

Arts and Culture Update

Economic Development Subcommittee

Meredith Knudsen, Arts and Culture Manager

February 9, 2026

Special Event update

Meet Our New Arts & Events Specialist, McKenzie Nelson

- Recently joined the Arts & Culture team
- Primary point of contact for special events
- Focused on improving coordination, clarity, and policy guidelines for event organizers

Special Event Guidelines

- Packet being developed to streamline information
- Overview of the event review and approval process
- Permit requirements by event type (civic site, special event, film, block party)
- Quick links to applications, and resources
- Clear expectations and timelines for organizers

Streamlining Application and Review Process

- Improved coordination with internal departments (fire, police, traffic, parks)
- Goal:
 - Reduce duplicate reviews
 - Improve internal communication and review timelines

Special Event Permit Fee Study

- Beginning a fee study for special event permits
 - Better understand staff time and City resources required for event review

2026 Special Events Snapshot

- 54 special events currently scheduled for 2026
- Calendar available online [HERE](#)

Event Support Funding Overview

Community Promotions

For non-profit, community-focused events.

SRTBIA

For events or activities that attract overnight visitors

Community Promotions and the Santa Rosa Tourism Business Improvement Area (SRTBIA) Grant programs are key tools used by the City to support events and activities that enhance community vibrancy, generate economic activity, and contribute to Santa Rosa's identity as a destination.

As the programs have evolved, staff has observed a growing range of funding requests:

- From emerging, first-time events seeking seed funding, to long-standing events requesting ongoing or expanded support to address rising operational costs, infrastructure needs, and enhanced programming expectations.
- Applicants are increasingly requesting non-monetary assistance, such as marketing support, Recology service requests, and logistical or operational assistance.

In response, staff is undertaking a review of the current grant guidelines and evaluating how additional support requests, beyond direct funding, are addressed within the City.



Funding Recipients

2025 Recipients

- Horse and Carriage Rides
- Wednesday Night Market
- Health and Wellness Fair
- Winterblast
- Museum of Sonoma County
- Pride
- Soy Cientifico
- Bike in Block Party
- Matsuri Festival
- Wine Country Face off
- Cheese Festival
- Country Summer
- Antique Fair
- Beer City
- Storytelling Festival
- Railroad Square Music Festival
- SoCo Market
- Luther Burbank Holiday
- Snoopy Home Ice
- DJFE Triathlon Races
- Santa Rosa Marathon
- Turkey Trot

2026 Recipients (January – June 30, 2026)

- Emergency Prep Workshop
- Together We Belong
- ILRC Community Research Symposium
- Santa Rosa Buskers Festival
- Cinco de Mayo
- Earth Day Procession
- Wednesday Night Market
- Lez-a-Palooza
- Pride
- Santa Rosa Zine Fest
- Nor Cal Vocal Arts
- Matsuri Festival
- Inclusive Winter and Spring Concerts
- Child in the Wild
- Wildfire Earthquake Prep
- Wine Country Face Off
- Hollow (Film Production)
- Santa Rosa Growlers
- Zombie Apocalypse Hockey
- Cheese Festival
- Beer City
- Antique Fair
- Cookout at the Vineyard
- Taco Fest

Upcoming Events



Bay Area Film Mixer | North SRCity.org/FILM

Friday, February 27, 6-10pm , La Rosa

Regional networking and industry engagement for the Film Santa Rosa program. This mixer provides an opportunity to connect filmmakers, location scouts, and local partners, while highlighting Santa Rosa as a film-friendly destination.

23rd Annual National Arts Program Reception

Sunday, March 15, 3-5pm Finley Center

Open to Santa Rosa residents and employees, all ages and abilities. Over 170 participants. Awards sponsored by National Arts Program

