

PHL OFFICE OF SPECIAL EVENTS



Office of Special Events

WHO WE ARE

The Office of Special Events (OSE) makes sure that people who want to have a special event in the City have the right permits, licenses, and insurance to do so. We are the City of Philadelphia's "one stop shop" for everything special events. From parades and festivals to runs and regattas, we are here to answer questions, review applications, facilitate permitting and coordinate City services.

WHAT WE DO

The responsibilities of the Office of Special Events (OSE) have expanded considerably in recent years. In addition to application intake, permit issuance, invoicing and delivery of City services, OSE has expanded community outreach efforts by offering in-person and virtual consultations to future event producers and informational presentations to both community members and collegiate settings.

OSE is also responsible for preparing and executing RFP's for large-scale special events on behalf of the City. Past efforts include the 2018 NFL Draft and the Made in America Music Festival.

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

OSE is positioning itself as a vital contributor to Philadelphia's marketing efforts through the promotion of the City's special events industry. Through the efforts of the OSE, the City of Philadelphia has been named a "World Festival & Event City" by the International Festival & Events Association (IFEA) six years in a row.

Philadelphia's special events industry is growing, and the Office of Special Events will take a leading role in building the City's event capacity by streamlining inter-agency coordination, increasing community and business engagement efforts and leading research into international municipal best-practices.

FAQ

Does my event require a permit from the City of Philadelphia?

Any event taking place on City property (streets, sidewalks, parks, etc.) requires a permit. Any event that requires, for its successful execution, City equipment and/or services beyond normal levels (Police, EMS, Sanitation, etc.) requires a permit as well. OSE can answer any event-related questions you may have at 215-686-3488 or by e-mail at ose@phila.gov.

How do I obtain a permit for use of a park or recreation center?

In this case, the Department of Parks & Recreation will take the lead for permitting. Picnics and large-scale special events and festivals are handled by the Parks & Recreation Special Events Office at 215-685-0060. Athletic events and other small-scale events are handled directly at the facility you wish to use.

How do I obtain a permit to close City streets?

Planning on throwing a residential block party? Those applications are handled by the Streets Department at 215-686-5500/5501. Street festivals, which are defined as events that are sponsored by a business or organization and/or taking place on a major, arterial roadway or commercial corridor, require a Festival Street Closure Application. These applications are processed by OSE and the Streets Department. Festival Street Closure Applications must be approved by the Police Department and SEPTA before a permit can be issued.

How can I become a vendor at special events in Philadelphia?

The overwhelming majority of events in Philadelphia are produced and managed by private organizations. Vendors wishing to participate in these events must first obtain permission from the event producer/organizer. Event websites and social media outlets are a good source for contact information. If you need to obtain a vendor license, you must submit the necessary applications to the Department of Licenses & Inspections and the Health Department (food/beverage vendors only).

Does the City of Philadelphia provide support services for special events?

The City of Philadelphia is able to provide a number of support services for special events including, but not limited to, the following:

- Sound Systems
- Sanitation Services
- Police & EMS Coverage
- Illegal Vendor Enforcement

PHL OFFICE OF SPECIAL EVENTS

OSE is responsible for coordinating City services and equipment for special events, and we do so via the City of Philadelphia's Special Events Application. It should be noted that there is a charge for these services and event organizers are invoiced for all services rendered. Cost estimates are provided upon request.

Any tips for planning my event in Philadelphia?

Absolutely. First things first, secure your desired venue before you make commitments or begin your marketing campaign. If your event is taking place on City property, you need a permit. If your event is taking place on private property, you need permission (in writing) from the owner.

Food-borne illness is a serious issue and should not be taken lightly. When selecting vendors for your event, make sure that they have the proper licenses from the Health Department and Licenses & Inspections.

Include City-related costs in your event budget, including all pertinent application/permit fees and costs for mandatory City services (Police/EMS coverage, food service inspections, sanitation services, etc.)

If you would like to schedule a consultation with a representative from our office, you can do so by giving our office a call at 215-686-3488 or by e-mail at ose@phila.gov

STAY CONNECTED

Want to stay connected?

Follow us on social media and visit our website for the latest City-wide and event related news and updates.

Website: phila.gov/OSE

Facebook: [Philadelphia MDO Special Events](#)

Twitter: [@phillymdoevents](#)

Instagram: [@phillymdoevents](#)



Manayunk Arts Festival by J. Fusco