited, the Committee shall use the prioritization criteria as a scoring framework to rank applications. Awards will be granted to the highest-ranking proposals until the cycle's budget is exhausted.

Documentation: The committee shall maintain a brief written record of the rationale used for prioritization in any cycle where eligible applications were denied or partially funded due to budget constraints.

HiAP as Core Values: Recommendations will integrate the three pillars of Health in All Policies:

- a) Health: Prioritize reducing health disparities caused by diet-related disease and inequitable access to nutrition and wellness.

- b) Equity: Apply equity lens to all decisions, ensuring communities of color, immigrants, and low-income residents are centered in funding and program design.
- c) Sustainability: Promote environmental health by reducing consumption of single use containers - which contribute to watershed and ocean pollution - and by investing in initiatives that support long-term environmental health.

Public Events Permit Application

Includes applications for Minor and Major Public Events, Public Gathering and Expression Events, Neighborhood Block Parties, and other applications deemed appropriate by the Public Events Committee.

POLICY

A maximum of fifty percent (50%) of City fees, not to exceed \$2,500, can be reimbursed through a Public Events Grant Application. Per calendar year, only one (1) Applicant/Sponsor per public event may submit a Public Events Grant Application.

Grants may be applied towards the following public event costs:

- City permit fees;
- Rentals for City-owned equipment and facilities, and
- City department staff services.

Grants may be revoked if:

- The Applicant/Sponsor fails to comply with City requirements and deadlines as determined by the Public Events Grant Application and Public Events Permit Application;
- There are changes to the status of the public event;
- The Applicant/Sponsor does not adhere to all rules, regulations, laws, and ordinances of the City and other applicable governmental entities; and
- The Applicant/Sponsor fails to abide by the procedures outlined in this policy.

Funds not awarded during a fiscal year will revert to the General Fund.

Note: Previous grant revocation may result in ineligibility of requesting grants in the future, as decided by the Public Events Committee.

PROCEDURE

I. Eligibility Criteria

Public Events must:

- Take place within City limits;
- Be consistent with applicable federal and state laws regarding limitation on use of public funds. More specifically, public funds shall not be used for:
 - Religious purposes. Grant funds shall not be used to conduct religious services or

ceremonies. A grantee shall not spend any portion of the grant to inhibit or promote religion, nor to convey a religious message.

- Political Purposes. Grant funds shall not be used for political purposes, such as political advocacy efforts whether for or against a political candidate, ballot measure, or bill.
- Submit a Public Events Grant Application during the annual priority window which runs the first week of March to the first week in April. The application window is open for funding public events occurring that July 1 through June 30 of the following year.
- After the priority window, if funding allows, a case-by-case application window is open for the remainder of the year until funds have been exhausted.



Note: Prior to each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30), the City will publish the total budget available for grants.

Applicants/Sponsors must:

- Provide a completed Public Events Grant Application and a copy of a completed Public Events Permit Application with associated supplemental information;
- Not have outstanding debt owed to the City and, if applicable, be in good standing with the Administrator in terms of fulfilling past event requirements;
- Be based inside City limits or show demonstrated benefits are primarily for the residents of the City;
- Meet all Public Events Grant Application and Public Events Permit Application process deadlines for consideration;
- Declare all other funding sources that they are seeking or have been granted; and
- Submit a Post-Event Report to the City within thirty (30) days following the event.

Ineligible Applicants/Sponsors are:

- Projects or organizations that have not satisfactorily fulfilled their obligations following previous fee reductions, waivers, or other public event requirements;
- Organizing a private function or on private property.

II. Application Process

- The Public Events Grant Application will have a priority window from the first week in March to the first week in April each calendar year. To be considered for a grant, the Public Events Grant Application must be complete and submitted by the advertised deadline.
- The Public Events Committee will decide within forty-five (45) days after the closing date.

Note: Completing the Public Events Grant Application does not guarantee a one-time grant and is contingent upon the annual approved budget, operating impacts, and available funds. Should funds be available after all grants are issued, case-by-case application requests (applications submitted after the advertised date) will be considered by the Public Events Committee.

All Public Events Grant Applications must include the following items and in the following order to be considered complete:

- Public Events Grant Application;
- Actual budget (detailing items, item descriptions, quantity, and estimated cost);
- Current W-9 with signature either attached or on file with the City;
- Flyer or poster, if applicable; and
- Public Events Permit Application along with the following supplemental information:
 - Site Plan/Map
 - Safety and Security Plan

After the advertised deadline, Public Events Grant Applications will be forwarded to the Public Events Committee to evaluate eligibility, estimate fees, and determine the one-time grant amount for each Public Events Grant Application received. Once the review of Public Events Grant Applications is completed, the Public Events Committee will notify Applicants/Sponsors of their award status per the Application Process.

Note: Disbursement will be made on a reimbursement basis after receipts are submitted to City staff after the public event has taken place. City staff will then authorize the Finance Department to make disbursement to the Applicants/Sponsors.

III. Case-by-Case Requests

Notwithstanding the provisions of this APO's requirements, the Public Events Committee retains discretion to consider additional public event Applicant/Sponsor requests presented outside of the application window set forth in this policy, if funds are available. All case-by-case requests for fee reductions and waivers shall be forwarded to the Public Events Committee for evaluation utilizing the eligibility and evaluation criteria set forth in this APO.