



**Contact:**  
Economic Development Office  
[NewtownCRA@SarasotaFL.gov](mailto:NewtownCRA@SarasotaFL.gov)  
(941) 263-6281

# NEWTOWN CRA CULTURAL EVENT GRANT PROGRAM

*[Approved by the Newtown CRA Advisory Board on September 12, 2024]*

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cultural events are a means of enhancing, marketing, and promoting the Newtown Community Redevelopment District (NCRA) to stimulate local business, community, and commerce activities.

Cultural events differ from unspecified special events due to their unique and inimitable nature. Cultural events amplify the community's existing culture – that is, the shared cuisine, social habits, music, arts, literature, crafts, history, and customs of our citizens. A successful cultural event demonstrates and celebrates what is uniquely Newtown, and in doing so, attracts a wide and enthusiastic audience from the local community and regional area.

In keeping with the City of Sarasota's adopted Vision and Strategic Goals, which emphasize the preservation and enhancement of culture and diversity, and the Newtown Redevelopment Plan which seeks to encourage residents to showcase their culture, and service to the community, the Newtown Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board (NCRAAB) and the City Commission *allocated* NCRA funds towards the creation and operation of a Cultural Events Grant Program.

The NCRAAB will award matching grants **up to \$5,000** to applicants on a case- by-case basis as funding allows. All applicants must submit a completed application package before being considered for funding. Applicants granted a funding award must sign an agreement with the City of Sarasota, and funding is distributed in the form of reimbursement following the successful completion and submission of accounting documentation.

**Visit:** [www.SarasotaFL.gov/Government/planning/office-of-economic-development/Cultural-Event-Grant-Program](http://www.SarasotaFL.gov/Government/planning/office-of-economic-development/Cultural-Event-Grant-Program)  
**or contact** [NewtownCRA@Sarasotafl.gov](mailto:NewtownCRA@Sarasotafl.gov) **at (941) 263-6281 for more information.**

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## APPLICATION CRITERIA

***To be eligible for funding under this program applicants are required to meet all the criteria listed below:***

1. Event must meet the definition of a Cultural Event, which is defined as a new or existing event that has the potential to generate and attract a local and regional audience and generate economic activity within the NCRA. Events can include organized concerts, exhibitions, festivals, carnivals, athletic events, craft shows, competitions, parades, celebrations, markets, or other events similar in nature, which are open to the public. Special events do not include social parties, conferences, open houses, grand openings, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, or events that are not open to the public. For the purposes of the NCRA's Cultural Event Grant Program, events that are primarily religious or political in nature will not be eligible for funding.
2. Applicant must be an active Not-for-Profit organization registered with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations, and as a charity with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs. Completed applications must be signed by one registered officer of the Not-for-Profit organization. Not-for-Profit public institutions (e.g., federal, state, or local governments; universities; etc.), political organizations and/or religious organizations are not eligible to apply for Cultural Event grant fund.
3. The event(s) **MUST** take place in the NCRA District, including adjacent public gathering areas.
4. To be considered for an award, applicants must demonstrate a funding match (i.e. monetary,) that is equal to the amount of the grant funds being requested from the NCRA. Requests may be made up to \$5,000. Volunteer hours by the not-for-profit organizer may reduce the financial match requirement. volunteer hours may not exceed 25% of the total funding requested. (Example: See Chart, top of next page)



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## MATCH REQUIREMENTS CHART

NCRA Grant Funds Requested	Cash Match Required	Maximum In-kind Value / (Volunteer Hours)
\$5,000	\$3,750	\$1,250 / (50 Hours)
\$4,000	\$3,000	\$1,000 / (40 Hours)
\$3,000	\$2,225	\$750 / (30 Hours)
\$2,000	\$1,500	\$500 / (20 Hours)
\$1,000	\$750	\$250 / (10 Hours)

5. Events must be open to the public and general entry shall be free.
6. Applicant(s), Organization(s), and Event Space operator(s) (if any) may not be in default of any City of Sarasota programs or regulations or have any outstanding liens, fines, or forfeitures.
7. Not-for-Profit organizations that have a For-Profit business and are hosting an event that is similar in nature to the for-profit business activity or operations, are not eligible for funding under this program.
8. Following the event, a Post-Event Report must be submitted to the NCRA that assesses the accuracy of projected estimates, indicates final event costs and revenue contributions received, and provides an estimate of future sustainability. The quality of the submission will be a critical component in the consideration of future funding awards. All events should be operated with the goal of financial independence and sustainability; however, the NCRA will consider future years of continuous funding awards, based on an event demonstrated success, event enhancements and ability for regional growth.

