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Hello, Festival Organizers!

The City of Pittsburgh Office of Special Events is pleased to announce the beginning of the 2026 Community Festival season with this informational packet and the opening of the application on March 9, 2026. **Your completed application must be received by our office no later than 11:59 PM on Wednesday, April 15, 2026.**

Even if you have previously applied, please be sure to read this entire packet thoroughly so you understand the process for this year.

What is the Community Festival Program (CFP) Grant?

In existence since 1977, the Community Festival Program (CFP) has provided funding to help communities introduce and maintain neighborhood-focused festivals for over 40 years. ***The program's goal is to provide financial assistance to community groups so they may launch and develop an annual event to bring together their community and foster togetherness.*** The festival season is from June 1 to October 31, annually.

This grant is **not** directly affiliated with any other city grant program.

Who is eligible to receive a CFP Grant?

To be eligible for funding, your organization and event **must meet all** of the following criteria:

1. Applicant must be a non-profit, tax-exempt, Pittsburgh community-based organization;
2. The organization must have been in existence for at least three years;
3. The festival must take place in a City of Pittsburgh neighborhood, be **free and open to the public***, and to the benefit of the community at large;
4. The festival should be a **one-day, one-off event (not multi-day, weekly, monthly, etc.)**. Multi-day events are welcome to apply however, priority will focus on one-day events in alignment with program goals.

**festival cannot charge admission or otherwise condition entry to the event*

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How does the CFP Grant work?

Similar to the City's other community-based grant programs, this grant continues to utilize a reimbursement system. In 2026, there will be 30 grants available, and approved grant applications will receive up to \$1,000.00 in **reimbursed** funds to assist with the operations of their festival. The funding is for **one (1)** event only, may not be distributed amongst multiple events, and must be used towards the event listed on the organization's official application.

Grantees will be selected by a committee consisting of community-facing staff across multiple City departments, and selection is based on criteria including, but not limited to: meeting program guidelines, demonstrated financial need, and lack of other neighborhood events. Be sure to answer **all** application questions as thoroughly and as accurately as possible!

This means your application is simply an initial request for funding.

Your organization is free to continue the event planning process as normal, and source materials and services from any vendor. Please keep a record of any payment receipts you might plan to submit if awarded the grant funding.

What happens once I'm approved for funding?

If you are hosting an event in a public space (parks, streets, etc.) or requesting City of Pittsburgh services, you are required to submit a Special Event Permit application and/or Department of Public Works request. These steps secure your venue and any needed City services, so it is important to complete these. Please note that the Office of Film and Event Management needs a minimum notice of 14 business days to hold an event in public spaces, so this step may already need to be in process before confirmation of receiving grant funds. **Direct permit fees through OFEM as well as DPW park facility and stage rentals will be waived for awarded grantees, however, the \$25 event application fee and any associated costs such as EMS, police detail, and other public works requests are not waived, and remain the responsibility of the organization.**

If you are approved for funding, you will receive more detailed information on how to apply for the Special Events Permit and/or to reserve a shelter, field or staging equipment in your approval letter.

Lastly, **within 30 days** of the completion of your festival, you will need to submit copies of all paid receipts for reimbursement to the Office of Special Events, and in turn you will receive a check for the amount of your reimbursable items, up to \$1,000.00.

When it comes to reimbursement, not all items are reimbursable, so be sure to check with the Office of Special Events before finalizing any rental agreements if you aren't sure if your item will be covered.

****Items that are reimbursable** include, but are not limited to:

- Tent, table, chair, and stage rentals (including heavy equipment rentals from Public Works)
- Port-o-john rentals
- Performer and/or entertainment payments (band, magician, DJ, etc.)
- Audio-visual rentals
- City of Pittsburgh event permit and services fees

****Items that are not reimbursable** include, but are not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Perishables
- Paper products
- Promotional items
- Capital purchases, such as items meant for multiple events/uses, replacing equipment, etc.

*****It is important that itemized receipts (for each vendor, store purchase, etc.) be kept and submitted following the event. Without an itemized receipt, reimbursements cannot be issued. Festivals approved for grants will receive a reimbursement form that must be submitted with their itemized receipts following the event.*****

In Summary

1. Fill out the Community Festival Program Grant application by 11:59PM on **Wednesday, April 15, 2026**, available here: pittsburghpa.gov/festivalgrant.

Once you receive confirmation that you've been approved for a grant (mid to late May):

2. Complete a DPW reservation or Special Event Permit application if necessary and not already completed for your event *at least 14 business days prior*. More info on event permits is available online at pittsburghpa.gov.
3. Begin sourcing your materials and services within the reimbursable categories, up to \$1,000.00 in value. **Don't forget to save your itemized proof of payment!**
4. Execute your event!
5. **Within 30 days after holding your event**, submit all reimbursable **itemized and paid receipts** to the Office of Special Events.
6. Receive your reimbursement! This process requires council approval to issue a check and typically will take up to 3-4 weeks, but may take longer dependent upon council's schedule.

Any and all questions regarding the grant should be directed by emailing the Office of Special Events at cfpgrant@pittsburghpa.gov. We look forward to working with you all on another successful Community Festival season!

RESOURCES

Citiparks Roving Art Cart

The Citiparks Roving Art Cart is a festival favorite and is typically available for rental June 1 - August 31 on Saturdays and Sundays only, from 8:00am - 4:00pm. **Please directly contact Citiparks Community Enrichment** at 412-665-3665 to confirm operational status.

Department of Public Works *

Equipment

The Department of Public Works offers rentals of staging (portable Showmaster stage, platform boxes).

-To begin the process of reserving **stage equipment**, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/DPWEquip>.

Field and Park Shelter Reservations

-To view the **shelter and overlook** calendar and to begin the reservation process, please visit <https://pittsburgh.recdesk.com/Community/Facility>

-To begin the process of reserving an athletic **field or court**, please visit <https://pittsburghpa.gov/Recreation-Events/Park-Permits/Sports-Field-Permit>.

**The Department of Public Works continues to graciously offer waived or refunded rental fees of the above services to organizations who are awarded this grant funding.*

Office of Film and Event Management

Special Event and Block Party Permits

OFEM manages all event permits and requires **at least 14 business days** to process all applications. This process is where you will request the closure of any street(s), use of public spaces, police and/or EMS details, and barricades for your event. While direct permit-related fees are waived by the Department of Public Safety, all permit applicants are responsible for the initial \$25 permit application fee and any adjacent fees for city services (barricades, details, etc.) Applicants are reminded that the permit application process for events is a wholly separate process from the Community Festival Program Grant application – completing an event permit application *does not* automatically include non-profit organizations for consideration of these grant funds.

-To begin the application process for a special event or block party permit, visit <https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/Recreation-Events/Film-Event-Management/Special-Event-Block-Party-Permitting>.

Important Contacts

Questions regarding the following subjects should be referred to the following offices:

Community Festival Program Grant (CitiParks Office of Special Events):

Email (preferred contact): cfpgrant@pittsburghpa.gov

Office: 412-255-2493

Block Party and Special Event Permits (Public Safety Office of Film & Event Management):

Email: ofem@pittsburghpa.gov

Office: 412-255-2641

Field, Court, Shelter, Overlook & Staging Reservations (Department of Public Works):

Email: dpwfields&parkshelters@pittsburghpa.gov