



CITY OF BALTIMORE
Office of Permits
200 Holliday Street Baltimore, MD 21201

SPECIAL EVENT GUIDELINES & FAQ

This guidelines document is intended to clarify the special events process for the public, provide greater predictability and answer common questions.

What is A Special Event & When Can the Special Event Application be Used?

Events including but not limited to: races, walk-a-thons, parades, church processions, festivals and concerts, leafleting, fairs and bazaars, exhibitions, outdoor plays, carnivals, circus. Furthermore, special events are—as the name implies—special, and not daily repetitious events or reservations of public space. Special events are planned, temporary activities open to the general public and taking place in the Right of Way or a City park.

What is a block party?

A block party is an event that is intended for the residents on the immediate block of the event, is organized by an applicant residing on the block, is closed to the general public and does not exceed 200 participants, is on a local residential street, ends before 9pm and where there are no sales of alcohol. Where all of these requirements are met, applicants can use the [block party application](#) found on the Department of General Services website.

What is Not a Special Event?

Extension of private dining services or restaurant seating by a private business applicant is not a special event. The Department of General Service's Minor Privilege Office handles requests for extension of outdoor seating into the Right of Way. Curb lane closures for conferences or meetings are not special events. Additionally, private events are not special events. A private event is one that is not open to the general public. Examples are pavilion rentals, picnics and weddings. Private events may not be held in the Right of Way.

Events in private facilities such as concert halls, arenas, stadiums or stadium lots, or similar buildings and facilities where gathering events take place are not considered "special events."

What About Farmer's Markets?

Applicants looking to establish a new farmer's market or obtain approval for an annual renewal of an existing market must complete the [Farmer's Market application](#). If your farmer's market is in a City Park or one of the properties under the jurisdiction of the Department of Recreation and Parks you will be granted or denied approval from the Department of Recreation and Parks as part of the application review process. The Department will ensure that there is no conflict for the use of the space.

Where Do I Apply?

Baltimore City now offers a one-stop shop for special event permits. Applicants for all special events, including outdoor events on city streets, private lots, sidewalks or parks, should apply at the Department of General Services' [Special Events Office](#) on the first floor at 200 N. Holliday Street – Counter 4.

Q: How Do I Apply?

All Special Event Permit applications must be submitted in person by the event organizer at the Special Events Office. Applications submissions by fax, email, mail are not accepted and will be returned if received. At submission you will receive a consultation with a Special Event Coordinator for your event who will walk you through the application to help you ensure it is complete and answer any questions you may have. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Applications are not accepted nor considered complete without full payment of all required application fees. Applications submitted by a 3rd party who is not the event organizer will not be accepted. Out of state organizers of large events should contact the Special Events Office to discuss with the events coordinator before applying.

What Do I Need to Apply?

There is a [Special Event application checklist](#) you should use that helps identify what things are required or not needed based on the type of event you are planning. See below. If you are planning a block party, you will need a physical street address (not a P.O. Box) and a valid government issued identification card showing your address as the applicant.

What About Large and First Time Events?

Organizers of large and new events are required to participate in an Interagency Coordination of Events (ICE) meeting which will be scheduled and coordinated by the Office of Special Events and are held at the Abel Wolman Municipal Building at 200 N. Holliday Street. ICE meetings are always on a Wednesday.

What Are the Application Processing Timelines and Deadlines?

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications anywhere between 3 to 4 months before their event. The earlier you apply the lower the application fee. **Absolutely no applications will be accepted less than 6 weeks before the event date.**

When Are Security Plans Required?

Any special event involving the sale or consumption of alcohol will always require a security plan to gain approval from the Police Commander. A security plan will likely be required whenever conditions exist that affect public safety, security, or the conduct of usual daily activities. For more information see the [Police Department Special Events Security Plan Guidance](#) document on the Department of General Services website.

When Am I Required to Pay?

Costs and payment for special events include pre event and post event payments. Applicants are required to pay all application processing and inspection fees at the time of application and cannot submit an application without payment. After the event, fees for the delivery of City goods or services to facilitate the event are required within 30 days of receipt of invoice from the City of Baltimore; these services may include waste disposal, electrical work and public safety personnel and equipment from the Fire or Police Department. **Any event or event organizer with outstanding fees due to the City of Baltimore will not be permitted to have a future event until the outstanding balance is paid in full.**

What are Special Event Fees and Costs?

