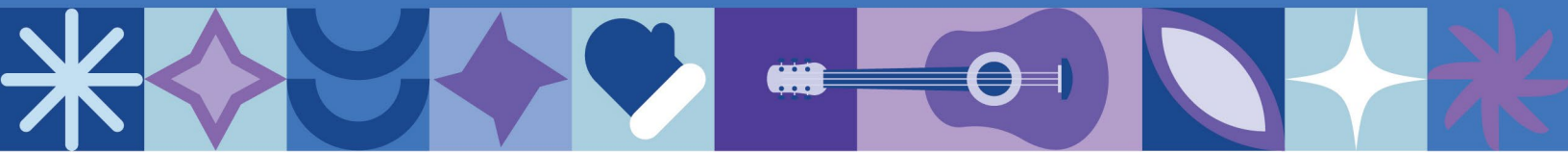




A 3x3 grid of 9 squares featuring various Christmas-themed icons in shades of blue and white. The icons include: a guitar, a musical note, a starburst, a heart, a mug with a tree, a snowflake, a four-leaf clover, a Christmas tree, and a star.



About

The Community Programming Fund (CPF) Winter Activation program is a one-time funding opportunity designed to support community programming in Bellevue's public spaces during the late fall and winter season.

The City is seeking proposals that engage residents, workers, and visitors during the darker, cooler months of the year. Whether through seasonal programming, interactive experiences or other activities, the goal of this program is to create welcoming public spaces that encourage residents, workers and visitors to connect with one another, visit our vibrant business districts, and experience Bellevue in new ways.

We have a limited grant fund available to cover program expenses and permit fees. Individual grants will range from \$2,500-\$10,000. Funding is awarded on a reimbursement basis, after completion of the funded activity or event and after submitting the post-grant report and invoices.

Key Dates and Application Details

Application opens	September 3, 2026
Application deadline	September 27, 2026
Award notification	Early October 2026
Eligible program dates	November 1 - December 31, 2026
Grant Reimbursement	January 2027

How to Apply

Applications are submitted online through Submittable. You can access the application at BellevueWA.gov/cpf.

Program Contact

Emily Sherman
Public Space Management Specialist
425-452-4270
esherman@bellevuewa.gov



Eligible Activities

The Winter Activation round supports free outdoor activities, events, and installations that encourage people to gather, socialize, and visit Bellevue's business districts and public spaces during the late fall and winter season.

Eligible activities may take many forms. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Markets, artisan fairs, and seasonal bazaars
- Outdoor seasonal celebrations and cultural events
- Temporary installations
- Live music and performances
- Family-friendly activities and events
- Workshops, demonstrations, or hands-on creative experiences
- Outdoor fitness, wellness, or recreation activities

Funding will not be provided for:

- Programs, activities, or events with paid tickets
- Private events that are not open to the general public

What We'll Provide

Grant Funding

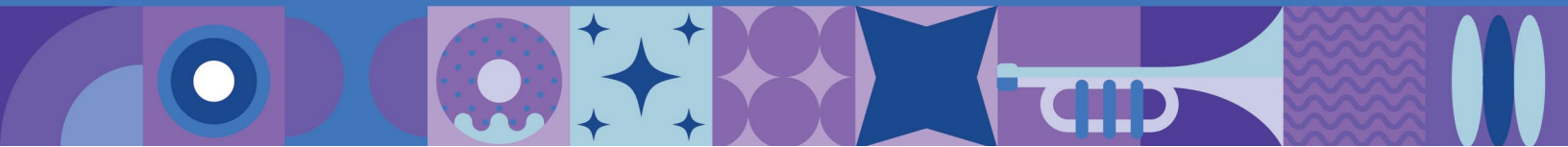
Applicants will submit a budget, outlining the program's expected cost and anticipated non-grant revenues. and may request funding at one of the following levels:

- \$2,500
- \$5,000
- \$7,500
- \$10,000

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis. Grant recipients will receive payment after completing the program and submitting the required documentation, including the post-grant report and eligible invoices/receipts.

Permit Guidance

The City cannot waive or expedite permit requirements, and it cannot provide preferential access to public spaces or parks. Grant recipients will be responsible for securing all necessary permits and approvals, but City staff can provide guidance and support to help navigate the process.



