

Arlington County Special Events Checklist

Welcome to your roadmap to planning a [special event in Arlington County](#).

This checklist guides applicants through requirements and considerations for planning a special event. It is the responsibility of the event organizer to contact all relevant County offices to secure necessary permissions, permits, quotes, licenses, or certificate. We recommend starting these steps as early as possible, since many can be completed at the same time. **An approved special event application alone DOES NOT indicate approved facility reservations, County staff support, or any of the other requirements below.** Depending your specific event plans, fees may need to be paid before the event or you may be invoiced after services have been provided.

Event Applicant Milestones Map

Below is a list of actions that we recommend applicants review and complete depending on your event needs:

At Least 90 Days Before Event

- ☐ 1. Submit Special Event Application
- ☐ 2. Submit Park, Community Center, Trail, or other Public Space Reservations
- ☐ 3. Share Public Information and Conduct Community Outreach

7 to 10 Weeks Before Event

- ☐ 4. Coordinate with Police Department
- ☐ 5. Coordinate for Road Closures and Reserved Parking
- ☐ 6. Coordinate with Fire Department
- ☐ 7. Coordinate with Zoning Division for Certificate of Occupancy and Signage
- ☐ 8. Coordinate with Inspection Services for Amusement Devices, Amplified Noise, Electrical Usage, and Tents over 10'x10'
- ☐ 9. Coordinate with the Environmental Health Program for Food Vendor Licensing and Requirements
- ☐ 10. Coordinate with Solid Waste and Recycling for Trash/Recycling Plan and Street Cleaning
- ☐ 11. Coordinate with the Commissioner of Revenue (COR) on State and Local Tax Liabilities
- ☐ 12. Obtain and Submit Approval for Any Live Animals
- ☐ 13. Obtain and Submit ABC License
- ☐ 14. Obtain and Submit Certificate of Insurance
- ☐ 15. Submit a Request for a Water Bottle Filling Station

At Least 90 Days Before Event:

1. Submit Special Event Application

What you need to know:

- a. Applications can be submitted through the [Special Event Application form](#) found on the [Special Events webpage](#).
- b. Special event applications must be submitted at least 90 days prior to the event date. Incomplete or late applications may delay or impact the review/approval process. Applications submitted less than 90 days in advance or with insufficient time as determined by the Special Events Committee could be at risk of denial.

Fees/Requirements:

There is no fee for the Arlington County Special Event application.

Contact:

Arlington Special Events Office
specialevents@arlingtonva.us

2. Submit and Receive Park, Community Center, Trail, and other Public Space Reservations Approval

If your event takes place in an Arlington County park, field, community center, or other County-owned facility, you must also submit a separate facility rental reservation in addition to your Special Event Permit application. Due to scheduled programming and existing reservations, not all facilities, fields, or event locations may be available.

What you need to know:

- a. County parks, community centers, plazas, fields, shelters, tracks or other public spaces must be reserved through the [facility rental process](#).
- b. County trails may be reserved through the [DPR Trail Event Form](#).
- c. Use of trails may be limited at certain times. In many cases, reservation of a picnic shelter must be secured with trail reservations to ensure parking access to the event.
- d. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) must be notified of any parking restrictions for lots within Arlington County parks and is responsible for coordinating those restrictions.
- e. Please note that other events may be happening in or around the facility. Event organizers are encouraged to contact the facility or park manager to discuss facility set-up/breakdown.
- f. Submitting a DPR facility request does not guarantee approval or reservation. Requests are subject to availability and approval and are not finalized until the permitting process is complete. Please do not advertise your event until a DPR permit has been issued.

- g. All activity in DPR public spaces must abide by [Arlington County's Park Rules & Regulations](#).

*Private facility rentals are coordinated with facility owners. Arlington County is not responsible for the reservation of Arlington Public Schools or private facilities.

Fees/Requirements:

Fees vary by facility and payments must be completed within 72 hours of invoice.