Costs of events are broken into two categories: 1) application & processing fees and 2) the cost of City services provided to facilitate your event. Below is a table of relevant processing and service costs. Additional costs for equipment requested by event organizers are outlined in the Equipment Request Application

Filing Costs

Item or service	cost	Item or service	cost
Block Party application filing (>8 weeks prior)	\$50	Equipment Request filing (>8 weeks prior)	\$50
Block Party application filing (6-8 weeks)	\$65	Equipment Request filing (8-6 weeks)	\$65
Block Party application filing (4-6 weeks)	\$80	Equipment Request filing (6-4 weeks)	\$80
Special Event application filing (>10 weeks prior)	\$80	Food Facility License (for each food vendor)	\$50
Special Event application filing (10-8 weeks)	\$125	Fire Department Review Fee (required for every permit except Park events)	\$45
Special Event application filing (6-8 weeks)	\$250	Noise Exemption	free
Parks event application filing and processing (>8 weeks)	\$75	Park events security deposit (varies by location)	varies
Parks event application filing and processing (8-6 weeks)	\$175	Park events daily impact fee (varies by location)	varies
Fire Department tent inspection for tents over 400sq feet (fee is one time, not a per-tent fee.)			\$150

Service Costs

Item or service	cost
Fire Marshall (\$55 per hour where required as determined by Fire Dept based on size, footprint, capacity, etc...)	\$55 hour
Fire Dept. EMS ambulance and crew (hourly charge where service requested by organizer)	varies
Police Detail (price established by Police Department varies based on: alcohol service, event size, footprint and location)	varies
Temporary zoning variance permit (price varies based on square footage of event area)	varies
Electrical work (\$20--\$25 per 5 kilowatt depending on event type)	varies
Amusement device such as moon bounces, ride & slides, bounce houses & concessions, water slides etc. (per device)	\$30
Waste Removal, Stages or Equipment (see price list on equipment request application. varies by item, quantity and size)	Varies

Does Baltimore Provide Support for or Encourage Special Events and Cultural Events?

Two of the goals of Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake are to: 1) increase economic activity from tourism and entertainment and attraction offerings and; 2) to increase the number of citizens who rate the City as being rich in cultural opportunities. To this end, the City of Baltimore supports and provides for special events in a number of ways. We believe that small community and neighborhood events help strengthen the bonds between our residents and neighbors and the fabric of our communities. The Department of General Services has a separate block party application for communities and neighborhoods that are looking to have an event on a residential block and meet certain criteria. The block party application is a reduced fee application; it is simpler and less expensive to file and complete this instead of the special events application. *This incentive is a reduction or savings to residents for block parties of \$215.*

To help reduce the cost and encourage event organizers looking to provide festivals, concerts and other cultural events in Baltimore, the City has purchased the tents, generators, stages, bike racks, recycling bins and other items necessary for events and provides them at significantly discounted prices to organizers. Except in rare cases where electrical wiring is required, applicants are encouraged to use City generators. The City switched from providing electrical services to providing generators as a cost savings to applicants and the City. For example, previously, a 2 day event had cost an applicant \$11,000 for wiring but by switching to generators it now costs around \$2,400 for twelve generators for two days each (hours to be determined by the Department of Transportation).

The City offers a further 50% reduction in price on equipment items for events where there is a Baltimore City based non-profit sponsor (proof of 501(c)(3) status at the time of application required). This discount does not apply to public safety services such as Fire and Police delivered during an event. The 50% discount only applies to events sponsored by a non-profit that are open and free to the public.

For example, the savings and City rate for key special event equipment items for non-profit event organizers is:

- 10x10 Tent/canopy—first 10 free (if picked up by applicant)
- 10x15 Tent/canopy—first 10 free (if picked up by applicant)

Effective January 1, 2015

- Electric generators (including overnight security and refueling where needed)—\$50
- Where City tents are used, no tent inspection fee or additional permit is required. This is just one way that the City of Baltimore is taking steps to help local neighborhoods and special event organizers looking to increase the number of safe, culturally diverse and attractive events in the City.

For the complete list of equipment and reduced prices see the [Equipment Request Application](#).

What Do I Need to Know About Equipment Rentals?

You can submit an equipment request at the special events counter when applying for your event. If City equipment is not available for your event date, you still have the option of purchasing or renting the desired equipment from one of the many companies that service the area. No equipment applications are accepted less than 4 weeks before the event date.

What Do I Need to Know About Public Safety Costs for Special Events?

