



Special Events Grant Program

Council Workshop

April 20, 2026





How Did We Get Here?

The Lewisville Special Events Grant Program is the result of months of thoughtful deliberation and dialogue with Council. Here is a snapshot of the key milestones that led us to this point:

1

August 4, 2025

Cattle Drive Parade Discussion

2

November 17, 2025

Reallocation of Cattle Drive Funding

3

April 6, 2026

Presentation of Proposed Special Events Grant Program

Available Funding: \$15,000

Benchmarking – Texas Cities with Event Grant Programs

Before developing Lewisville's program framework, staff reviewed comparable grant programs in Texas cities. Each program shares common characteristics that informed our proposed approach.



Common Program Elements

- Offered exclusively to nonprofit organizations
- Focused on community engagement and civic connection
- HOT/Tourism-related funding structures
- Placemaking and activation of key city locations
- Required public access to all funded events
- Formal application and review process
- Defined funding tiers and award structures

Special Event Grant Program

The goal of the program is to provide financial support to eligible nonprofit organizations hosting public events in Lewisville that strengthen community engagement, enhance resident connections, and celebrate the city's culture and identity.

1

Attract Visitors

Drive tourism and foot traffic to Lewisville through well-organized, publicly accessible events.

2

Foster Civic Pride

Create shared experiences that celebrate Lewisville's unique culture, heritage, and identity.

3

Support Local Business

Generate economic activity and vitality by bringing residents and visitors into the community.

4

Ensure Belonging

Create safe, welcoming, and culturally meaningful activities accessible to all residents.



Special Event Grant Program Framework

Intended Outcomes

- Greater community engagement citywide
- Expanded event diversity across Lewisville
- Strengthened support for local nonprofits
- Increased tourism and economic impact

Eligible Events

- Music festivals, concerts, and parades
- Cultural and heritage celebrations
- Art shows, expos, and car shows
- Holiday and community-wide events

Eligibility Requirements

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- In good standing with the City of Lewisville
- Non-discrimination policy
- Event must take place within Lewisville city limits
- Must obtain a Special Event Permit
- Event must align with goals established in 2025/2035
- Must complete the grant application
- Must list City of Lewisville as event sponsor
- Must submit post-event reporting and audit

Special Event Grant Program Framework (continued)

Eligible Expenses

- Equipment rental (audio, visual, lighting, stage)
- Production infrastructure (restrooms, fencing, barricades)
- Marketing, printing, and promotional materials
- Entertainment costs (bands and performers)
- Public safety or policing services

Restrictions

- Must be open to the general public
- No political or religious advocacy events
- No private or invite-only events
- Blackout dates protect City signature events
- Compliance with ineligible expense guidelines required

Program Administration

- Administered by Community Engagement Department
- Funded through Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)
- Awards committee: Director of Communication & Community Engagement, Special Events Manager, Assistant City Manager

Decision Points for Council

Staff seeks Council direction on the following key policy questions that will shape the final structure of the Special Events Grant Program.

1

Maximum Grant Award

What is the maximum grant amount that should be awarded to a nonprofit for a single event?

Staff Recommendation: \$2,000 per event.

2

Frequency of Grant Awards

How many times may a single nonprofit organization receive a grant within one fiscal year?

Staff Recommendation: Once per fiscal year per organization.

3

Geographic Prioritization

Should the application process prioritize events held outside of Old Town to expand the city's geographic event footprint?

Staff Supports this geographic prioritization approach.

4

Nonprofit Eligibility Scope

Should eligibility be limited to Lewisville-based nonprofits only, or open to any nonprofit as long as the event occurs in Lewisville?

Council direction needed – both options are under consideration.

5

Overall Eligibility

Should the grant program be open to businesses within Lewisville?

Council direction needed – both options are under consideration.

Next Steps:

The following milestones outline the path to program launch over the coming months.



Program Development Completion

Finalize program guidelines in partnership with the Legal and Finance departments to ensure full compliance, proper fund administration, and future funding options (HOT v GF)



Program Launch & Marketing

Develop and execute a communications strategy to promote the grant program to eligible organizations.



Anticipated Go-Live

The program is expected to be fully operational and accepting applications by October 1, 2026.

Questions?

