

SPECIAL EVENT  
PERMIT APPLICATION  
INFORMATION  
SESSION 2026



# OUR TEAM



Yaffa  
Fain

Deputy Cultural  
Development  
Officer

Cultural  
Development



Meg  
O'Rourke

Administrative  
Assistant

Cultural  
Development



Melissa  
Richford

Customer  
Service  
Representative

Department of  
Parks, Recreation  
& Cemetery

## Special Event Committee

Cultural Development  
Diversity Equity and Inclusion  
DPW Engineering  
Department of Parks,  
Recreation & Cemetery  
Department of Transportation  
Emergency Management  
Fire Department  
Inspectional Services  
License Commission  
Police Department  
Public Facilities  
Worcester EMS



# ABOUT SPECIAL EVENTS

## Plan an Event

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From meetings and conventions, to sporting events, to festivals and parades, the City of Worcester is proud to support and host a variety of special events that contribute to the spirit and vitality of our City.

Worcester offers many unique public and private venues to accommodate all kinds of events and the support staff to help guide organizers through the municipal permit process and event coordination.

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# BY THE NUMBERS

290+



Special Event Permit and Expressive Event Permit Applications reviewed and coordinated between January 2025 and December 2026.

95+

Unique digital inquiries to [SpecialEvents@WorcesterMA.Gov](mailto:SpecialEvents@WorcesterMA.Gov). Dozens of walk-in's and phone calls from prospective event organizers since January 2025.

50%

Increase in the number of permit applications submitted in 2025 vs. 2024.

14

Special Event Committee meetings offered for community participants in 2025.





# 2025 Fee Waivers Continue in 2026

City of Worcester

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### SPECIAL EVENTS PROCESS ENHANCEMENTS

- ✓ Consolidated Application
- ✓ Improved Coordination
- ✓ Fewer Permits and Fees
- ✓ Further Improvements to Come

The following changes are being made to permits and fees:

- Special Event Application Fee: waived
- Parks Permit Application Fee: waived
- Parks/Facilities Electrical Usage Fee: waived
- Parks Administrative Charge: waived
- Street or Sidewalk Obstruction/Closure Fee: waived
- Temporary Signage Fee: waived
- Portable Heater Permit Fee: waived
- Special Effects Permit Fee: waived
- Fireworks Permit Fee: waived
- Dumpster Permit Fee: waived
- Propane Storage Permit Fee: waived
- Temporary Building Permit Fees for Special Events: waived
- Temporary Body Art Practitioner Permit: waived
- Late Charges: eliminated
- Portable Toilet Permit: eliminated
- Parade Permit: eliminated
- Sound Permit: eliminated
- Permit to Exhibit, Raise, or Keep Animals: eliminated