## EXAMPLES OF ALLOWABLE USES OF GRANT FUNDS

- Site preparations such as rentals of facilities, tents, chairs, tables, trash/recycling containers, port-a-lets, barricades, etc.
- Marketing expenses such as graphic design, flyers, newspaper/TV/radio ads, social media, etc.
- Entertainment expenses such as bands/ DJ's, stage, lighting, A/V equipment, etc.
- Accommodations to ensure compliance with ADA/Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Permits and licensing fees.
- Security and/or Police.
- General liability insurance.

## RESTRICTIONS OF USES OF GRANT FUNDS

Events that promote intolerance, hate, discrimination, religious dogma, political campaigns, or that celebrate or commemorate history or events that are not consistent with the current morals and ethics of the City of Sarasota and its citizens will not be eligible for grant funding. Additional restrictions include but not limited to:

- Payments made to vendors via cash.
- Payments made to vendors or individuals who have not registered as an active business through the



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State of Florida or do not have an active Local Business Tax Receipt with the City of Sarasota as of the date services are provided.

- Events that occur more than once on an annual basis.
- Events sponsored by the State of Florida, local governments or universities.
- Events that are not open to the public.
- Events that have received sufficient sponsorship funding to cover the costs of the event.
- Events, if required, that have not received a special event permit from the City of Sarasota.
- Prize money, awards, plaques, trophies, scholarships, certificates.
- Purchase of tangible personal property.
- Interest payments or reduction of existing organizational deficits or loans.
- Travel expenses
- Food, beverages or catering
- Taxes, such as Florida State Sales
- Costs for lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state or local legislation.

## APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Only complete application packages (including all support documentation) received **at least 90 days** in advance of the event date will be considered for evaluation. An Application Package Checklist is provided as part of the attached documents and shall be completed and submitted as part of your application package. The Checklist may be found on the last page of the Application.

**Submission:** Please deliver completed application to the Economic Development Office between the hours of 8am and 5pm from Monday through Friday (not including Federal holidays) at 1575 Second Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sarasota, FL 34236

or

**Digital Submission:** Save the application as a PDF on your computer then send the completed application and supporting documentation via email to the Planning Department at: [NewtownCRA@sarasotafl.gov](mailto:NewtownCRA@sarasotafl.gov)

## FUNDING DECISIONS

The City of Sarasota's Economic Development Department staff will score the application packages on a scale of 0 to 100 (described further herein) and rank the applications accordingly. Applicants must score a minimum of 70 points to be considered eligible for funding. The process of receiving, reviewing, ranking, and potentially presenting the request before the NCRAAB may take up to 60 days.

The NCRAAB and Economic Development Office reserves the right to reject all applications that are not substantially complete or do not meet the Application Criteria. Staff will review applications to provide an initial score. If it is determined after the initial scoring process the event is ineligible, a denial letter will be sent from the Economic Development Office within 14 business days of the decision. Applicants may appeal this decision to the City Manager.

Funding awards will take place on a first-come first-served basis until all available grant funds are depleted. When and if organizations are competing for remaining funding opportunities, grants will be awarded by score/ranking. Although most grant awards will be based on the highest-ranking applications, the NCRAAB reserves the right to reduce an award for less than the amount requested.



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## GRANT AGREEMENT AND INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

All applicants selected to receive grant funds under this program will be required to enter into a written agreement with the City of Sarasota outlining the grant requirements.

For events occurring on City property, grant recipients will need to meet all City of Sarasota Special Event application and permitting requirements as outlined in the attached Special Event Permit Guide and codified in Chapter 29.6 of the City of Sarasota's Code of Ordinances.

Recipients are required to obtain and maintain commercial general liability insurance, naming the City of Sarasota as additional insured, with a liability limit of no less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence and two million dollars (\$2,000,000) aggregate. Insurance shall be placed with Florida admitted insurers rated B+ or better by A.M. Best's rating service.

## FUNDING DISBURSEMENTS

Unless agreed in writing and further outlined in the grant agreement, grant funds shall be paid to the successful applicant(s) after the event has occurred and the Economic Development staff has reviewed the submittal of documented expenses including paid vendor invoice(s), and proof of payment(s) to vendor such as the front & back copy of a cleared check, proof of cash app payment via bank statement, and/or credit card receipt. NO cash payments should be submitted for reimbursement, as well as all revenue received. The Post-Event Report is required to be submitted and approved within 60 days after the event.

The City of Sarasota will provide reimbursement within 30 days of receipt of submitted documents, provided all required documentation has been properly completed in accordance with the requirements of the City of Sarasota.

## CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AND RANKING OF APPLICATIONS

The applications will be scored using the general criteria described below. (Please note: ONLY events meeting the Application Criteria (Page 2) will be considered eligible for scoring.)

### ***1. Event Description (Maximum 60 points):***

- a. Event Goals & Objectives (max 20 points)
- b. Targeted Marketing, Promotions, Merchandising (max 20 points)
- c. Planning, Organization & Participants (max 20 points)

### ***2. Attendance/Regional Interest (Maximum 15 points):***

- d. Attendance estimates, assumptions (max 5 points)
- e. During and post-event counts/estimates (max 5 points)
- f. Community Interest (max 5 points)

### ***3. Financial Collaboration (Maximum 25 points):***

- g. Applicants that demonstrate their Organization's financial commitment to the event's success and long-term sustainability, as well as the support of the community in the form of donations, and/or in-kind services (max 25 points)



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# NEWTOWN CRA CULTURAL EVENT GRANT APPLICATION

*Total Event Cost:*

*Grant Amount Requested:*

*Percent of Match:*

Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Dates/Times: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Not-For-Profit Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Not-For-Profit Organization Officer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Not-For-Profit Organization Officer Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Not-For-Profit Organization Officer Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Not-For-Profit Organization Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Third-Party Event Organizer Name (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Third-Party Event Organizer Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Third-Party Organizer Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete all the following questions below (attach additional sheets as needed):**

## 1. EVENT DESCRIPTION (MAXIMUM 60 POINTS):

*A detailed description of the proposed event will allow the Office of Economic Development to consider the event's potential for short and long-term economic benefits to the City of Sarasota. The more detail provided the easier it will be for the evaluation committee to make a confident decision. Descriptions should focus on the EVENT and should not include extensive details regarding the non-profit organization. To be considered for funding, the location of the proposed event should occur within under-activated commercial corridors within the City of Sarasota, provide a unique and exceptional experience for attendees, demonstrate a skillful use of marketing and merchandising, and be well-organized, with a clear vision for success and growth. Description shall include:*

- **Goals and Objectives of Event (20 points)**
- **Targeted Marketing, Promotions, Merchandising (20 points)**
- **Planning, Organization, and Participants (20 points)**



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**Describe the Goals and Objectives of Event (20 points):** Description shall be a written statement, not a bulleted list.

**Helpful hints:** *How will your Event celebrate the community's culture? What is exciting / enticing / unique about your Event?*



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**Marketing, Promotions, Merchandising (20 points):** In addition to written details, images of graphics, logos, advertisements, merchandise, etc. may be attached.

**Helpful hints:** *How are you planning to communicate your Event with the public? When do your marketing efforts begin? How have you considered the role of merchandising and branding in the success of your Event?*



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**Planning, Organization, Participation (20 points):** In addition to written details, an organizational diagram that illustrates the parties involved in operating your event may be attached.

**Helpful hints:** *How did the Board of your Organization develop this Event proposal? What permits, agreements, or commitments do you already have in place, or are in the process of obtaining? What community partners are collaborating with you on the planning of this Event?*





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## 2. ATTENDANCE/REGIONAL INTEREST (MAXIMUM 15 POINTS):

A detailed estimate of the proposed event's interest by the community will allow the Office of Economic Development to consider the event's potential for short and long-term economic benefits to the City of Sarasota. The more detail provided the easier it will be for the evaluation committee to make a confident funding decision. Description shall include:

- **Attendance estimates and assumptions (5 points)**
- **During and post-event counts/estimates (5 points)**
- **Community interest (5 points)**

Attendance estimates and assumptions (5 points): Provide numbers and descriptions below:

***Estimated (Gross) attendance of total event (includes all individual attendees over the length of the event):***

***How have you calculated this estimate and what was the basis for your assumptions?***

During and post-event counts/estimates (5 points):

***How are you intending to collect 'actual' attendance figures for your event?***



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## Community Interest (5 points):

*Do you expect that your event will draw specific attendees from the local or regional area? Are you aware of large groups, neighborhoods, organizations, populations, etc. that would be particularly interested in attending the event?*

## 3. FINANCIAL COLLABORATION (MAXIMUM 25 POINTS):

Applicants that demonstrate their Organization's financial commitment to the event's success and long-term sustainability, as well as the support of the community (in the form of donations, and/or in-kind services) will be more likely to receive a grant award.

