

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

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.

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.
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**

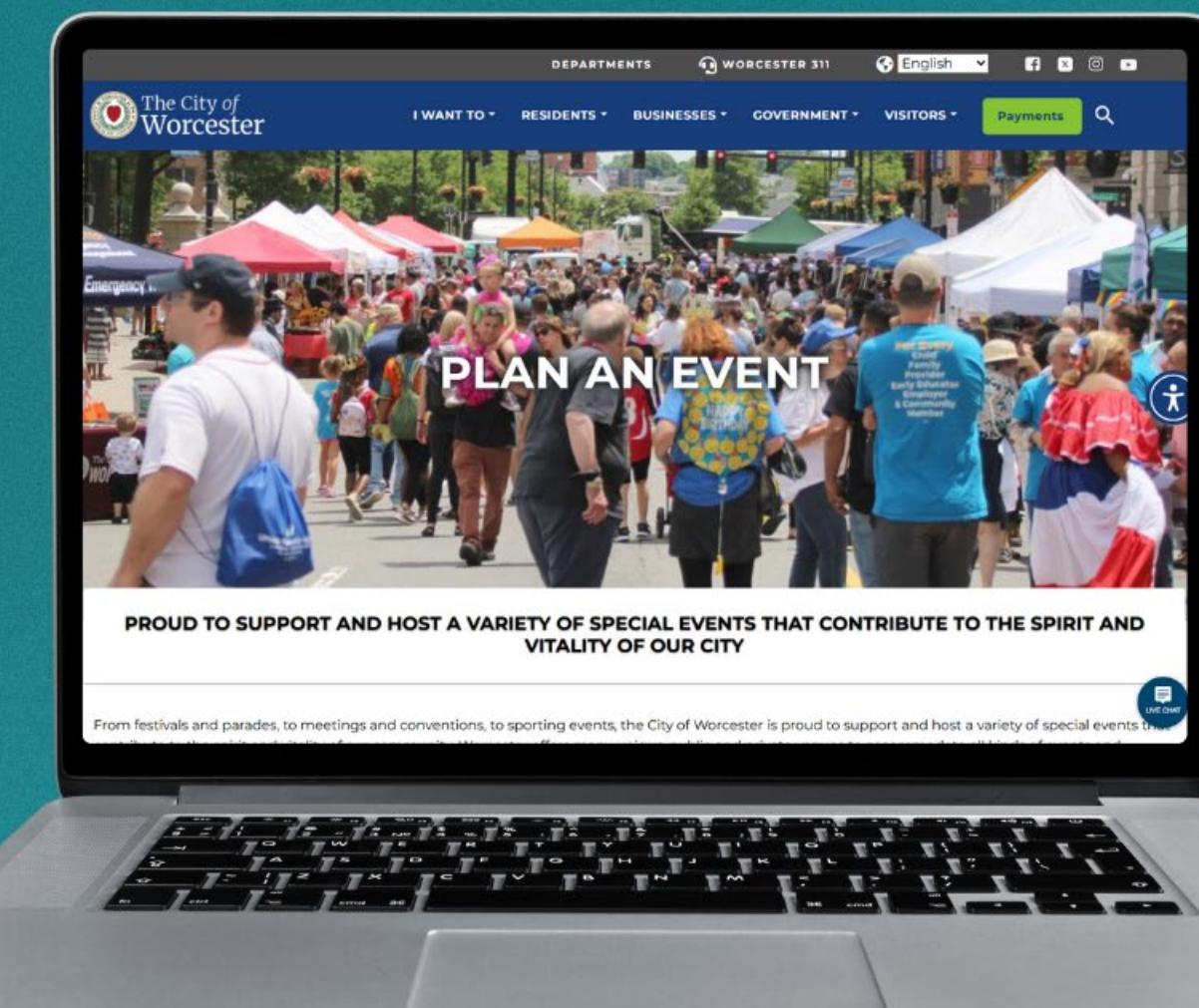
 **Parks Rules & Regulations**

 **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



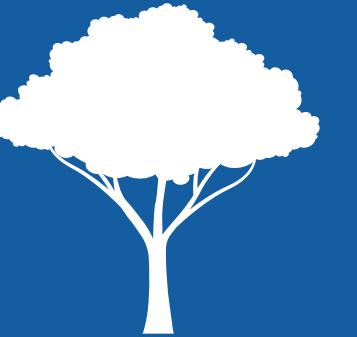
SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT

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

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.