City of Worcester

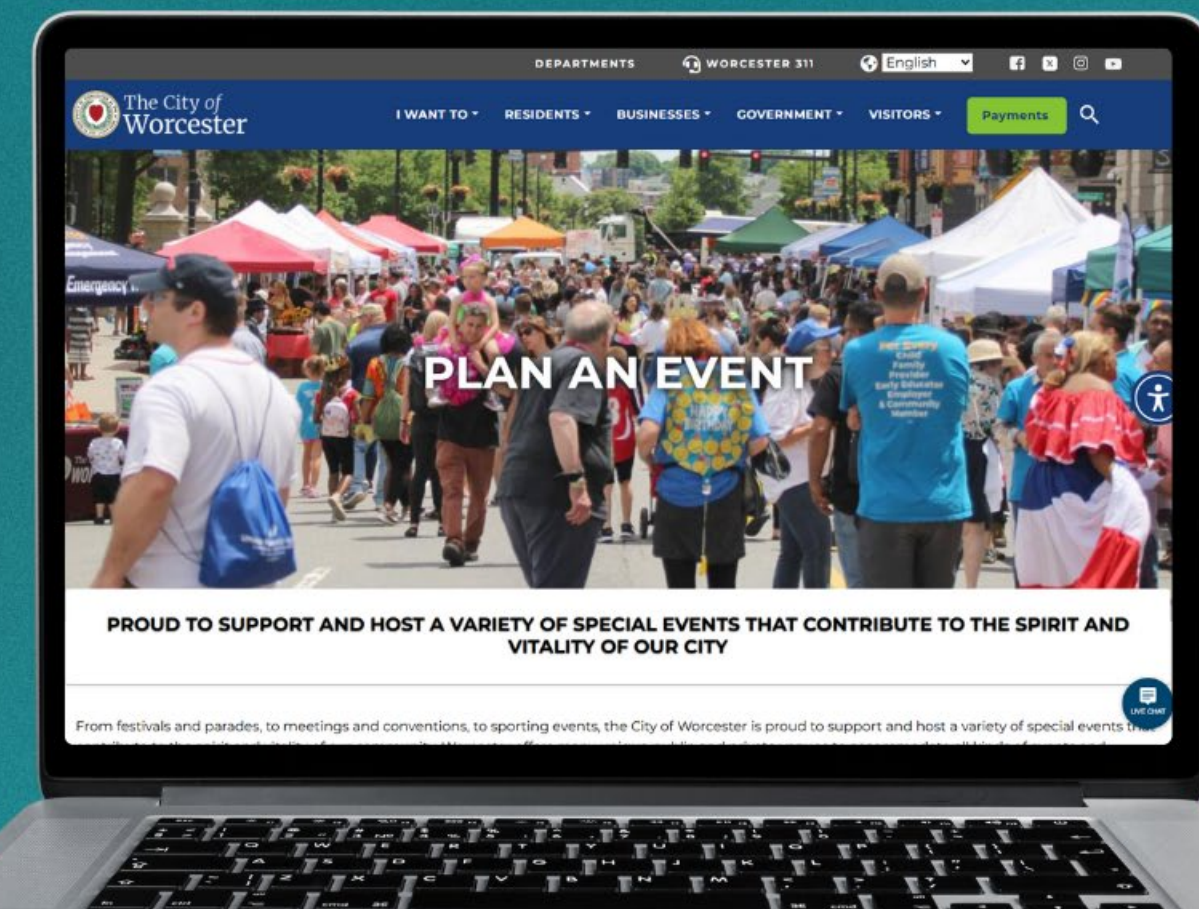
# SPECIAL EVENTS UPDATES

- ✓ Special Events Permit Application
- ✓ Expressive Event Permit Application
- ✓ Parks Rules & Regulations
- ✓ Fee Structures

## NOW LIVE



We are happy to announce that the 2026 Special Event Permit Application, Expressive Event Permit Application, Parks Rules & Regulations, and fee structures are now available! For this year, the applications have been converted from a PDF to streamlined webforms.





# SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT PROCESS

## 2026 Update

There is now an **online [single application for all Special Events](#)**, which is received and processed by the Cultural Development Division (CDD). For events of a time-sensitive, spontaneous nature there is a separate **online [Expressive Event Application](#)**. Printout documents are available for those without computer access.

## Special Events – Events in Public Space/Parks and/or Requiring City Services

Events on City property, including City Parks, and/or events that require City services or authorization necessitate the [Special Event application](#) process. Events will be reviewed through the Special Event Permit process.

Examples: Road Races, Block Parties and events in City owned parks/parking lots, garages and other infrastructure.

## Expressive Event– Event of a Time-Sensitive Nature

An Expressive Event of a time-sensitive nature is a spontaneously planned event in response to a recent occurrence, including but not limited to rallies, protests or vigils addressing current political, religious, or social issues, when the organizer(s) could not have reasonably anticipated their need for such event in advance of the permitting timeline established by the City's Special Events regulations. The City provides an [expedited permitting](#) process to facilitate this type of event.

