SPECIAL EVENTS PLANNING GUIDE

CITY OF LOWELL
375 Merrimack Street, Room 7
Lowell, MA 01852
phone: (978) 674-1482
email: case@lowellma.gov
web: www.lowellma.gov/446/Cultural-Affairs-Special-Events

#LOWELL
THERE'S A LOT TO *like*.

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I. Step-by-step process to obtaining a license for a special event in Lowell

The application for a Special Event in Lowell is available online, via email and in the Cultural Affairs and Special Events Office. Applications will be reviewed within 2 weeks of receipt. There is a $25 processing fee, payable by check or money order, which is due when the application is submitted. Cultural Affairs & Special Events staff will advise as to which City Departments will need to be contacted and what other permit(s)/permissions may be required. It will be the responsibility of the event contact person to secure all necessary permits.

Notification deadlines:
Please plan ahead and allow advance notice for all your events.

Block Parties, Road Races, Festivals, Filming require 2 months advance notification to the Cultural Affairs and Special Events Office.

Larger scale events such as major festivals with over 500 attendees should contact the Cultural Affairs and Special Events Office 6 months in advance of the date of the event.

Develop a Plan
This is what will need to be included on the application.
Primary contact person for the event and their contact information.
Date and duration of the event.
Event location.
Expected turnout for the event.
Whether alcohol will be served.
Whether a street closure is will be needed.
Rain date and plan.
If your application is for a road race, you will need to provide a route map and a detailed safety plan.

If you plan on serving food or including food trucks or vendors, you will need to contact Development Services/Health at (978) 674-1458 to make sure their food service inspections are up-to-date.

If using propane, you will also need to contact Fire Prevention to schedule an inspection.
See pages 6 and 11 for more information.

II. License Commission

Events serving alcohol or using outdoor amplification systems will need to receive separate licenses from the License Commission. The License Commission also issues permits for sidewalk stands.

The Lowell License Commission schedules meetings bi-monthly in the City Council Chamber. Refer to the License Commission web page www.lowellma.gov/433/License-Commission for more information. Applicants are advised to file not less than three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled event.

A request for a license or permit requires that the responsible individual appear at the meeting to answer questions about the event. Call in advance to reserve time at the meeting.

Prior to appearing before the License Commission, the individual/organization will have the approval of the Cultural Affairs & Special Events Office, Police Department, Fire Department, Inspectional Services, Health Department, Department of Public Works and the Board of Parks.

A. Alcoholic beverages
Sale and service of alcohol requires that a one-day license be granted and issued by the License Commission. It is illegal in the City of Lowell to sell, serve, and consume alcoholic beverages on public property without a license. The outdoor area is to be enclosed by fencing or other barrier set-up for the purpose of restricting the removal of alcoholic beverages by patrons/guests. The applicant is an individual, as the responsible manager for the organization. He or she agrees to control the dispensing of alcohol to persons not under the age of twenty-one (21), and that there is to be no service of alcohol to individuals who are or "appear to be" under the influence of alcohol.

B. Amplification
City of Lowell Noise Ordinance allows the License Commission to grant amplification of sound permits for special events. The permit is specific to a special event, not for a family event on private property. The ordinance restricts the hours to the following:

Sunday to Wednesday - 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Thursday to Saturday - 10 a.m. to 12 midnight

B. Amplification
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Sunday to Wednesday - 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
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C. Sidewalk Stand License
Business owners may request a permit from the License Commission for the following:
Single day only (fee, $5.00)
Seasonal permit, April to October (fee, $25.00)
Lowell Folk Festival weekend only (fee, $5.00)

D. Insurance
The individual/organization that has permission to access public property is required to have the City of Lowell co-insured for not less than $500,000 for alcohol licenses.

III. Departments

Board of Parks
The Board of Parks has jurisdiction and authority to act in all instances for the promotion and conduct of recreation, play, sport or other similar acts with regard to the use of playgrounds, parks, stadiums, etc. Contact a month before an event.

Fire
The Fire Department needs to be notified 2 weeks prior to the use of propane tanks for cooking or heating and they require a gas permit. A fire detail must be on site for the duration of the event. Fire extinguishers must be onsite.

Anyone using fireworks needs to notify 15 days prior to the fireworks arriving and the permit must be until they leave.