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

Begin Permits

Review

Meet

Follow-Up

Event

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

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 6:30pm.

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.

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 *	Zip *
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Choose One"/>	<input type="text"/>

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.



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Next

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	<p>\$65/Hour / per one Parks Staff Member and/or Parks Electrician *Minimum of 4 hours / per event / per day (\$260 minimum charge)</p> <p>\$260 deposit for use of Park for a Special Event</p> <p>\$400 trash removal/disposal fee</p> <p>\$1,040 Parks Portable Stage fee for the delivery, setup, breakdown, pickup and transportation of Parks Stage</p>	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	<p>\$0 Farm Stand (Defined by the State as: Unprocessed fruits and vegetables, eggs, honey and maple syrup)</p> <p>Seasonal (Semi-Annual) (May include pie, cakes, cookies, breads etc.)</p>	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.

Executive Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion 51 Sever St. Third Floor Worcester, MA, 01609 Phone: (508) 799-1995 EODEI@worcesterma.gov	Division of Emergency Communication 2 Coppage Drive Worcester, MA, 01603 Phone: (508) 799-1400 Fax: (508) 799-1406 communications@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
Cultural Development Department 455 Main Street, Room 409 Worcester, MA, 01608 Phone: (508) 799-1400 Fax: (508) 799-1406 culture@worcesterma.gov	Division of Emergency Management 2 Coppage Drive Worcester, MA, 01603 Phone: (508) 799-1840 Fax: (508) 799-1389 emergencymgt@worcesterma.gov	Public Health Department 25 Meade Street Worcester, MA, 01610 Phone: (508) 799-8531 Fax: (508) 799-8572 health@worcesterma.gov
Department of Public Facilities 50 Officer Manny Familia Way, Room 101 Worcester, MA 01605 Phone: (508) 799-8588 publicfacilities@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	Worcester Police Department 9-11 Lincoln Square Worcester, MA, 01608 Phone: (508) 799-8600 Fax: (508) 799-8680 wpd@worcesterma.gov
Department of Public Works 20 East Worcester Street Worcester, MA, 01604 Phone: (508) 799-1300 Fax: (508) 799-1448 dpw@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	Worcester Fire Prevention 25 Meade Street, Room 100 Worcester, MA, 01610 Phone: (508) 799-1822 ext. 33100 Prevention@worcesterma.gov
Department of Public Works Engineering Division 20 East Worcester Street Worcester, MA, 01604 Phone: (508) 929-1450 DPWpermits@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	City Clerk 455 Main Street, Room 206 Worcester, MA, 01608 Phone: (508) 799-1121 Fax: (508) 799-1194 clerk@worcesterma.gov

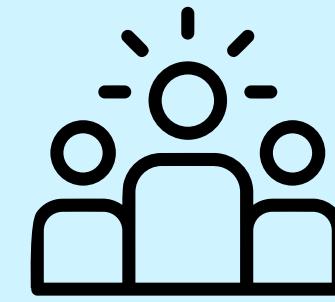
EXAMPLE EVENT MAP

- 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



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).



