



**CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Item No. 6A  
May 14, 2026

**TO:** HONORABLE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Administrative Services Department  
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**SUBJECT:** FY 2027 Special Events Grants Program

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**SUMMARY:**

Pursuant to City Council Policy A-12, the City of Newport Beach annually awards Special Event Grants to support community and signature events that enhance residents' quality of life. The Finance Committee is requested to review the grant applications, with particular attention to the financial documentation submitted in support of each application.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Review and discuss the financial documentation submitted in connection with the City's Special Events Grant Program, specifically Signature Events applications, for FY 2027 and provide any recommendations for staff and the City Manager's consideration prior to formal recommendations being presented to the City Council.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Recreation and Senior Services Department administers a Signature Events Grant Program that provides financial support to eligible large-scale events held in Newport Beach. Signature Events are intended to attract visitors, generate measurable economic benefits to the City, enhance community vibrancy, and promote Newport Beach as a premier regional destination. Grant funding may assist in offsetting eligible event-related and City-related costs associated with producing qualifying events.

Funding for Signature Events is generally provided through direct cash support and is based on factors such as anticipated community benefit, projected attendance, tourism generation, event scale, and overall economic impact to the City.

For the FY 2027 award cycle, the application period was open from March 31, 2026, through April 21, 2026, for events scheduled to take place between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027.

Applicants were required to provide financial documentation as part of the application review process to assist staff and the Finance Committee in evaluating the organization's financial position, prior event performance, and capacity to support the proposed event and future operations.

Submitted materials generally included prior-year event financial information, organizational financial documentation, and projected revenue and expenditure estimates for the upcoming event year. Documentation reviewed by staff included financial statements, event budgets, IRS Form 990 filings, and pro forma projections, where applicable.

The requested information was intended to provide additional context regarding organizational capacity, event sustainability, and the overall financial feasibility of the proposed event.

Staff in the Recreation and Senior Services Department reviewed the applications based on the following considerations:

- Applicants meeting minimum qualifications (described further in this report)
- For Signature Event grant requests exceeding \$10,000, staff generally recommended reducing requested funding amounts by 50%, while maintaining a minimum recommended award of \$10,000, subject to available funding and overall program considerations.

As part of the minimum qualifications review for Signature Events, three (3) City staff members reviewed the applications and, based on a minimum qualification matrix, approved or denied applicants. The minimum qualification matrix evaluated each event application based on its anticipated impact and alignment with established program criteria, including the following considerations:

- Whether the event occurs within Fiscal Year 2026–27;
- Whether most of the event activities take place within Newport Beach;
- Whether the applicant has an affiliation with a Newport Beach or Orange County nonprofit organization;
- Whether the event is volunteer-based (considered, but not required);
- Whether the event is open and accessible to the public through attendance or ticket availability;
- Whether the event is expected to attract at least 3,000 attendees;
- Whether the event primarily benefits for-profit enterprises;
- Whether the event has any political affiliation;

- Whether the event attracts visitors to Newport Beach from the regional market or beyond;
- Whether the event enhances the quality of life in Newport Beach through cultural, social, or educational benefits;
- Whether the event provides a substantive economic benefit to the City;
- Whether the event promotes Newport Beach as a desirable location to live, visit, work, and recreate;
- Whether the event directly or indirectly benefits local businesses;
- Whether the applicant has strategic and measurable marketing practices in place;
- Whether proposed performance measures clearly demonstrate measurable economic benefit to the City; and
- Whether the applicant's budget clearly identifies projected revenues and expenditures.

Based on this review process, staff developed preliminary funding recommendations for the Signature Events. In developing these recommendations, evaluators considered a range of factors, including available funding, anticipated community benefit, economic impact, prior-year funding allocations, organizational capacity, projected event size and attendance, and prior event performance, where applicable. Collectively, these factors assisted in determining which events were anticipated to provide the greatest overall impact and benefit to the City and community.

Historically, when applicants requested funding support, prior-year funding levels approved by the City Council were considered in the development of recommendations for the subsequent funding cycle, along with available budget capacity. This approach provided consistency in evaluating and adjusting funding requests relative to prior allocations.

In the current cycle, a similar methodology was used in determining whether applicants met the minimum qualification criteria. However, the approach to recommended funding amounts has been modified, resulting in updated funding recommendations that differ from prior-year practices while still reflecting program objectives and available resources.

For Signature Events requesting cash support, staff applied the principle that such events should not become dependent on continued City funding when the event is showing a profit. In consideration of available program funding and the goal of distributing limited resources among multiple qualified applicants, staff generally recommended funding amounts below both the current requested amounts and prior-year funding allocations, including reductions of approximately 50% from prior-year funding levels, while maintaining a minimum recommended award of \$10,000. Additionally, several events did not meet the minimum qualification requirements, and one event was not recommended for funding because it had not previously been conducted in Newport Beach.

Recreation and Senior Services staff will be available to provide additional information during the May 14 Finance Committee meeting regarding the basis and methodology used in developing the preliminary funding recommendations, including the rationale for generally recommending funding levels at approximately 50% of requested or prior-year amounts.

The Signature Event applicants are listed below, together with prior-year funding levels, current-year requested amounts, and staff recommendations:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Event Organizer</b>	<b>FY26 Support</b>	<b>FY27 Requested</b>	<b>FY 27 Staff Recommendation</b>
<b>Newport Beach Film Festival</b>	Newport Beach Film Festival	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$70,000
<b>Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade</b>	Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$25,000
<b>Hoag Classic</b>	Hoag Charity Sports, Inc.	\$25,000	\$150,000	\$12,500
<b>Beach Volleyball</b>	Newport Beach Volleyball	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
<b>Komen Orange County MORE THAN PINK Walk</b>	Susan G. Komen Foundation	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Newport to Ensenada Yacht Race</b>	Newport Ocean Sailing Association	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Newport-Mesa Spirit Run</b>	Newport-Mesa Spirit Run	-	\$30,000	\$15,000
<b>Miracle Makers International Film Festival</b>	Givsum Foundation	-	\$50,000	-
<b>Global Rhythms Festival</b>	Sheed Entertainment	-	\$10,000	-
<b>Lord of the Rings Live Film Concert</b>	South Orange County Orchestra	-	\$15,000	-

The Committee is asked to review the staff-recommended baseline funding levels, which were developed based on minimum qualification criteria, prior-year funding context, available resources, and application review. Following review of the financial information and overall program considerations, the Committee may affirm the recommended amounts or provide direction regarding potential adjustments, including additional funding allocations.

Approximately \$102,500 in available funding remains within the Signature Events allocation; however, funding is intended to serve as a strategic investment by the City rather than an automatic or fully allocable distribution. The Committee’s input will help ensure funding recommendations remain aligned with program goals, community benefit, and fiscal responsibility.

The program overview is provided in Attachment A, FY 2026-27 Signature Events Program Funding Recommendations are listed in Attachment B, and the applications submitted for additional financial review and consideration by the Finance Committee are contained in Attachment C.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommend that the Finance Committee review and discuss this report and its related attachments, confirm that all financial eligibility requirements have been satisfied for those grant applications that have been shared, and provide any recommendations for staff and the City Manager's consideration prior to submission to the City Council.

Attachments:

- A. City of Newport Beach Grant Funding for Special Events Program Overview
- B. FY 2026-27 Special Events – Signature Events Program Funding Recommendations
- C. Signature Event Applications for Additional Consideration by the Finance Committee
- D. Signature Events Program Financial Overview and Staff Funding Recommendations