If a tent is being used that holds 50 or more people or it is a heated tent, you must have a fire detail onsite.

Development Services/Health
Development Services/Health Department requires a completed Temporary Food Establishment Permit and an employees log a minimum of 30 days before an event. A vendor without a licensed facility of their own must complete a Licensed Food Establishment Agreement Form. Refer to the General Guide to Temporary Food and Festival Events Information distributed by Development Services. Please contact Development Services directly for the necessary forms.

Inspectional Services
The License Commission approves carnival license applications for events occurring on weekdays and Saturday. Carnival license applications for events occurring on Sunday must apply for the Sunday entertainment license. These applications, after receiving the Manager's approval, are sent to the Office of the Commissioner of Public Safety for approval by the Commonwealth.

Tents—Development Services requires a permit for a tent equal to or greater than 400 square feet. If your event includes tents of this size you must contact the Building Commissioner at 978- 674-1455 to review plans and schedule a tent inspection.

Electricity—Development Services also requires review of any electrical requirements/plans by the Wiring Inspector. If your event utilizes tent lighting, sound systems or other electrical equipment or a generator, you must contact the Wiring Inspector at 978-674-1451 to review.

Carnivals/mechanical rides—Massachusetts law requires that mechanical rides at a carnival, and possibly a circus, be approved by the Department of Public Safety of the Commonwealth.

A non-profit sponsoring a carnival must request:
a) Certificate of approval for mechanical rides issued by the Department of Public Safety.
b) Certificate of Insurance with a minimum of $1,000,000 in liability, that the organization be co-insured if the carnival is to take place on private property.
c) Certificate of workers compensation, i.e. certificate of insurance, held by the carnival promoter.
d) The sponsoring non-profit organization should check with the Fire Department and Inspectional Services about the penchant for promoters having their workers sleep on carnival grounds.

City Calendar
Your event may be uploaded to the City calendar at www.likelowell.com/calendar. Some restrictions apply and local events (block parties, garage sales), may not be uploaded. Guidelines are available on the site.

Parking
The parking department needs to be notified 2 weeks before a large event in the downtown area in order to staff the garages.

You must also contact the Parking Department if you wish to rent metered spaces for your event.

Police/Traffic
Some events may require a police detail. This determination will be made by the Special Events Coordinator in consultation with the Lowell Police Department. All expenses are the responsibility of the festival organizer.

Solid Waste & Recycling
The Solid Waste & Recycling Office needs to be notified at least 4 weeks before a large event, 3 weeks for medium sized events and 2 weeks for small events. Collection containers for waste and recycling are required and may be available for rent. Coordinate your solid waste plan with the Solid Waste & Recycling Office.

IV. Frequently Asked Questions

Who does not need to apply for a special events permit? If the event does not involve the following, you may not be required to apply for a permit.

- selling food, alcohol, raffle tickets or other goods
- installation of stages and stands
- a parade, carnival rides and games
- additional electrical hook-ups
- closing of streets
- amplified music
- police details

What types of special events require permits and licenses from the City? Walk-a-thons, Block Parties, Road Races, Processions, Festivals, Filming and possibly other events that require a street closure or other permits.

How far in advance of the event date should the City be contacted? The Cultural Affairs and Special Events Office needs to be notified of events at least one month in advance. This gives the office ample time to review applications, identify any prescheduled events and develop a solid plan for event. A non-refundable fee of $25 will be needed at this time. Within 14 days most applications will either be granted or denied.

What is the first step? Come up with a detailed plan including date of event, number of people attending, necessary street closures, vending information, food handlers and anything else that may be helpful to the Special Events Office in reviewing and determining whether to approve a permit application.

Will this event require a street closure? Applications requiring the closing of a public way must obtain a "Street Closing Permit." The Department of Public Works, Lowell Police Department and the City Engineering Department all sign off on such a permit. The Special Events Coordinator will determine what is necessary to complete and will help facilitate the permit process. A permit fee of $75 and a certificate of insurance naming the City of Lowell as additionally insured for a minimum of $1,000,000 is required prior to issuance of a street closing permit.

Who provides traffic control for a road race? All road race permits will require the use of Lowell Police Officers. Contact the Lowell Police Department to review your plans. The applicant will assume costs for this service.