Examples: Vigils, Rallies, Protests

# TYPES OF SPECIAL EVENTS



## SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT

Event on a City property,  
including Parks,  
and/or requiring  
City Services



## EXPRESSIVE EVENT PERMIT

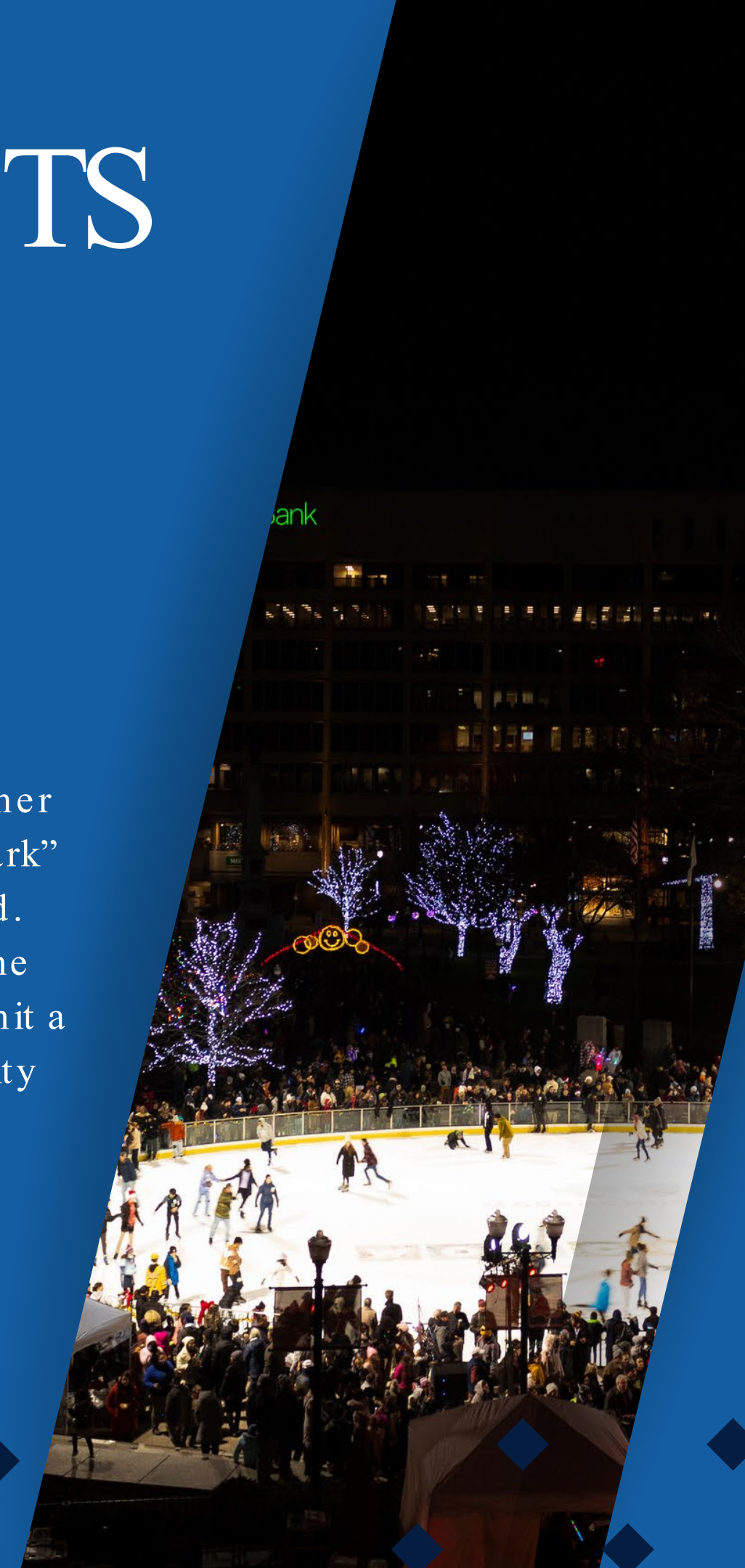
Event of a time sensitive  
nature (e.g., Vigil, Rally,  
Protest, etc.)



## ~~PARKS PERMIT~~

Eliminated: In 2025, the former  
Park's Division "Event in a Park"  
application was eliminated.  
Applicants will complete the  
Special Event Permit to submit a  
request for an event in a City  
park.

Depending on the nature of the event, organizers may need to attend  
a Parks Commission and/or Special Event Committee meeting, as assigned.





# PERMIT TIMELINE

## Begin Permits

Permit application will be reviewed by  
Special Event Committee and/or  
Department of Parks, Recreation &  
Cemetery on a rolling basis.  
Scheduling is First Come - First Serve.

Submit Special Event Permit application  
at least 3 months prior to proposed event  
date. *Exception for Expressive Event  
Permits of a time - sensitive nature.*

## Review

## Meet

Attend a Special Event Committee or  
Parks Commission meeting, if required.  
Special Event Committee meets 1st  
Wednesday of each month at 1pm. Parks  
Commission meets monthly on  
Thursdays at 6:30 pm.