Required police presence at special events serves to ensure public safety and integrity of events taking place in Baltimore City. This service also constitutes one of the largest cost components for special events in the City and should be considered when planning your event. The determination about both the need for a police detail and the level required is made by the Police Department. While a number of complex factors interact to produce this requirement, the following are standard contributing factors: the size of your event, historical data on the event regarding need or calls for service, presence of alcohol at your event, number of participants, number of intersections and street closures required. Where the determination is made and Police security participation required at your event it will be at the following rate: of \$ 45 an hour for officers, \$52 an hour for sergeants and \$ \$59 and hour for lieutenants. Please note there is a 4 hour minimum for police services. Guidelines you should anticipate and plan for are: 2 security guards per 100 guests, 2 Police officers for every 500 guests and 1 Police Lieutenant for 2 or more Police Sergeants.

How Do I Apply for Events on the Baltimore City Convention Center Campus?

Applicants looking to organize events on the streets surrounding the Convention Center are required to contact the Convention Center's Director of Building Services and applications must be cosponsored by the Convention Center.

What Are the Requirements for Erecting Tents and Other Temporary Structures?

Temporary structures erected for less than 6 weeks and that are 400 square feet or greater including connecting areas or spaces with common means of egress or entrance require obtaining a permit from the Special Events Office. Tents that are greater than 400 square feet require the following documents drawn to scale: 1) a site plan indicating the location of the temporary

structures, 2) section drawing, 3) tied on drawing(s) which shows how to securely fix the temporary structure to the ground. Signed and sealed construction drawings may be required for any non-tent structure over 400 square feet.

Is There a Checklist For Completing The City Special Events Application?

The following checklist is designed to walk applicants through what documents and information is required for their event and which they can use as a guide in organizing their race, festival, parade, concert, block party or other event in Baltimore City.

Required Item	When Required	Y/N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Valid government issued identification verifying physical street address	Block party applicants		
Application listing purpose of event, agenda of activities & attendance info	Always		
Site plan/drawing showing location of parking, equipment - tents, fencing, bike racks etc.	Always		
Event site plan and plan for placement of any trash receptacles, dumpsters, load packers and recycling bins.	Always		
Organizer mobile phone number, email contact	Always		
Electrical site plan	Where electrical work performed		
Copy of proposed route or map (show turn by turn)	racers, marches, parades, moving events		
Flyer or other promotional piece for event	Park event		
Musical entertainment program	Concerts, festivals, music events		
Entertainment program (other than music)	Where relevant		
Detailed listing of all street closures	Always when requesting a street closure		
Equipment application included	Where relevant		
Copy of Non-profit 501(c)3 status if required	Where relevant * always for park property if vending		
Detailed floor plan of the tent showing the location of fire extinguishers, exit signs, emergency lighting units.	Large private tents		
Security plan	Alcohol sales at event		
Signed copy of the "Patterson Park Addendum"/ "West Shore Park Addendum"/ "Mt. Vernon Square Addendum" to show acceptance of terms	When using these facilities with ≥ 200 people		
Temporary Noise Exemption Application	Concerts and festivals where requested		
Signed Financial Responsibility Form	When applying on behalf of organizer or beneficiary.		
Signed and sealed construction drawings for non-city stages, bridges, tents	Temporary structures exceeding 400sq feet		

If – Then for Special Event Application Process

1. **If** you are having a special event which exceeds 200 attendees and which is on any public street or publicly owned site, facility or park, **then** you must provide a recycling receptacle immediately adjacent to each trash receptacle and ensure that all receptacles are clearly distinguished from trash receptacles by color or signage and ensure that all recyclable materials deposited into recycling receptacles at the event are collected for recycling. This is required of the event organizers by [Senate Bill 781 regarding environment and recycling](#).
2. **If** you are having an event which includes the sale of alcohol, **then** you should notify the Liquor Board and must first obtain all required City permits before the Liquor Board will issue its permit.
3. **If** you are having an event in which you close streets or sidewalks, **then** you must obtain a permit from the Department of General Services.
4. **If** you are having an event with a money wheel or, bingo, raffle or cash prize, **then** you must apply to the Department of General Services.
5. **If** you are having food at your event, **then** you can apply to Department of General Services where we have and will process for you both the special event applications and the Health Department food permit applications.
6. **If** you are having an event and require a noise waiver, **then** you can apply to the Department of General Services where we have and will process for you the Health Department Noise Waiver application.
7. **If** you are having an event and require equipment such as dumpsters, roll offs, recycling bins, tents, stages etc..., **then** you must submit an equipment request application to the Department of General Services. This application can be found on the General Services website or at the counter at the General Services Special Events Office.
8. **If** you are having an event in which you both close streets and use an adjacent park, **then** you can apply to either the Department of General Services or Recreation and Parks to obtain a permit for both the street closure and park usage.
9. **If** you are having an event in which you erect a temporary structure including private stage, bridge or tent larger than 400 square feet, **then** you must obtain a permit from the Housing Department's One Stop Shop located at 417 E. Fayette Street.
10. **If** you are having an event at which you use a private tent larger than 400 square feet, **then** upon your submission of application to the Department of General Services, the Fire Department will contact you to perform a site inspection of the location and tent. In this instance there is no "tent permit" but there is a onetime \$150 fee for inspection.
11. **If** you are having an event at which you close streets, use a park and erect a temporary structure, **then** you must submit an application to either Recreation and Parks or General Services which will issue your permit and, also the Housing Department is required to review and approve the structure before issuance of the temporary structure permit.
12. **If** you are having an event on Maryland Stadium Authority property and the event is entirely contained within the footprint of the Maryland Stadium Authority property and or lots and does not require the use or closure of any City streets or curb lanes, **then** you are required to get approval from the Maryland Stadium Authority to use their property but are not required to obtain a street closure permit from the Department of General Services. Additionally, you