Contact:

Parks & Recreation Facilities Scheduling Office

facilitiescheduling@arlingtonva.us

703-228-4747

3. Share Public Information and Conduct Community Outreach

Notify neighboring residents, businesses, and community organizations about your planned event and any anticipated impacts. Concerns from neighbors can sometimes delay the application process or, in some cases, **can result in application denial**. Denials due to impacts of poor community outreach will be at the discretion of the Special Events Committee. The event applicant's ability to address concerns early is crucial for a smooth approval process.

At Least 7 to 10 Weeks Before Event

4. Coordinate with the Police Department

What you need to know:

- a. Police support may be required based on the location, expected attendance, and nature of the event.
- b. Reach out to Arlington County's Police Department to discuss your event needs and obtain a quote for required public safety services.
- c. Police must be notified of requested street closures.

Fees/Requirements:

Fees and requirements may vary depending on the nature of the event.

Contact:

Arlington Police Special Operations

Cpl. Stephen Capizzi, scapizzi@arlingtonva.us

Lt. Kyle O'Keefe, Kokeefe@arlingtonva.us

5. Coordinate Road Closures and Reserved Parking

What to know:

- a. Certain roads such as Rte. 50/Arlington Blvd., Rte. 395 and Rte. 120/Glebe Road and more may not be closed for Special Events.
- b. Reserved parking requests are only for vehicles such as equipment vans or food trucks that actively support the event. Information should be included in the application and marked on the special event map.
- c. Staff will contact you about road closures and spaces you request and will contact you about any forms you may need to complete.

Fees/Requirements:

- Fees will be presented as part of the Transportation Right-Of-Way Permit.
- Road closures could require Police officer service and possible vehicle charges per information found in Police Department Section.

Contact:

Transportation Right-Of-Way permitting office will reach out to you directly with questions or concerns.

6. Coordinate with the Fire Department

What you need to know:

- a. Police Support and Fire Department / EMS Support will be determined based upon the size of the crowd, location and nature of the event.
- b. Evacuation and fire safety must be reviewed by the Fire Marshal.
- c. You are required to obtain a permit for use of open flames and a site inspection for safety.
- d. The Fire Department should be contacted if any of the following are required for your event:
 - i) Over 500 attendees
 - ii) Require vigorous activity
 - iii) Are held in hot weather
 - iv) Use of tents (requires permits or inspections)
- a. A tent of any size must be made of fire-retardant material.
- b. For tents over 900 square feet, please see the Inspection Services section of this document.

Fees/Requirements:

Requirements may vary determined by the scale of the event.

Contact:

Office of the Arlington County Fire Marshal

firepermits@arlingtonva.us

703-228-4644

7. Coordinate with the Zoning Division for Short-term Certificate of Occupancy, Amplified Sound/DJ, and Signage

What to know:

- a. **Short-term certificate of occupancy:** This certificate is required for all short-term events that change the use of an indoor or outdoor space from its normal use. Get the process started by submitting an application for a Certificate of Occupancy on the [Permit Arlington Customer Portal](#).
- b. **Signage:**
 - i. Once a Certificate of Occupancy is issued for a Special Event, certain signs that are identified in the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance as *not* requiring permits, are allowed to be placed for up to 30 days prior to the public opening of the event, and during the time period for which the Certificate of Occupancy is issued for the event. This includes incidental signs (noncommercial signs smaller than four sq. ft.).
 - ii. Other types of signs, where allowed, will require a permit.
 - iii. There are three designated locations in the County where temporary banners may be allowed, *subject to approval of a sign permit for an approved Special Event*, over

the road. These locations are: 2900 Block Wilson Blvd (2915 Wilson Blvd), 3100 Block of Columbia Pike (3200 Columbia Pike) and at the pedestrian overpass on Rt. 50 near the Thomas Jefferson Community Center (3237 Arlington Blvd). Application for a sign permit for one of these banners must be completed through the [Permit Arlington Customer Portal](#), and should use the specific address listed in parentheses above for the preferred location. In your permit application, include the following:

- If the Special Event is approved or still pending approval (include approval notification as an attachment if already approved; otherwise note pending approval)
- Documentation from the Special Events Coordinator confirming availability of the preferred location (as an attachment)
- Date(s) of the Special Event
- Date(s) of the sign placement

c. Signs may not be permitted in all areas.

