



Policy and Procedures Manual for Applicants

***Calendar Year 2026
January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026***

The mission of the Special Events & Community Arts Grant Fund Program is to assist the City in furthering special events and artistic cultural experiences that support an inclusive community that values diversity for Naperville and its visitors.

Introduction

In March 2004 the City Council discussed the creation of a fund to supplement and cover the expenses associated with hosting social and artistic events. Council approved a 1% Food and Beverage tax to fund the Special Events and Cultural Amenities (SECA) Grant Fund Program and financial support of these events were removed from the City's General Fund.

Since 2004, the Food and Beverage tax allocations and the SECA Grant Fund Program have been reviewed and refined almost annually.

In late 2020, in response to City Council direction, staff created a group of community partners and subject matter experts to evaluate processes related to public art in Naperville, explore opportunities for improvement, and develop a Public Art Program recommendation. In 2021, this group, the Exploratory Task Force (ETF), presented components of a program to the City Council. After receiving valuable feedback, the group reconvened for several months and presented the final recommendation in 2022.

As part of the recommendation, the City Council approved modifying the Special Events & *Cultural Amenities* Grant Fund Program to create the Special Events & *Community Arts* Grant Fund Program.

This manual will explain the expanded role of the SECA Commission, the connection to the Special Events application process and the Special Events Team, the revised SECA Grant Fund Program policy that includes the *community arts* component, and updated grant funding details.

Section One – Special Events & Community Arts (SECA) Commission

The Community Services Department is responsible for the administration of the SECA Grant Fund Program. Specifically, the Special Events Coordinator serves as the staff liaison to the SECA Commission.

Members of the SECA Commission ("Commission") are appointed by the Mayor. The Commission has traditionally been comprised of nine members of the community, two non-voting student representatives, and one non-voting Council member.

The ordinance states that commissioners shall have professional expertise in the various facets of the duties of the Commission by virtue of their training and/or employment. Areas of expertise may include, but are not necessarily limited to, business, nonprofit management, arts, social or artistic events, diversity, and culture.

The specific responsibilities of the Commission are also outlined under Powers and Duties in the ordinance. In summary, the Special Events & Community Arts (SECA) Commission will:

1. Assist, inform and advise the City Council on matters pertaining to the arts, culture, and special events in the City of Naperville.
2. Further special events and community arts experiences for residents and visitors.
3. Perform a comprehensive review of all Special Events & Community Arts applications and provide recommendations to the City Council for the annual allocation of the SECA Grant Fund Program portion of the Food and Beverage tax.

The City Council is made up of the Mayor and eight Council members. The City Council will review the applications, the recommendations made by the Commission, and approve the final funding decisions.

Section Two – Special Events

Special Events

The City of Naperville is host to dozens of special events each year. Events include, but are not limited to, holiday parades, 5K/10K races, triathlons, half-marathons, and multi-day festivals.

Due to the diversity of the events, and the different sizes, complexities, and impact of each, the Special Events Team (“Team”) was created to evaluate all applications. This Team is a multi-departmental (Community Services Department, Police, Fire, Public Works, Naper Settlement, Naperville Public Library, TED), multi-jurisdictional (Edward Hospital, Park District, and Downtown Naperville Alliance) group that reviews all Special Events requests and recommends funding estimates for City Services necessary to support events based on details in the application.

For qualifying events, the organizers will use the estimate to complete the SECA Grant Fund Program application.

Section Three – Community Arts

Community Arts

The City of Naperville is committed to contributing to the intellectual, emotional and creative life of the community by facilitating engaging art experiences and dynamic public spaces. Public art, in all its forms, helps the City of Naperville stand apart from other communities and having a plan and policy for the arts will not only ensure visitors keep coming back, but will also brighten the lives of residents.

In 2022, the City Council approved the City of Naperville Public Arts Program (“Program”) and designated the responsibility for program administration to the SECA Commission and Special Events Coordinator. A detailed overview of the Program is below.