cannot obtain final approval and contract to use the Maryland Stadium Authority lots until you have obtained the appropriate Health Department or Liquor Board permits from the City of Baltimore as required based on your event.

13. **If** you are having an event on Maryland Stadium Authority lots which will also impact or require the closure of Baltimore City streets, **then** you are required to apply to the Department of General Services for the street closure using the Special Event Application no later than 5 business days after the submission to the Maryland Stadium Authority. The applications for Special Event must be submitted in person at the Special Events Office located on the first floor at 200 N. Holliday Street, Baltimore Maryland, 21202.

Accessibility Guidelines for Special Events

The City of Baltimore is committed to providing equal access to permitted special events to people with disabilities. We require the event organizers to comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Americans with Disabilities Act 2010 Standards provide guidelines for such temporary events as festivals, parades, and concerts. When submitting your application please make sure you adhere to the guidelines below.

PUBLICITY

If your event will be fully accessible integrate access symbols into the design of your ad, brochure, or flyer. When advertising your event, note wheelchair accessibility by using the wheelchair symbol, which indicates access for people with limited mobility. Use the symbol only if the facility and/or area are accessible to people using wheelchairs, including entrances, restrooms, assembly areas, etc. Other frequently used symbols include: access for individuals who are blind or have low vision, accessible parking, telephone typewriter (TTY), assistive listening systems, braille, volume-controlled phone, large print and info. If your event will be partially accessible because of site constraints only integrate the access symbols that apply. Access symbols can be found on the internet.



SIGNAGE:

Clear, easy-to-read signs placed in consistent locations help visitors find their way around an event site and make choices regarding which activities or exhibits to attend. The international symbol for accessibility should be used on directional signage. **Refer to PUBLICITY section above.

ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION:

All MTA services are accessible for individuals with disabilities. For more information on MTA Bus, Metro Subway, Light Rail or Mobility service, call 410-539-5000, 1-866-RIDE-MTA (toll-free), TTY 410-539-3497

PARKING AND TRAFFIC CONTROL:

Accessible Parking Spaces: Use the table below to determine the required minimum number of spaces for your event based on the total spaces provided. When no on-site parking is provided, select the nearest possible parking area or garage and create accessible parking on an accessible route. If providing temporary parking in an unmarked area such as a field or blacktop you may designate accessible spaces by using traffic cones and temporary signage. Accessible parking must be within 200 feet of an accessible entrance.

Total Parking in Lot	Required Minimum Number of Accessible Spaces	Total Parking in Lot	Required Minimum Number of Accessible Spaces
1 to 25	1	201 to 300	7
26 to 50	2	301 to 400	8
51 to 75	3	401 to 500	9
76 to 100	4	501 to 1000	2% of Total

100 to 150	5	1001 to Over	20+1 for Each 100 over 1000
151 to 200	6		

*Van spaces. For every six or fraction of six accessible parking spaces, at least one shall be a van-accessible parking space. 1 in every 6 accessible spaces, but never less than one, must be van accessible. Dimensions (all dimensions are minimums): Accessible parking spaces are eight (8) feet wide; van-accessible spaces are eleven (11) feet wide. Access aisles for either type of space are five (5) feet wide. These adjacent aisles, which can be shared between two spaces, provide room for individuals to deploy vehicle-mounted wheelchair lifts and/or unload and use mobility devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, etc. An alternate design allows a van-accessible space to be eight (8) feet wide if the adjacent access aisle is also eight (8) feet wide.