A	Estimated Event Costs (list on Page 8):	
B	Grant Request from City of Sarasota:	
C	Other Funding Sources and/or In-Kind Services and Goods (list on Page 9):	
D	Remaining costs for which your Organization will be responsible:	
E	% of Event Budget being provided by City Grant (B/A):	
F	% of Event Budget being provided by other contributors (C/A):	
G	% of Event Budget being provided by your Organization (D/A):	



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## ESTIMATED EVENT COSTS

<b>SITE EXPENSES:</b>	
Property Rental	
Usage Permit	
Equipment Rental	
Portable Restrooms	
Tent Rental	
Police/Security	
Trash/Recycling	
Barricade Rental	
Misc (provide details)	
<b>MARKETING EXPENSES:</b>	
Print Ads	
TV/Radio Ads	
Social Media	
Merchandise	
Banners	
Posters	
Flyers	
Brochures	
Postage	
Misc (provide details)	
<b>ENTERTAINMENT EXPENSES:</b>	
Presenters	
MC	
Band/DJ	
Lighting	
Stage Rental	
A/V Rental	
Lighting Rental	
Technical Staff	
Misc (provide details)	
<b>OTHER EXPENSES (provide details):</b>	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	



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**OTHER FUNDING SOURCES – SPONSORSHIPS/DONATIONS AND/OR DONATED IN-KIND SERVICES AND GOODS (List any in excess of \$250 in value)**

Organization or Individual <small>After name, please indicate if contribution is PROPOSED (P) or CONFIRMED (C)</small>	Value of Contribution	Type of Contribution:	
		Monetary? <small>(Yes or No)</small>	In Kind? <small>(Specify what services, volunteer services, goods, or reduced costs/fees will be included)</small>

**4. POST-EVENT REPORTING:**

*Please submit a description below of how you will meet the requirement for post-event reporting, which will be required as part of your Grant Award agreement.*



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## CERTIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that I have read the Program Guidelines of the City of Sarasota's Cultural Special Event Grant Program and will abide by all legal, financial, and reporting requirements as a condition of receiving grant funds from the Planning Development.

The City of Sarasota requires one signature from an Officer of the Not-For-Profit Organization who has been given the authority to sign on behalf of the organization. Documentation must be attached (Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, or approved minutes from meetings) which identifies the signatory authority of the Officer).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Not-For-Profit Organization Officer Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

.....  
***If Not-For-Profit Organization partners with a third-party Event Organizer,  
then please complete the following:***

As an Officer of \_\_\_\_\_ (Not-For-Profit Organization),  
I hereby give authorization to \_\_\_\_\_, (Event Organizer), to act on  
behalf of the organization to include but not limited to: applying for Special Event or other related permits, conduct  
financial transactions, contract with vendors, sign event agreements, submit and receive reimbursement requests to  
the City of Sarasota for grant related expenses, and prepare post-event reports.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Not-For-Profit Organization Officer Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

***Tax Liability. The Grant from the CITY may be considered taxable grant income. The GRANTEE will have to submit a federal tax form W-9. The CITY may issue a federal tax form 1099-G to recipients for funds exceeding than \$600, whether paid directly to the Grant recipient or to a third-party Event Organizer pursuant to the authorization listed above. It is the GRANTEE's responsibility to consult with a tax professional regarding any 1099-G issued by the CITY and any associated tax implications.***

I am assuming the responsibilities listed above in addition to submitting receipts and proof of payments to the City of Sarasota for reimbursement for grant-related expenses as outlined in the application and accept the tax liability by signing below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Event Organizer Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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## APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

***THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:***

- ☐ Initial agreement with statement
- ☐ Proposed Event meets the definition of a Cultural Special Event.
- ☐ Proposed Event will be open to the public.
- ☐ Application is submitted in full; No sections or areas have been left blank.
- ☐ Attached is the complete Event budget, including all estimated expenditures and anticipated revenues (including in-kind donations).
- ☐ This submission has been certified and signed by one Officer of the Not-For-Profit organization.
- ☐ I have attached a copy of our Organization's By-Laws and/or approved meeting minutes indicating the Officer's authorization to represent the applicant Not-For-Profit organization.
- ☐ Attached is current documentation confirming the organization's Not-For-Profit status in the form of one of the following documents:
  - 1. Current copy of your Not-For-Profit status letter from the U. S Department of Treasury
  - 2. Current copy of a Consumer Exemption Certificate from the Florida Department of Revenue
  - 3. Current copy of the Articles of Incorporation from the Florida Department of State confirming your organization's non-profit status
- ☐ Attached is a W9 of the Event Organizer (For events being sponsored by the Not-For- Profit Organization but partnered with an Event Organizer).
- ☐ Attached proof of commercial general liability insurance additionally naming the City of Sarasota covering the dates of the event.