A. Mission of the City of Naperville Public Arts Program

To create opportunities for artists to implement a diversity of art and art experiences that bring people together and inspire, beautify, and enhance Naperville public spaces.

B. Public Arts Program – Goals

- City beautification
- Integrate diversity of works into public spaces to promote tourism and contribute to the economic vitality of Naperville
- Facilitate public art and public art partnerships
- Commemorate historic dates and events
- Provide an opportunity for artists to display original pieces/performances
- Represent a variety of media, styles, locations, and community interests
- Build awareness and promote understanding about public art and the benefits of the arts
- Serve as a point of contact for artists
- Establish a process for review, approval, installation, and decommission
- Offer a competitive selection process and recommend works based on thoughtfully designed criteria by art professionals

C. Application – Annual Call for Arts Projects

The SECA Commission and Community Services Department staff will facilitate a Call for Arts Projects as part of the fall SECA Grant Fund Program application cycle. Criteria to evaluate submissions will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Qualities/purpose of art
- Intentionality of design
- Thought process of impact
- Diversity
- Originality/redundancy
- Location
- Conservation
- Public safety/accessibility
- Agreements/public liability

The SECA Commission will perform a review of all applications and reach consensus on a Unified Recommendation for award. The City Council will have final approval. Upon approval, the SECA Commission and Special Events Coordinator and/or City Clerk, will coordinate installation/performance and any necessary permitting with the artist.

Both non-profit [501 (c)] organizations and individual artists who do not have a 501 (c) designation may apply to the SECA Grant-Community Arts/Public Arts Program. Applicants are eligible for concurrent SECA Grant Fund Program awards and may submit more than one application per funding year.

D. Unsolicited Proposals

The Special Events Coordinator will serve as the point of contact for artists outside of the annual application cycle. The Special Events Coordinator will vet the request and, if deemed appropriate, will provide an application and convene the SECA Commission for full review and approval.

E. Placement

The project must be completed within 12 months of approval date or must have received an approved extension by the SECA Commission.

F. Agreements

Works of art selected and implemented pursuant to the Public Arts Program may be placed in, on, or about any public place owned by the City of Naperville by agreement with the art owner. If the art is to be placed on private property, an agreement with the private property owner must be submitted for approval. Upon award, the artist and the City of Naperville will sign an agreement outlining terms including, but not limited to, liability, maintenance, permitting, and removal.

G. Ownership

Unless otherwise stated, the City of Naperville does not own, collect royalties on, or hold copyrights for temporary works of art approved by the SECA Commission.

As detailed in the Agreement, the artist, or organization creating the artwork, grants the City of Naperville the limited right to reproduce the artworks for the purposes of promoting the Public Arts Program and Public Arts Program events via print and electronic communications methods.

As a general rule, the City of Naperville will require that it own permanent art installations on City-owned property involving City funding in excess of \$5,000.

H. Documentation

The SECA Commission and City Clerk and/or Special Events Coordinator are responsible for keeping a catalog of pieces in the Public Arts Program. The catalog will include a file on each work with information including, but not limited to, artist, grant application and final award amount, placement date, location, medium, photos, maintenance invoices and/or damage documentation, and decommission date.

I. Maintenance

The SECA Commission is not responsible for soliciting or managing maintenance contractors.

J. Decommissioning

The SECA Commission will be responsible for partnering with the artist to facilitate the thoughtful and careful removal of pieces. Works of art may be considered for decommissioning if any of the following conditions are met:

- Display has reached approved decommission date stated in the application
- Has physically deteriorated
- Is a duplicate, or considered excess
- Is fraudulent or not authentic work
- Displays faults of workmanship or materials
- An appropriate space for display no longer exists
- It is attached or embedded in a structure slated for destruction
- Requested by the artist
- Other

K. Education

The SECA Commission will facilitate public education and community engagement components of the Program. To the extent possible, commissioners will collaborate with organizations on events and activities designed to provide a greater understanding of public art and gather feedback on desired arts experiences. These may include, but are not limited to, artist lectures, exhibitions of works, and community surveys.

