



City of Manassas

Event Catalyst Fund

Parks & Recreation Committee

Endorsed November 8, 2023

Table of Contents

1. Preface	3
2. Goals	3
3. Application Process.....	3
4. Eligibility for Support	3
5. Ineligible and Eligible Expenses and Activities.....	5
6. Evaluation Criteria	6
7. Guidelines for Grant Recipients.....	3
8. Awarding of Grants	9
9. Distribution of Grant Funds	9
10. Acknowledgment	9
11. Recordkeeping	10
12. Final Reporting Requirements	10
13. Financial Penalty	10
14. Effect of a Late or Incomplete Filing on Grant Eligibility	11
15. Contact Information	11
Appendix: Definitions	12

1. Preface

The City of Manassas recognizes the crucial role that events play in fostering a vibrant community, and is pleased to introduce the City of Manassas Event Catalyst Fund (ECF).

2. Goals

The ECF aims to provide financial support to emerging event producers in Manassas to promote greater diversity of events in the City, contribute to the City's cultural landscape, promote tourism and business activity in the City, and further the City of Manassas's reputation as a destination.

Specifically, the ECF intends to support events which further the following objectives from the City's Comprehensive Plan:

ED 5.1 Promote Manassas as a strong, vibrant, safe, and well-educated community in which to live, work, learn, and recreate. (5.1.1)

ED 5.5 Maintain a strong tourism program focused on attracting visitors to the community. (5.5.1, 5.5.3, 5.5.4)

3. Application Process

Applications will be accepted through an online portal. The application period will be open twice a year (in January and July), each session with a total budget of \$5,000. Each application must be submitted at least 3 months prior to the proposed event date to allow adequate time for review and funding distribution.

Completed, timely applications will be reviewed within 30 days of the end of the submission window. Each application will be scored according to the Evaluation Criteria

by three separate reviewers, including two Parks and Recreation Committee members and one City employee (e.g. from the Parks and Recreation Department), and their scores averaged.

Awardees will be notified of their successful application within 45 days of the application window closing.

Application windows:

Dec 20 - Jan 20 - Application open for events taking place mid-April and later

Jan 20 - Feb 20 - Applications reviewed

Feb 20 - Mar 20 - Applicants notified

Jun 20 - Jul 20 - Application open for events taking place mid-October and later

Jul 20 - Aug 20 - Applications reviewed

Aug 20 - Sep 20 - Applicants notified

If the 20th falls on non-business day, applications will be due the last business day before the 20th.

** For the inaugural cycle of the ECF, events with dates closer to the notification deadline will be considered, and some events may be considered which have already been held. In that case, those events would be seeking reimbursement. Previously held events must have occurred within the 12 months prior to program launch and will be evaluated by the same criteria described below.*

4. Eligibility for Support

To be eligible to apply for an ECF grant, applicants must:

- a. Have provided all reports required by prior grants, including as described in Final Reporting Requirements.

-
- b. Cannot exceed more than two grants in two consecutive City fiscal years.
 - c. Be in good standing with the City of Manassas with respect to taxes and other obligations.
 - d. Be either an individual or an organization.
 - e. Organization applicants must provide proof of their legitimacy, such as registration or incorporation documents.
 - f. Organization applicants must be non-profits and demonstrate non-profit status (e.g., 501c3 status or other non-profit status).
 - g. Individual applicants must be 18 years old or older. **(Individuals may not apply on behalf of a for-profit business)**

5. Ineligible and Eligible Expenses and Activities

- a. The ECF will not fund:
 - i. Cost of parties, receptions, fundraising benefits, food, drink, catering, gifts, awards, etc.
 - ii. Entertainment, such as DJs, live bands, magicians, clowns, etc.,
 - iii. Salaries, wages, honoraria, or personal fees,
 - iv. Activities that are inherently religious,
 - v. Political rallies,
 - vi. Requests to reduce or eliminate existing deficits,
 - vii. Events that take place outside the City,
 - viii. Activities that promote discrimination,
 - ix. Marketing and promotion,

-
- x. Grant applications that are filed late or incomplete.
 - b. The ECF may be used to fund operational costs, including:
 - i. Trash pick-up fees,
 - ii. Facility rental fees,
 - iii. Insurance,
 - iv. Security / Manassas City Police,
 - v. Or other similar operational expenses not prohibited in section 5a above.
- Note: it is highly advised to use grant funds for costs that would be refunded if the event is canceled, as the grant will need to be repaid in that case (See 7.b).

6. Evaluation Criteria

The reviewers will evaluate each complete, timely application across the following categories:

- a. Community Impact (Sum of i, ii, and iii below for 40 points total)
 - i. Engagement of local businesses and organizations (15 points) - the number of vendors with a physical presence in the City of Manassas involved and community partners (businesses or non-profits not participating as vendors) within the City of Manassas. One point will be given per vendor or partner, up to the total of 15 points.
 - ii. Representation and Inclusion (15 points) - How well the event plans to include and represent diverse community segments that are underrepresented in the city's current events landscape. This could be based on (but not limited to) aspects such as age, gender, socio-economic

status, language, nationality, ability, and sexual orientation. Events that actively aim to include and engage these groups, through tailored activities, accessible facilities, language support, etc. will be awarded higher points. The underrepresented and marginalized groups will be determined based on the list of existing city events planned for the current year and city demographics.

iii. Size of event (10 points maximum)

1. Expected number of event attendees is 50 to 100 (3 points)
(No points are awarded for events smaller than 50 participants)
2. Expected number of event participants is 101 to 200 (6 points)
3. Expected number of event participants is over 200 (10 points)

b. Feasibility (Sum of i and ii below for 20 points total)