## Follow-Up

Complete supplementary permits and  
follow-up with City departments on  
specific event needs.

## Event

Host event and update the City team  
of any post-event concerns or  
challenges to maintain open lines of  
communication.





# The City of Worcester

## Special Event Permit Application

The City of Worcester is proud to support and host a variety of Special Events that contribute to the spirit and vitality of our city. Please refer to the Special Events Planning Guidebook to aid in the completion of your application. Please fully complete all application information; incomplete applications will be returned. For inquiries, contact [SpecialEvents@WorcesterMA.gov](mailto:SpecialEvents@WorcesterMA.gov).

Please note the following information:

- Special Event Applications should be submitted at least 90 days prior to the requested date of event.
- If event qualifies as an Expressive Event of a Time Sensitive Nature, complete the [Expressive Event Permit Application](#).
- To display a cultural flag at City Hall, complete the [Request to Display a Cultural Flag](#).
- After staff review of application, all additional permit fees must be submitted to obtain approval of application. Fee schedule for all permits may be found in the Special Events Guidebook.
- Additional event permits must be approved 14 days prior to event, except in extenuating circumstances.

### Sponsoring Organization

Type of Organization \*

- ☐ Commercial (for profit)
- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Nonprofit with 501(c)(3) Exemption

☐ Other

Organization \*

Event Coordinator \*

Organization Address

Street Address \*

City \*

State \*

Choose One



Zip \*

# SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT APPLICATION

## Deadline

Submit online application at least 90 days prior to requested event. Printed documents may be submitted to the Culture Office, Room 409 of Worcester City Hall.

## Applicant

Ensure applicant is appropriate contact for all event correspondence.

## Customization

Application should be completed, but some fields will not be relevant depending on event format.

## Supplementary Materials

Include simple event map as attachment.



Special Event Permit

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PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE			
Type of Permit	Permit Fee	Inspection Status	Department
Auctioneer Permit	\$25/Day	No Inspection	City Clerk
Raffle & Bazaar License	\$10/Year from date of issuance	No Inspection	City Clerk
Parks Fees	\$65/Hour / per one Parks Staff Member and/or Parks Electrician *Minimum of 4 hours / per event / per day (\$260 minimum charge)  \$260 deposit for use of Park for a Special Event  \$400 trash removal/disposal fee  \$1,040 Parks Portable Stage fee for the delivery, setup, breakdown, pickup and transportation of Parks Stage	No Inspection	Department of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery
Street Closure / Obstruction Permit	Fee Waived	Pre and Post Inspection Required	Department of Public Works Engineering Division
Parking Signage	Fee Waived	No Inspection	Department of Transportation & Mobility
Event Garage / Lot Rentals	\$500 Municipal Lot \$500 Municipal Garage per Level	No Inspection	Department of Transportation & Mobility
Temporary Building Permit	Fee Waived	City and State Inspection Required	Inspectional Services
Temporary Permit to Practice Body Art	Fee Waived	Inspection Required	Inspectional Services
Electrical Permit	Fee Waived	Inspection Required	Inspectional Services
Food Permit	\$0 Farm Stand (Defined by the State as: Unprocessed fruits and vegetables, eggs, honey and maple syrup) Seasonal (Semi-Annual) (May include pie, cakes, cookies, breads etc.)	Inspection Required	Inspectional Services

	\$50 Farmers' Market with Food Preparation (Annual)		
Temporary Food Permit or Mobile Food Permit	\$60/Permit	Inspection Required	Inspectional Services
Food Truck/Trailer Inspection Permit	Fee Waived, embedded in Temporary Food Permit	Inspection Required	Fire Prevention
Food Permit (Bundle)* *(Bundle rate eligible to non-profits at discretion of Inspectional Services)	\$150—1-12 Vendors \$300—13-24 Vendors \$500—25+ Vendors	Inspection Required	Inspectional Services
Entertainment License	No fee Monday through Saturday, \$50 to City of Worcester and \$100 to Commonwealth of MA on Sundays	No Inspection	License Commission
Liquor License	\$100 per day	No Inspection	License Commission
Hawkers and Peddlers Permit	\$62	Inspection Required	Police Department
Police Detail	\$60/hour per officer with a 4 Hour Minimum	No inspection required	Police Department
Fireworks Permit	Fee Waived	Day before and day of event inspection	Fire Prevention
Propane Storage	Fee Waived	Day before and day of event inspection	Fire Prevention
Fire Detail	Detail rate is 1.5 times staff members normal rate, 4 hours minimum, up to 8 hours	No Inspection Required	Fire Prevention
Flame Effects	Fee Waived	Inspection Required	Fire Prevention
Public Facilities Staff	\$60 / Hour / Staff member		Public Facilities
City Hall Restroom Access	\$56.25/Hour After 5PM (Mon.-Fri.) and After 8AM (Weekends) \$100.00/Hour Prior to 8AM (7 days a week)		Public Facilities