Section Five – SECA Grant Program Application

Annual Application Cycle

Every summer, the City of Naperville opens the Special Events application period for several weeks. Once the application period closes, the Special Events Coordinator assembles the applications and reviews all submissions with the Special Events Team.

After the Special Events Team makes funding recommendations for events requiring City Services, the City of Naperville opens the SECA Grant Fund Program application period for several weeks.

Once the SECA Grant Fund Program application period closes, the Special Events Coordinator provides a cursory review of all submissions to ensure eligibility requirements have been met and then forwards all applications to the SECA Commission.

After members of the SECA Commission have individually reviewed all applications, the Commission hosts a meeting in the fall to hear public comment from the applicants and ask questions related to the request. The Commission will take all responses/comments under advisement, continue to individually evaluate the applications and meet a second time to determine a Unified Funding recommendation for all requests. The Unified Funding recommendation is presented to the City Council in the winter. A typical application timeline is shown below.

SECA GRANT FUND PROGRAM – APPLICATION TIMELINE	
July	Special Events Applications available online
August	Special Events Team provides funding estimates for City Services
September	SECA Grant Fund Program Applications available online
October	SECA Grant Fund Program Applications due
November	SECA Commission meeting with Applicants
December	SECA Commission meeting
January	City Council approves SECA Commission recommendation

Applicant/Organization Eligibility Requirements

Unless otherwise stated in this Manual, in order to apply to the SECA Grant Fund Program the applicant must be recognized as a tax-exempt nonprofit organization in good standing according to Section 501(c) of the United States Internal Revenue Code [26 U.S.C. § 501(c)]. A valid tax ID number is required.

The applicant shall disclose whether any Director, Board Member, or employee of the applicant has a family interest, employment interest or ownership interest in the applicant's use of the

SECA Grant Fund Program funds being requested. Family interest, employment interest and ownership interest are defined in 1-13-1 of the Naperville Municipal Code.

501(c) status is not required if applying to the Community Arts/Public Art Program as an individual artist or group of artists.

The applicant, or designee, **must** have attended one of two SECA Grant Fund Program workshops held prior to the availability of the grant application. At the workshops, staff will review the application, the Commission and Council review timeline, and highlight any changes for the funding year. Dates of the workshops will be posted on the SECA page of the City website. Applicants who did not attend a workshop will not be allowed to submit an application.

Event/Art Eligibility Requirements

In certain instances, the applicant may be eligible to apply to the SECA Grant Fund Program, however the proposed event, art piece, project, or initiative does not qualify. In order for the request to be reviewed by the SECA Commission it must meet the following criteria:

- 1) The event/art display must be located within incorporated Naperville.
- 2) The event/art display must be held or completed between January 1 and December 31 of the current funding year. Anything outside of the funding year will not be reimbursed without SECA Commission approval.
- 3) The request cannot be for a social services event, project, or initiative such as transitional housing, job placement, and crisis intervention initiatives.
- 4) Requests for fundraising events are prohibited. In 2016, the City Council approved the definition of a fundraiser as an event with the primary purpose of generating revenue to support the organization's own mission.
- 5) Salary, payroll, and other compensation-related requests are ineligible and will be denied.
- 6) The event/art display must comply with governmental regulations concerning nondiscrimination and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Applications received after the deadline will not be accepted. The following documentation must also be attached:

1. Non-profit status document
2. Most recent financials or annual financial statement; if one is not available, please submit a letter explaining the reason
3. Most recent Federal Form 990
4. Written endorsement by the organization's governing body authorizing the

- application
- 5. Disclosure of Interest if applicable
- 6. Budget Worksheet

For the **Community Arts/Public Arts Program**, non-profit arts organizations must be designated a 501(c) in good standing and complete the entire application with the additional documentation as requested. Individual artists or groups of artists that are not a 501(c) must complete the entire application with the additional documentation as requested. A resume is not required for youth or student projects, however, teacher references are encouraged.