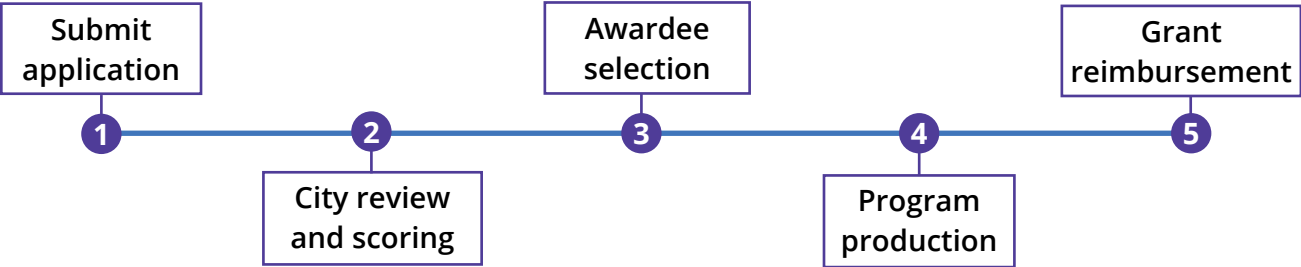
Permit Fee Coverage

We will waive fees for permits issued by the city’s Development Services department, including permits for amplified sound, right-of-way (street) use, and fire prevention. We cannot waive fees for activities permitted by the city’s Parks & Community Services department (including park event, outdoor, and special use fees), though these are eligible reimbursable expenses under the grant.

Marketing Support

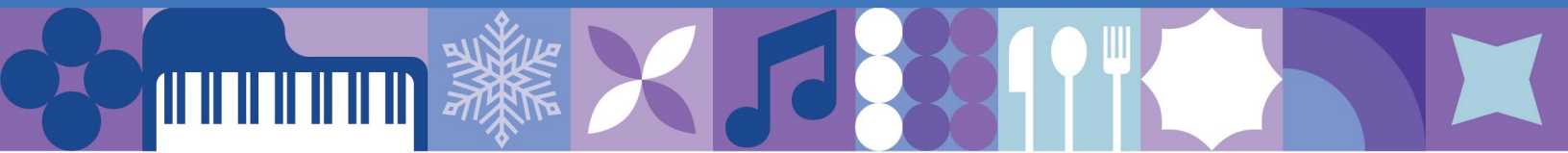
We can provide reports on foot traffic and visitor demographics, so you can better understand how to tailor your programming to Bellevue’s unique audience.

Grant recipients may receive assistance from the City to help promote their program through City channels, including social media, newsletters, and public event calendars. Organizers of funded programs are required to acknowledge City funding in their promotional materials.



Application Process and Timeline

1. Applicants submit a detailed application through Submittable, outlining the event or program, including the target audience, goals, and logistics.
2. The City will review applications for completeness, then score proposals based on alignment with program goals, community impact, and feasibility.
3. Applications selected for funding will enter a formal contract with the City. The contract will outline responsibilities, budget, reporting requirements, and reimbursement process. A Certificate of Insurance is required before a contract can be finalized. This may include general liability, event insurance, and workers’ compensation if applicable.
4. Grant recipients are responsible for organizing, scheduling, and producing the program, including securing any required permits or approvals. Programs must be executed according to the approved plan.
5. After completing the program, grant recipients submit a post-grant report summarizing public benefit, community impact, and upload eligible invoices/receipts. Funds are reimbursed once the City approves the documentation.



Eligibility

Who Can Apply:

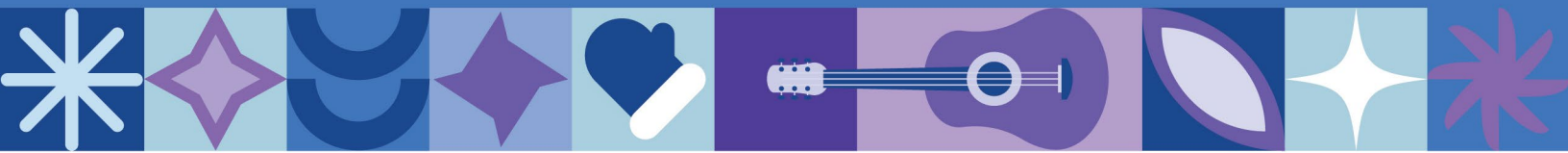
- Individuals
- Community organizations
- Nonprofits
- Small businesses with 50 or fewer full-time employees, if programming meets criteria and is not solely promotional; partnership with a community organization is encouraged

Minimum Program Requirements:

- Have a target audience which includes residents, employees, visitors, and/or students in Bellevue.
- Take place within an accessible public space
- Take place between November 1 and December 31, 2026.
- Be free and open to the public.
- Obtain any necessary permits and/or property owner permission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Grants will not be awarded to:

- Churches, schools, and/or religious organizations where city funds might be used for religious purposes.
- Groups which discriminate based on age, race, sex, gender identity, or expression, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin.
- Groups currently in litigation with the city.
- Political campaigns or parties.
- Unions representing city employees.
- Organizations with an ongoing place management contract with the city, unless they can demonstrate that the proposed program or activity is (a) substantially different from contracted activities; (b) also funded by other sources such that the City is not the sole funder; and (c) new or substantially expanded from the organization's prior programming.



Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation process ensures alignment with program goals and prioritizes high-quality, impactful activations.

- **Public space activation and community impact:** Programs should activate public space, encouraging people to gather, interact, return, and make the most of the area. Programs will be evaluated on how well they would draw people into the space, create a welcoming atmosphere, drive retail spending, and improve the experience of living in, working in, or visiting Bellevue.
- **Winter and seasonal fit:** Programs should provide a compelling reason for people to visit, gather, and spend time outdoors during the colder and darker months. Programs will be evaluated on how well they create an engaging winter experience and thoughtfully account for seasonal conditions, including weather, darkness, and the suitability of the proposed location.
- **Feasibility and budget:** Programs should be realistic and achievable within logistical, financial, and regulatory constraints. Applicants must demonstrate that they have the necessary experience to successfully produce and execute the program, and that the proposed budget is appropriate to the scope of the activity and available funding.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I receive access to City facilities or parks if I apply for this program?

A: No, this program provides funding. It does not provide preferential access to City facilities or parks. Reservation requests must be submitted through our Parks or Facilities teams. We will help point you in the right direction, but you are responsible for obtaining all relevant approvals, reservations, and/or permits.

Q: What happens if I receive funding, but my event doesn't end up happening?

A: Because the grant is reimbursement-based, funds will be awarded upon completion of the program.

Q: What permit fees will you cover?

A: We'll cover the application and review fees associated with any permits you may require through our Development Services team. Typically, these include right-of-way, fire, and amplified sound permits. We will not award additional funds to cover facility rental fees or fees/charges associated with larger programs permitted through our Special Event Committee process, though you may submit these expenses for reimbursement from your award amount.

Q: Can I use generative AI tools (like ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini) when writing my application?

A: Please do so cautiously. The application asks important questions that help you think through your program or event planning process—information you'll need to run your program. These platforms may craft plausible-sounding answers to our questions, but if you rely too heavily on them, your application can be generic and lack the kind of specificity necessary to perform a fair review of your proposal. That means your proposal could score less highly, or that we may need to follow up, creating more work for everyone.

If you do use an AI tool, here are some tips to ensure your application has enough specificity and authenticity that it can be fully evaluated:

- **Be specific.** Name the venue(s), the date(s), the vendor(s), the partner organization(s) and the individuals you're working with. We want to know what makes your program and organization unique. If your answer would be equally true for a different event in a different city, it's too generic.
- **Do not copy generated material verbatim.** Draft your application in your own words first, then use a tool to cut length, sharpen your responses, or check against our review criteria to find what's missing.
- **Do not let an AI tool write your budget or program plan.** These are critical components of your event planning process, and only you know your budget or the timelines on which you work.
- **Check for hallucinations and incorrect information.** You're accountable for accuracy in your application and in your program contract. These tools may also state our program requirements confidently, but get them wrong. This guidelines document is the sole source of truth.

- Do not input third-party information. Partner contact details, participant or volunteer data, or anything you collected from someone else. Most AI tools retain what you enter.
- In line with Bellevue’s policy on transparency in AI use (bellevuewa.gov/ai-policy-guidelines), you will be asked whether and how you used AI in crafting your application.

Q: My organization receives an ongoing place management contract with the City. Can I apply to this grant program?

A: Yes, however, because these organizations already have ongoing relationships with the city whereby they produce some of these types of activities, we have additional requirements in place. These requirements ensure the city is supporting a diversity of organizations and programming partners across the city.

Organizations with existing place management contracts must demonstrate:

- **That their proposal is not already funded by an existing contract with the city.** We cannot provide additional funding to programs already receiving substantial city support.
- **That their proposal has additional financial support beyond City funds** (for example, membership dues, sponsorships, earned income, and/or assessment revenue).
- **That their proposal is for a new and/or substantially expanded program.** Because these organizations may use their contracts in part for operating support, to receive funding, they must show that they are continuously developing their program offerings.



CDD-26-85547

 For alternate formats, interpreters, or reasonable modification requests please phone at least 48 hours in advance 425-452-4270 (voice) or email esherman@bellevuewa.gov. For complaints regarding modifications, contact the City of Bellevue ADA, Title VI, and Equal Opportunity Officer at ADATitleVI@bellevuewa.gov.