



Sunnyvale

Community Events Grant Program

Guidelines & Eligibility Criteria Calendar Year 2026

Application Deadline for Fall Cycle (#1): Friday, October 10, 2025, by 5 p.m.

Funding

Thank you for your interest in the Community Events Grant Program. Please review the following guidelines and eligibility criteria to determine if your group qualifies. Funding requests will be considered as part of a competitive application process. Total funding available for the entire program, Community Events and Neighborhood Grants, is \$150,000.

NEW! This year's program will accept grant applications twice a year. The Fall cycle will allocate 80% of available funding. Applicants may submit applications for community events for the entire 2026 calendar year. A second application cycle will open in Spring 2026, March – mid-April, to accept additional applications and will allocate the remaining 20% of grant funds. One of the goals of the Spring application cycle is to provide a funding opportunity to organizations that may have missed the Fall cycle.

Program Mission

The Community Events Grant Program was created to support and encourage groups to build community and celebrate our unique culture by holding community events in Sunnyvale.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

- The sponsoring organizations must be nonprofit or not-for-profit. Nonprofits must have 501(c)3 status under IRS. Non-for-Profit organizations are generally "recreation organizations" and fall under a variety of other 501(c) tax codes under IRS. Applicants must attach a copy of nonprofit documentation if the organization has such documentation.
- Funds may be granted to religious organizations if the funds are not used for a religious purpose including for the promotion of any sect, church, creed, or sectarian organization, nor to conduct any religious service or ceremony. This eligibility criterion is an attempt to preserve separation of church and state while still allowing religious organizations to be eligible for grant funds.
- Organizations that are collaborating with the City in co-sponsoring an event are eligible to apply for grant funding, however, grant funds can only be used to defray expenses incurred by the co-sponsoring organization(s) rather than the City.
- Grants will not be awarded to organizations owing a debt to the City.
- Grants will not be awarded to individuals.
- Grants may not be used for political activities.
- The sponsoring organization must demonstrate the ability to produce a well-planned, safe event and demonstrate strong financial management and effective management controls, including cost-effectiveness.
- It is not the nature of the organization applying for or receiving the grant, but whether the organization will use those grant funds for a valid public purpose. Some factors that may demonstrate the public purpose of a funded program or service include:
 - Whether the proposed project/service compliments or enhances a service that the City also provides
 - When there is an identifiable secondary, or indirect, benefit to the City
 - When the organization provides a service, the City could provide, but chooses not to

Special Event Permit Requirement

All community events will require a special event permit if your event includes one or more of the following components:

- Open to the public
- Large attendance anticipated
- Community event, carnival, or festival
- Hosting carnival games, activities, or petting zoo
- Reserving 3+ Baylands picnic areas or Great Meadow Area
- Closure of streets

Applications are due at least eight weeks before the event date. Please submit a special event application independent of the Community Event timeline and funding decision.

In-Kind Support from City of Sunnyvale

Organizations that receive funding will receive the following services as in-kind support for their community event:

- Insurance
- Garage and recycling service
- Special event application fee
- Limited marketing support through City's Communications Division

Event Eligibility and Evaluation Guidelines

- All proposed events must:
 - be held within Sunnyvale City limits
 - be of a citywide nature
 - demonstrate an ability to draw a crowd of at least 500 people
 - be free and open to the public
 - occur between January 1 and December 31, 2026
- Fundraiser events are not eligible for grant funding. A "fundraiser" is defined as any event that solicits funds from attendees either through direct ticket sales or asking for a donation. Events that are free and open to the public that include passive, purely optional opportunities for donations to other community nonprofit organizations, such as canned food or school supply drives or voluntary donation jars on exhibitor tables, are not considered fundraisers. Under no circumstances shall event sponsors, partners or participants seek funds in the form of raffle tickets, silent auction bids or items of similar intent.
- The event should encourage celebrations of community which focus on the character, diversity and quality of Sunnyvale and provide vitality and identity to the community.
- If the organization is planning to use a City facility, submit a request in accordance with standard rental procedure.
- Higher priority will be given to encouraging new events as well as supporting existing events that have been highly successful in the past, subject to other grant criteria.
- The review team will consider the financial and budgetary capabilities of the sponsoring organization, the extent to which City funds will be leveraged with other funding sources, and the need for City funding. Community event grant funding from the City will represent no more than 50 percent of the

total event budget, including the value of in-kind goods and services but excluding the value of volunteer time.

- Grant funding is not intended to be an ongoing funding source for the event. Funding in one year is not a guarantee of future funding. All applications are subject to a fresh review vis-à-vis competing applications each year.

Application Process and Next Steps

To apply: Complete the attached Community Event Grant Program application and submit it by Friday, October 10, 2025, by 5 p.m. Incomplete applications or ones that are received after the deadline will not be considered.

When submitting the application, the following must also be included:

- Submit an event budget, including in-kind services provided by the City (i.e. insurance, garage & recycling services, etc.).
- Identify other co-sponsors of the event. All co-sponsors must be approved by the City.

Application Review and Funding Decisions: A Council subcommittee will review each application. The Council subcommittee may choose to contact the applicant for more information or clarification regarding the details of the application during the review period and/or request an interview with any applicant. Final funding decisions will be made by the full City Council. For the Fall cycle, grant applicants will be notified in writing of final funding decisions in Jan./Feb. 2026. For the Spring cycle, grant applicants will be notified in writing of final funding decisions in May/June 2026.

All grant awardees will be required to submit the following to the City of Sunnyvale within 30 days after your event was held and no later than December 31, 2026, whichever comes first:

1. A final report describing the project and use of funds.
2. All original receipts/invoices and an itemized description of each expense, for reimbursement.
3. Submit pictures of the community event and sample marketing materials (i.e., fliers, social media posts, posters, etc.) documenting acknowledgement of city funding.

Reimbursements: This program is reimbursable, meaning that any approved funds must first be spent by the grantee and receipts/invoices showing payment must be submitted to the City of Sunnyvale. Upon review of eligible receipts/invoices, the City will reimburse the grantee. The reimbursement process takes approximately two to four weeks.

Grant recipients may be reimbursed in partial payments for ongoing event expenses, rather than in a single lump-sum after the event. A decision to reimburse in multiple payments will require approval from the City of Sunnyvale and may be justified if the recipient incurs significant expenses before the event. If that is the case, grant recipients must invoice the City on an ongoing basis for reimbursement of expenses incurred, up to the grant amount.

City Co-Sponsorship: Grant recipients (and their sponsors, if applicable) are entirely responsible for planning, promoting and staffing their event. Grant approval does not equate to co-sponsorship from City of Sunnyvale. The City will not be involved in planning or staffing the event and is not considered a co-sponsor of the event.

Grant Spending Guidelines: Grant recipients must attempt to expend all grant funding within City limits. Grant funds must be used only for the event applied for, but may be used for any costs, including costs payable to the City.

Acknowledgement of City Funding: Grant recipients must acknowledge City of Sunnyvale as a funder of the community event in all marketing and outreach materials, including but not limited to fliers, social media, posters, etc.

Questions and More Information

For questions or more information, please email: ncs@sunnyvale.ca.gov or call 408-730-7599.