Section Six – Receiving SECA Grant Funding Program Award

The following requirements, criteria, and limitations are in place to facilitate an efficient and equitable reimbursement process:

- 1) Recipients must sign and return the SECA Grant Fund Program Agreement.
- 2) The SECA Grant Fund Program is primarily a reimbursement-based program. Awardees must submit an invoice and a Reimbursement Request Form to the Special Events Coordinator to receive funds. Grant recipients will be reimbursed, up to the amount awarded, within 60 days of staff approval. No awards shall be advanced without approval of Special Events Coordinator. First time SECA awardees may request a pre-payment for a special event. For the Community Arts/Public Arts Program, pre-payment to artists, groups of artists, and organizations must be requested on the application to be approved as part of the award.
- 3) Awards greater than \$50,000 will be reimbursed on a quarterly basis.
- 4) SECA monies shall not be used for the payment of any previous year's deficit and reimbursement requests dated from the previous year will be denied.
- 5) Requests for reimbursement may only be submitted after the event has occurred, unless special permission has been granted by the Special Events Coordinator.
- 6) Funds shall not be used for, or to subsidize, an individual's salary, an organization's payroll, and all other compensation-related expenses, or academic study.
- 7) Funds shall not be used to pay for commercial storage space.
- 8) Recipients will not be reimbursed for any travel-related expenses.
- 9) Food and beverage purchases, with the exception of professional catering, are not eligible for reimbursement. This includes grocery store, fast food, and other

restaurant purchases.

- 10) Requests for reimbursement for costumes must include a photo of the costume.
- 11) Receipts submitted for reimbursement must not include personal items. Please do not commingle purchases.
- 12) Applicants must make a good faith effort to purchase goods and services in Naperville. Reimbursement requests will be reviewed for point-of-sale information.

Section Seven – SECA Grant Fund Program Reporting

Evaluating the success of SECA-funded initiatives is a vital part of the award process. Awardees are required to submit a Final Financial Event Report to the Special Events Coordinator no later than 30 days after the completion of the event. Data collected on the report will be used by the Commission to evaluate future funding requests.

Section Eight – Promotion of City Amenities and Services

A critical component of the SECA Grant Fund Program is to encourage positive economic impact through the promotion of all aspects of the city. As such, recipients are encouraged to partner with the Naperville Convention and Visitors Bureau in a good faith manner to facilitate overnight accommodations and use of other community amenities. For more information, visit www.visitnaperville.com or call (630) 305-7701.

Section Nine – SECA Grant Fund Program Logo

Recognition of SECA grant funding is a requirement for each funded project/event/program. Use of the City of Naperville logo is strictly prohibited. The SECA Grant Fund Program logo is shown below and will be provided to all recipients upon request (in blue or black) for the purpose of designating their event/project/program as SECA funded. Evidence of recognition is a required attachment in the Final Grant Report.



Section Ten – Environmental Sustainability Initiatives

The City encourages all awardees to incorporate recycling and other green initiatives into events as much as practicable and appropriate. Recipients are asked to describe these efforts when answering questions in the application and Final Financial Event Report.