- i. Event Logistics and Planning (10 points) - the clarity and detail of the event planning, including venue suitability, time management, contingency planning, etc.
- ii. Budget Realism and Efficiency (10 points) - The sensibility of the budget, including cost-effectiveness and how well the budget reflects actual expected costs.

c. Innovation (Sum of i and ii below for 20 points total)

- i. Uniqueness of event (10 points) - The novelty and distinctiveness of the event concept or theme. More points will be given to original and unique events.
- ii. Creative Use of City Spaces or Resources (10 points): Innovative uses of local venues, parks, or other resources.

d. Marketing Strategy (Sum of i, ii, and iii below for 15 points total)

-
- i. Outreach and Promotion to City Residents (7 points) - The quality of the event's marketing and promotional plan targeted at residents of the City of Manassas. This can include the use of local channels like community newsletters, local radio stations, community groups, and more.
 - ii. Outreach and Promotion to Out-of-City Visitors (5 points) - The quality of the marketing plan aimed at attracting visitors from outside the city. This can involve regional advertising, partnerships with travel agencies or tourism boards, and use of broader-reaching media channels.
 - iii. Use of Social Media and Digital Platforms (3 points) - The planned use and integration of digital platforms and social media in the marketing strategy, targeting both residents and visitors.
- e. Potential for Recurrence or Long-term Impact (15 points) - The estimated potential for the event to become a recurring part of the community calendar or to have a long-term positive impact on the community. For example, applications which include market research showing the type of event proposed are successful annual events or events which are tied to annual holidays.
 - f. Residency (5 points) - applicants demonstrating residency within the City of Manassas will receive a 5-point bonus.

7. Guidelines for Grant Recipients

- a. Changes in an Event
 - i. All significant changes to an approved event must be reported by email to jjensen@manassasva.gov or sent as a hard copy to Parks, Culture and Recreation Headquarters, 9101 Prince William Street, Manassas, VA 20110 within 3 business days of the change. A significant change alters

the name, venue, date, time, range of expected participants, sponsoring organization/agent, or other important aspects of the application.

b. Cancellation of an Event

- i. If the event is canceled other than due to weather, civil unrest, or act of God, then the grant from ECF shall be repaid in full.

8. Awarding of Grants

Grants will be awarded based upon total application scores and event budgets. Grant amounts will range from \$100 to \$2,500, in order to ensure at least four events can be supported during each funding cycle.

9. Distribution of Grant Funds

Grant recipients will receive 75% of total grant funds upon selection and verification of eligibility (e.g., validating good tax status, residency, etc.). The remaining 25% will be distributed after the event and upon receipt of the grant recipients completed and timely final report (See Final Reporting Requirements). Grant funds must be expended within the fiscal year of the award, even if the event occurs at a later date.

10. Acknowledgment

Grant recipients must include an acknowledgement in all published materials that their event has received funding through the City of Manassas Parks & Recreation Event Catalyst Fund.

11. Recordkeeping

- a. A grant recipient must maintain accurate and sufficient financial records for any event supported by an ECF grant. The City or its authorized representative shall have access to these records upon request.
- b. Records are defined here as documenting how the ECF funds were used, such as receipts, paid invoices, copies of checks, etc. These records must be retained for a period of two years after the event.

12. Final Reporting Requirements

- a. Successful applicants will be required to submit a post-event report in electronic format after the event's completion. The report should detail the event's outcomes, community impact, financial expenditure (with supporting documents), number of participants, proof of marketing activity, and lessons learned. This will help improve the program and create accountability for the use of public funds.
- c. Filing Deadline - A grant recipient must submit the complete final report within 30 business days of their event. Final reports must be submitted by email to jjensen@manassasva.gov.

13. Financial Penalty for a Late or Incomplete Final Report

- a. Grantees who fail to file a complete report within 30 business days of their event will not receive the remaining 25% of their grant.

14. Effect of a Late or Incomplete Filing on Grant Eligibility

- a. Grantees who fail to file a complete, timely report will be ineligible for future ECF grants.

15. Contact Information

If you have questions, please feel free to email Jean Jensen at jjensen@manassava.gov or call 703-257-8451.

Appendix: Definitions

Discrimination - refers to the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups based on certain characteristics such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected categories, as defined by applicable federal, state, and local laws. Discrimination may manifest in actions, decisions, policies, or practices that adversely affect the equal and fair treatment of individuals or groups in areas including but not limited to employment, housing, education, and access to public services or accommodations.

Harm - refers to physical, emotional, psychological, or financial damage or injury inflicted upon an individual or group, either intentionally or unintentionally. Harm can arise from actions or omissions and may be actual or potential. It encompasses a wide range of adverse effects, including but not limited to bodily injury, emotional distress, property damage, and infringement upon individual rights and freedoms.

Inherently religious - refers to activities, practices, or expressions that are fundamentally tied to a religious belief system, doctrine, or theology. Such activities typically serve primarily to advance the faith or religious objectives of a particular group or institution and may include prayer, worship, proselytizing, or religious instruction. In the context of public funding or public services, "inherently religious" activities are usually distinct from those that are considered secular, non-proselytizing, and aimed at providing a general public benefit.

Political Rally - a pre-planned event organized for the primary purpose of supporting or opposing a political cause, candidate, policy, or party. It typically consists of speeches, presentations, and/or performances aimed at mobilizing supporters, raising awareness, and encouraging civic participation. Political rallies may be subject to regulations and restrictions as prescribed by applicable federal, state, and local laws concerning public assemblies, free speech, and public safety.