Access aisles must be marked (e.g., painted with hatch marks) to discourage parking in them. This is especially important where the alternate design is used and an access aisle at a van-accessible space is the same size as the space. The surface of accessible spaces and access aisles must be smooth, stable, and virtually level in all directions to ensure safe use for people with disabilities, including those who must load, unload, and use wheeled mobility devices.

ACCESSIBLE ROUTE:

An accessible route is a 36” path clear of all activities and exhibits from the accessible parking area to the accessible entrance. This means clearance from tables, display booths, etc. Accessible routes shall be clear of barriers and protruding objects which are free standing or mounted to a fixed structure such as low hanging signs and newspaper dispensers.

ENTRANCES:

The entrance(s) should be barrier free with a minimum 32” opening. If a turnstile or revolving door is at the entrance, an alternate accessible route provided.

EQUIPMENT:

Stages: The stage is required to have direct access via a ramp if participants/spectators will be allowed on stage and if required by performers, speakers, etc. Stages over 6 inches require railing and edge protection. Stages provided by The City will be accessible. **Tables:** Provide 30” width tables for individual seating, 27 inches minimum knee clearance, and minimum 19 inches depth for dining and other activities; (BINGO, arts & crafts, etc.) See Table 2 below for quantity of tables required. **Counters:** A portion of the counter should be at least 36” wide and a maximum of 36” high. If accessible service counter/table is not provided, each vendor must offer to accommodate an individual by providing service in an alternate way. An example of an alternate way would be providing enough space beside the counter to pass items to customers who have difficulty reaching over a high counter. **Tents:** Guy wires should be located out of pedestrian pathways or have a detectable barrier or element such as a warning device such as sandbags. **Seating:** There should be an accessible seating area to accommodate a person(s) with the disability and their companion(s). The area should be 36” wide to accommodate the wheelchair. See Table 2 below for Number of Required Wheelchair locations; **Cables, Wires, Other Equipment or Vehicles:** Must not interfere with accessible routes or pose hazards to people with vision disabilities. **Portable Assistive Listening Devices:** Should be provided for special events such as a musical concert or seminar. (A portable assistive listening device is usually used as a system where the audio source is broadcast wirelessly over an FM frequency. The person who is listening may use a small FM Receiver to tune into the signal and listen at their preferred volume.)

<u>Capacity of Seating in Assembly Areas</u>	<u>Number of Required Wheelchair Locations</u>
4 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 300	4
301 to 500	6
Over 500	6, plus 1 additional space for each total seating capacity increase of 100

SERVICE ANIMALS: Service animals are allowed and must be under the control of their owners, on a leash and with the owner at all times. Disruptive or dangerous animals will be asked to leave the site.

FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS: If you will be selling tickets for seating, you must provide a designated number of seating areas for guests with disabilities and their companion. See Table 2 above.

FOOD AND MERCHANDISE: Work with vendors to ensure that people with disabilities have access to food, drinks, merchandise, and services offered. Vendors should be advised to offer additional assistance to people with disabilities so they can participate equally. This generally involves only simple or minor procedural changes, such as bringing items to an interested individual from an inaccessible area. **Refer to EQUIPMENT section above for tables, counters & seating for eating.

WASTE REMOVAL:

Portable Toilets: If one portable toilet is used, it must be ADA accessible. Where multiple single-user portable toilets are clustered at a single location, no more than 5 percent of the toilet units at each cluster shall be required to be accessible. One toilet is required to be accessible if less than 5 are provided. However if there are several clusters of toilets located throughout the event area at least one must be accessible in each cluster. It is advised to locate the accessible toilets at the end of the clusters.

If food or beverages are available at the event, one portable toilet must be provided for every 125 people in attendance. If NO food or beverages are available, one portable toilet must be provided for every 250 people in attendance. Portable toilets must be fully accessible to persons with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Note: These services are not provided by the City of Baltimore. You are responsible for providing these services.

If you have any questions regarding the accessibility of your special event, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Nollie P. Wood, Jr., Executive Director, Mayor's Commission on Disabilities. Please contact him via email at nollie.wood@baltimorecity.gov or phone at 443-984-3170.

ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities
www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm

ADA Guide for Small Businesses
<http://www.ada.gov/smbusgd.pdf>

Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA HOME PAGE
www.ada.gov

Department of Justice - ADA Title III Highlights
<http://www.ada.gov/t3highlight.htm>

Federal Access Board
www.access-board.gov/about.htm