Section Eleven – Contact Information

Jake Fiedler
Special Events Coordinator
630-420-6045
fiedlerj@naperville.il.us

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) Can I use the City of Naperville logo on event materials?**
No. The specific SECA logo must be used. Please contact the Special Events Coordinator for the logo file.
- 2) Where is the application located? Can I submit the application in hard copy?**
All applications are available on the [SECA Grant Fund Program](#) page of the City of Naperville website (www.naperville.il.us)
- 3) What if I cannot submit my application by the deadline?**
Applications that are submitted past the deadline will be not accepted.
- 4) How long after I submit the application will I hear if my event has received funding?**
See above for a detailed timeline of the application process.
- 5) Do I have to attend a SECA Commission or City Council meeting?**
While attendance is not mandatory, it is encouraged as questions do arise for the organizer. If you do not wish to speak, you can sign in and designate yourself “Present for Questions Only.”
- 6) What is a capital purchase?**
The City of Naperville defines a capital purchase as a single item which exceeds \$5,000 and has a useful life of more than one year.
- 7) I am a single artist/student/part of a group of artists and do not have non-profit 501(c) designation. Can I still apply for SECA funds?**
Yes. Complete the Community Arts without a 501(c) Application Form.

8) Does the project need to meet a minimum dollar amount to apply for SECA funds?

No, SECA grant size varies by event/project/program.

9) My event involves travel and overnight accommodations. Are those expenses eligible for reimbursement?

No, travel expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.

10) I cannot possibly justify my request in so few words. Can I go over and/or submit supplemental documentation such as reports and pamphlets?

Due to the high number of submissions that must be reviewed, the Commission has requested that responses be kept brief and succinct. A voluminous response will not improve the organization's funding opportunity.

11) Can I use SECA funds to hire an employee or pay another employee's salary?

No. Use of SECA funds for an individual's salary, or any compensation-related expenses, is expressly prohibited.

12) Does the City require grantees to submit any reports?

Yes. A Final Financial Event Report must be submitted to the no later than 30 days after the completion of the project or event.

13) How do I receive the funds?

Grantees receive funds through a reimbursement process. After the City receives and approves the event invoice, the Applicant will receive payment up to the amount that was awarded. If your award is \$50,000 or more, you will be reimbursed on a quarterly basis.

14) Can I receive the funds prior to creating my art piece?

Yes, first-time SECA funded events, and some Community Arts/Public Arts projects can receive a pre-payment. Pre-payment should be requested on the application and approved as part of the award. Depending on the award, the SECA Commission may require the grantee to meet certain milestones before subsequent funds are advanced.

15) How will I be notified of my award amount?

Applicants are encouraged to attend the SECA Commission and/or watch the City Council meetings. Once funding levels have been decided, the Special Events Coordinator will distribute the agreements.

16) What is the difference between salary and artist fee/honorarium?

An artist fee/honorarium is payment for an appearance or performance related to the specific event in the application. A salary is an ongoing commitment to an employee and is prohibited.

17) May I have the SECA Commission members' contact information?

No. All requests and inquiries must be submitted to the Special Events Coordinator who serves as staff liaison to the Commission.

18) What if I am not awarded the entire amount that was requested?

If the award is less than the amount requested, the applicant may choose to not hold the event or create the art. The applicant must then notify the Special Events Coordinator. If the award is accepted at a lesser amount, the grantee may decide to reduce the event scale/scope or alter the piece.

19) What type of documentation is required when submitting for reimbursement?

Invoices and receipts are the preferred proof of purchase. Please do not commingle personal and event related purchases. Cancelled checks and credit card statements will not be accepted.

20) My event is a fundraiser. Can I submit an application?

No. Fundraising events are prohibited.

21) Do I have to attend a training session? If so, how long will it last?

Yes, the training sessions are mandatory and will last approximately one hour.

22) My event was moved outside of the funding year. What should I do?

Submit a Request for Extension in writing to the Special Events Coordinator and include the reason for the extension. Requests for Extensions will be accepted up to 60 days into the next funding year and must be approved by the City Manager.

23) Should I expect SECA to fund my entire event?

No. SECA is meant to supplement funding that the organization already has/or will have. The organization's ability to reduce its reliance on SECA funding will be evaluated by the Commission and City Council.

24) Do I have to recycle at my event?

While not required, the City of Naperville encourages green initiatives.