## CONTACT INFORMATION

For your reference, the following is a list of contacts you may need to acquire all necessary permitting for your event. For the Special Event Committee, please contact [specialevents@worcesterma.gov](mailto:specialevents@worcesterma.gov).

### **Executive Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion**

51 Sever St. Third Floor  
Worcester, MA, 01609  
Phone: (508) 799-1995  
[EODEI@worcesterma.gov](mailto:EODEI@worcesterma.gov)

### **Cultural Development Department**

455 Main Street, Room 409  
Worcester, MA, 01608  
Phone: (508) 799-1400  
Fax: (508) 799-1406  
[culture@worcesterma.gov](mailto:culture@worcesterma.gov)

### **Department of Public Facilities**

50 Officer Manny Familia Way,  
Room 101  
Worcester, MA 01605  
Phone: (508) 799-8588  
[publicfacilities@worcesterma.gov](mailto:publicfacilities@worcesterma.gov)

### **Department of Public Works**

20 East Worcester Street  
Worcester, MA, 01604  
Phone: (508) 799-1300  
Fax: (508)-799-1448  
[dpw@worcesterma.gov](mailto:dpw@worcesterma.gov)

### **Department of Public Works Engineering Division**

20 East Worcester Street  
Worcester, MA, 01604  
Phone: (508) 929-1450  
[DPWpermits@worcesterma.gov](mailto:DPWpermits@worcesterma.gov)

### **Department of Transportation and Mobility**

76 East Worcester Street  
Worcester, MA 01606  
Phone: (508) – 929-1300  
[mobility@worcesterma.gov](mailto:mobility@worcesterma.gov)

### **Division of Emergency Communication**

2 Coppage Drive  
Worcester, MA, 01603  
Phone: (508) 799-1400  
Fax: (508) 799-1406  
[communications@worcesterma.gov](mailto:communications@worcesterma.gov)

### **Division of Emergency Management**

2 Coppage Drive  
Worcester, MA, 01603  
Phone: (508) 799-1840  
Fax: (508) 799-1389  
[emergencymgt@worcesterma.gov](mailto:emergencymgt@worcesterma.gov)

### **License Commission**

25 Meade Street, Room 205  
Worcester, MA 01610  
Phone: (508) 799-1198 ext. 33009  
Fax: (508) 799-1406  
[license@worcesterma.gov](mailto:license@worcesterma.gov)

### **Inspectional Services Department**

25 Meade Street  
Worcester MA, 01610  
Phone, Food inquiries: (508)-799-  
1198 ext. 33030  
Phone, Portable Toilets/Housing  
inquiries: (508)-799-1198 ext.  
33012  
Fax: (508) 799-8544  
[inspections@worcesterma.gov](mailto:inspections@worcesterma.gov)

### **Office of the City Manager**

455 Main Street, Room 306  
Worcester, MA, 01608  
Phone: (508) 799-1175  
Fax: (508) 799-1208  
[CityManager@worcesterma.gov](mailto:CityManager@worcesterma.gov)

### **Department of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery**

50 Officer Manny Familia Way  
Worcester, MA, 01605  
Phone: (508) 799-1190  
Fax: (508) 799-1293  
[parks@worcesterma.gov](mailto:parks@worcesterma.gov)

### **Public Health Department**

25 Meade Street  
Worcester, MA, 01610  
Phone: (508) 799-8531  
Fax: (508) 799-8572  
[health@worcesterma.gov](mailto:health@worcesterma.gov)

### **Worcester Police Department**

9-11 Lincoln Square  
Worcester, MA, 01608  
Phone: (508) 799-8600  
Fax: (508) 799-8680  
[wpd@worcesterma.gov](mailto:wpd@worcesterma.gov)