Can I use the Auxiliary Police? Only non-profit organizations may use volunteer auxiliary police, however the Lowell Police Department must be notified and at least one Patrol Supervisor must be on site.

Will there be alcohol served at this event? Applicants planning to dispense any form of alcoholic beverages at a Special Event must obtain a liquor license for the event. Please contact the License Commission.

What about an event at a park or playground? Applicants seeking to utilize a park or playground within the City of Lowell must apply to the Board of Parks. The Board of Parks will act on the application and will notify the applicant of their requirements prior to the issuance of a permit. Upon receipt of the Board of Parks Permit, the applicant contacts the Special Events Coordinator to determine City services and other permits that may be required and any associated costs if any.

What about an event at the riverfront Vandenberg Esplanade/Sampas Pavilion or downtown Mack Plaza?
These sites are under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Conservation and Recreation/Heritage State Park. You will need to secure permission from them for use of these sites prior to securing a Special Events Permit from the City. In certain cases, a City Special Event Permit may not be required. Contact Sate Park Supervisor John Aziz at (978) 369-6312 for information.

When is the balance due for an event? Any outstanding balances for an event must be paid within fourteen (14) days of the event. Any outstanding balances that have not been paid to the City of Lowell will result in applicants not being able to obtain future Special Event Permits.

What about sanitation facilities? Port-a-johns are generally required at most events and the Special Events Coordinator will determine the number required. Any event expecting more than 100 people must discuss their plans concerning port-a-johns with the Cultural Affairs and Special Events Office when applying for a special event license. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide those units at their expense.

How can the city be notified of an event cancellation? Contact the Office of Cultural Affairs & Special Events in the event of a cancellation: 978-674-1482 or 978-674-1482.

Is a special events permit necessary for an event on private land? No. However a one-day entertainment, vendor or liquor license may be necessary. In case of street closure, a street closing permit is necessary.

What are special requirements regarding the handling of food? Development Services/Health Department requires a completed Temporary Food Establishment Permit and an employees log a minimum of 30 days before an event. A vendor without a licensed facility of their own must complete a Licensed Food Establishment Agreement Form. Refer to the General Guide to Temporary Food and Festival Events Information distributed by the Health Department.

Is recycling required at all events and festivals? Yes, it is State Law. Recent updates to Lowell Ordinance (Ch 9) have recycling requirements. By recycling at festivals several requirements will have been met. Contact the Solid Waste and Recycling Office for more information.

What are the hours of operation for J.F.K. Plaza? Events scheduled to be held at F.J.K. Plaza are to be conducted no earlier than 7:00 AM and no later than 9:00 PM. Hours of operation at other locations will be determined by the Special Events Coordinator.

How often does the Lowell License Commission meet? They have bi-monthly meetings in the City Council Chamber on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. These are listed on the City's online meetings calendar http://www.lowellma.gov/Calendar.aspx. Applicants are advised to file at least 1 month prior to scheduled event.

How often does the Board of Parks meet? The Board of Parks meets on the last Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Division of Planning and Development's second floor Conference Room in the J.F.K Civic Center.

V. Department Contact Information

Cultural Affairs & Special Events
JFK Plaza
50 Arcand Drive, 2nd Floor
Lowell, MA 01852
Special Events Coordinator—(978) 674-1482

License Commission
c/o Law Department
375 Merrimack Street/3rd Floor, City Hall
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 674-1513

Development Services
375 Merrimack Street/ 2nd Floor
Lowell, MA 01852
Senior Health Inspector/food–(978) 674-1458
Building Commissioner/tents—(978) 674-1455
Assoc. Planner/sidewalk seating (978) 674-1472
Wiring Inspector (978) 674-1451

Lowell Police Department
50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, MA 01852
978 937-3200
Traffic Division—(978) 674-4505
Detail Office—(978) 674-4503

Parking Services
75 John Street
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 674-1566

Parks & Recreation/Board of Parks
375 Merrimack St. Basement
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 674-4175

Public Works
1361 Middlesex Street
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 674-1802
Fax: 978 970-4071

Public Works/Electrical Division
1365 Middlesex Street
Lowell, MA 01852

Solid Waste & Recycling
1361 Middlesex Street
Lowell, MA 01851
(978) 674-1811

Heritage State Park-Mack Plaza & Sampas Pavillion
John Aziz, Park Supervisor
(978) 369-6312