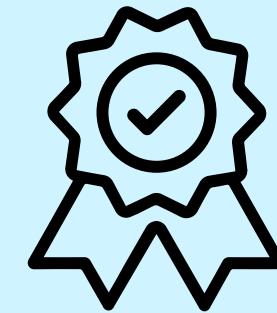
Attend Meeting

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

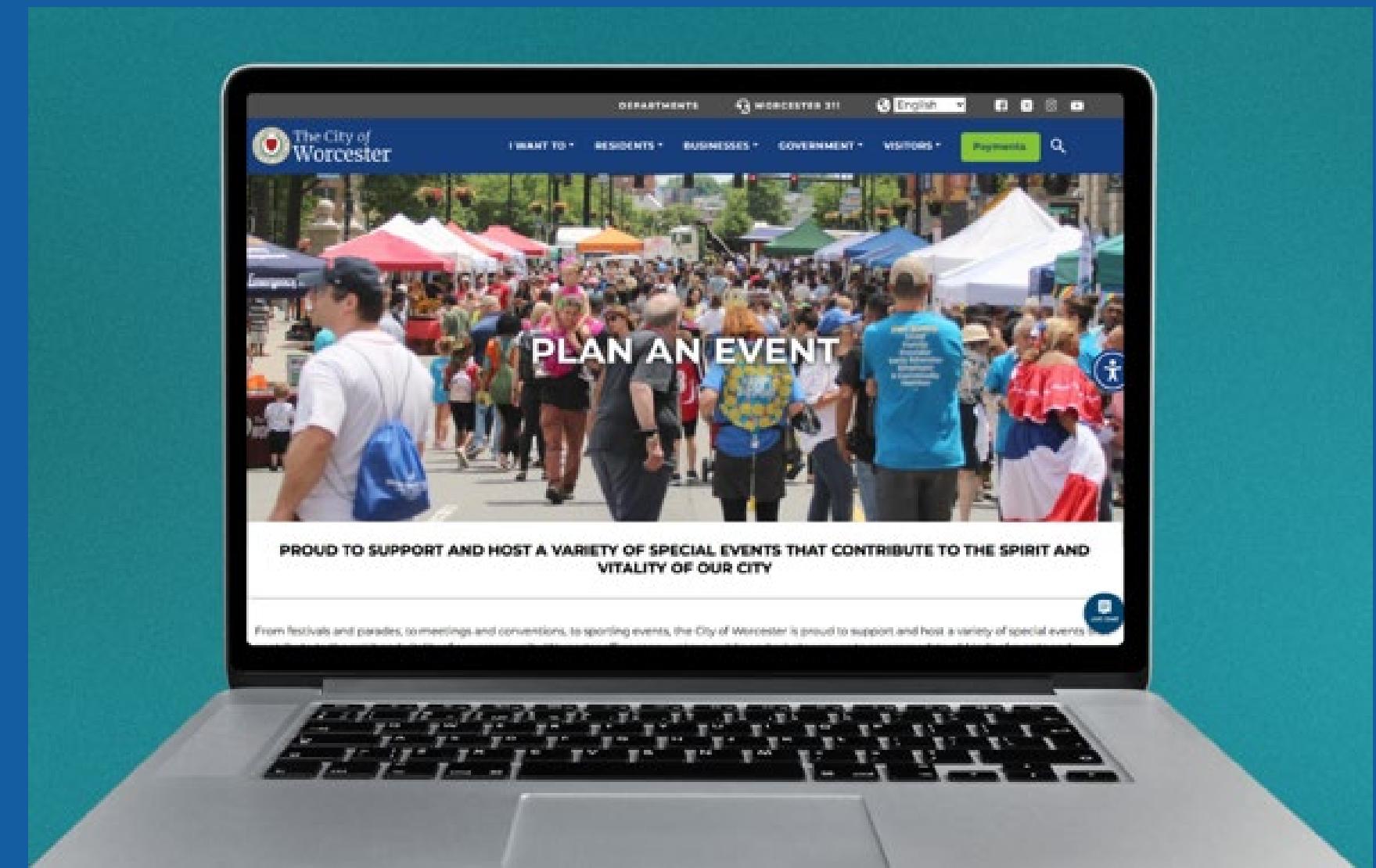
In Partnership with the City Manager's Office, and the Department of Innovation and Technology, the Special Event Committee and Department of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery are continuing to develop the Special Event permitting process.

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



CONTACT INFORMATION

Cultural Development Division / Special Event Committee

 City Hall, Room 409

 508-799-1400

 SpecialEvents@worcesterma.gov

Department of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery

 50 Officer Familia Way

 508-799-1190

 Parks@worcesterma.gov