### **Worcester Fire Prevention**

25 Meade Street, Room 100  
Worcester, MA, 01610  
Phone: (508) 799-1822 ext.  
33100  
[Prevention@worcesterma.gov](mailto:Prevention@worcesterma.gov)

### **City Clerk**

455 Main Street, Room 206  
Worcester, MA, 01608  
Phone: (508) 799 – 1121  
Fax: (508) 799 – 1194  
[clerk@worcesterma.gov](mailto:clerk@worcesterma.gov)



# EXAMPLE EVENT MAP

- Admissions Gate(s)
- Booths, Exhibits, Displays or Enclosures
- Canopies or Tent Locations
- Number of Canopies or Tents
- Size(s) of Canopies or Tents
- Fencing, Barriers and/or Barricades
- First Aid Facilities and Ambulance Locations
- Food Concession and/or Food Preparation Area(s)
- Gas Tanks (i.e., helium, propane, etc.)
- Generator Locations and/or Source of Electricity
- Platforms, Stages, Grandstands or Related Structures
- Portable Toilets, Restroom Facilities
- Trash Containers and Dumpsters
- Number of Trash Cans
- Dumpsters w/covers
- Vehicles and/or Trailers

Event Title – Event Date

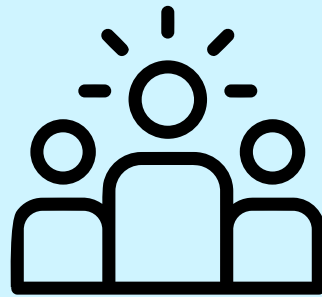


- Stage
- Light Sculptures
- Trailers
- Programming
- Emergency Tent
- Vendors (Craft, Nonprofit & Sponsors)
- Portable Toilets
- Vehicles
- Fire Pit



# SPECIAL EVENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Upon Special Event Permit Application submission, organizer will be invited to attend a Special Event Committee meeting hosted 1st Wednesday of the Month at 1pm (on Zoom).



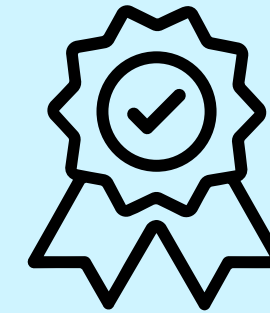
## Attend Meeting

Prepare brief overview of event plans to share with Committee. Committee will inquire about event and share additional permitting needs.



## Review Follow-up

Special Event team will email list of required permits and follow-up steps within one week of Committee meeting.



## Complete Permits

Complete appropriate additional permits and pay permit fees.





# FUTURE PERMIT IMPROVEMENTS

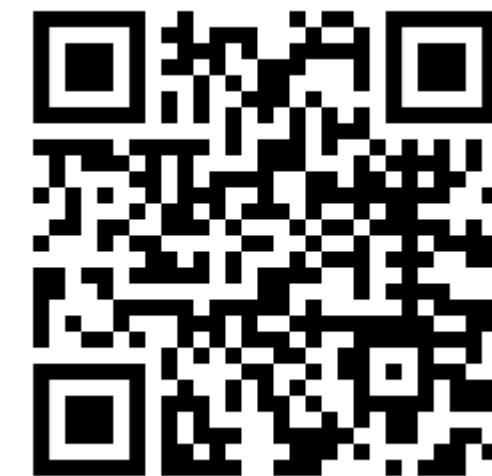
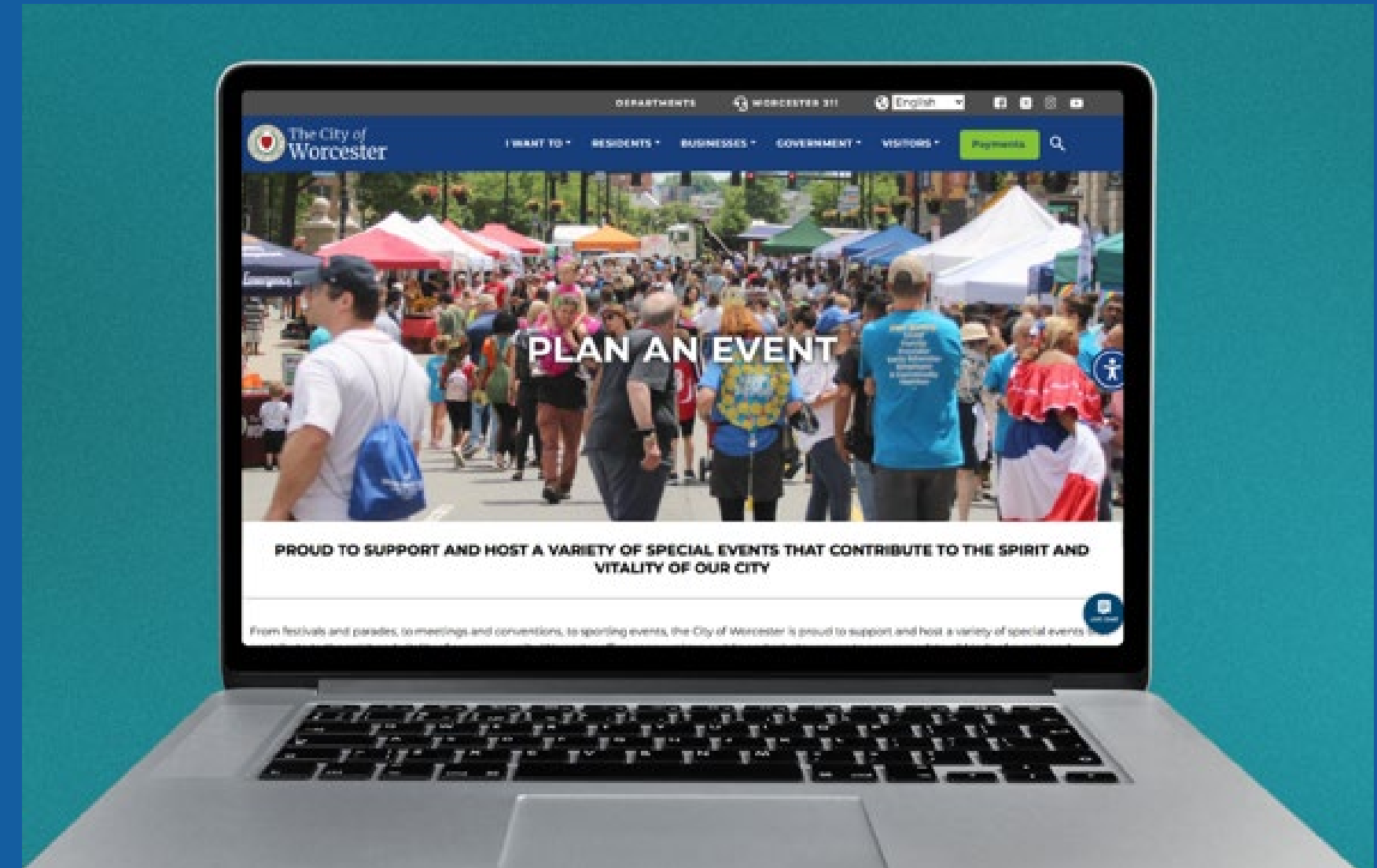
In Partnership with the City Manager's Office,  
and the Department of Innovation and  
Technology, the Special Event Committee and  
Department of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery  
are continuing to develop the Special Event  
permitting process.



## You can also learn more at the following sessions:

- The Cultural Development Division will host an optional, virtual Special Event Information Session on Wednesday, Feb. 4 from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- The Cultural Development Division will also host February drop-in office hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 9; Wednesday, Feb. 11; and Tuesday, Feb. 17 for anyone with questions about the 2026 Special Event Application process.
- The Department of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery will host an event meeting to review 2026 Parks Rules and Regulations on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 6:30 p.m. at 50 Officer Manny Familia Way - Meeting Room A.

**LEARN MORE** → [worcesterma.gov/plan-an-event](https://worcesterma.gov/plan-an-event)





# CONTACT INFORMATION

Cultural Development Division / Special Event Committee

 City Hall, Room 409

 508-799-1400

 [SpecialEvents@worcesterma.gov](mailto:SpecialEvents@worcesterma.gov)

Department of Parks, Recreation  
& Cemetery

 50 Officer Familia Way

 508-799-1190

 [Parks@worcesterma.gov](mailto:Parks@worcesterma.gov)