Fees/Requirements:

- Fees are listed in the [Permit Arlington Center Fee Schedule](#).
 - For Certificate of Occupancy, select the *Planning and Zoning Fee Structure*, then search for the key term "Short-term or Temporary Uses."
 - Signs that require permits will have a fee

Contact:

Arlington County Zoning Division
contactzoning@arlingtonva.us
703-228-3883

8. Coordinate with Inspection Services for Amusement Devices, Amplified Noise, Electrical Usage, and Tents over 10'x10'

What you need to know:

a. Amusement Devices

- i. includes rides, moon bounces, other inflatables, etc.
- ii. An amusement device used for entertainment must have a permit and be inspected through the Inspection Services Division.
- iii. To process the Amusement Device Permit, the Permitting Office will need the specs of the device, a device manual (if possible), the manufacturer name, device model, serial number/ID, inspection status, etc.

b. Amplified Sound, Bands, or DJs

- i. A special event permit may allow amplified sound. All live music and amplified sound must abide by the [Arlington County Noise Ordinance regulations](#). Click on the PDF at the top for full ordinance.

c. Tents over 10'x10'

- i. All tents must abide by the County's [Tent and Membrane Structure Permitting guidelines](#).
 - ii. A permit from the Inspection Services Division is required for all tents that exceed 10' X 10' in size, as well as any air supported temporary structure that is over 900 square feet and occupied by more than 50 people.
 - iii. For smaller tents, please contact the Fire Department.
 - iv. A tent of any size must be made of fire-retardant material.
 - v. Please refer to the [Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code \(VSFPC\), Section 3103](#), for full tent regulations and requirements.
- d. You may be required to obtain a permit depending upon the amount of your electrical use, location and type of generator.

Fees/Requirements:

An Amusement Device Permit and inspection is required for amusement devices. Fees are State regulated and depend on the type of device.

Contact:

Inspection Services Division
703-228-3800

9. Coordinate with the Environmental Health Program for Food Vendor Licensing and Requirements

What you need to know:

- a. Arlington County Public Health Division (ACPHD), Environmental Health Program requires a Coordinator Application (English, Español) with a list of proposed food vendors at least 10 business days before the event.
- b. All food vendors must complete the temporary food establishment license application at least 10 business days before the event to determine licensing status.
- c. Please visit the ACPHD webpage for a list of [pre-approved Arlington County licensed food trucks](#) to participate in events.
- d. Mobile food vendors not on the pre-approved list will need an inspection prior to the event at the Health Department.
- e. All food vendors must abide by guidelines for [Temporary Food Establishment Licenses](#). Food provided to the public (either served for free or sold) must be reviewed by ACPHD prior to events.
- f. All food trucks must be inspected by ACPHD and may require additional licensing by Fire.

Fees/Requirements:

A food vendor license fee may be required. Please contact the ACPHD Environmental Health Office for up-to-date fees.

Contact:

Environmental Health Office

10. Coordinate with Solid Waste and Recycling for Trash/Recycling Plan and Street Cleaning

What you need to know:

- a. Recycling is required for all events. You must have a detailed and specific plan for trash & recycling collection and disposal. If using a private collection service, the name must be listed in the application. County assistance is available for a set hourly fee.
- b. ClearStream collection containers are available at no cost. Pickup and return are required at the Solid Waste Bureau offices.
- c. Street sweeping is offered for before or after events. Please indicate interest on Special Event Application or by contacting the Solid Waste Bureau. Post-event sweeping does incur a fee for service.

Fees/Requirements:

Fees may be charged if your event requires additional staff to remove trash and recycling.

Contact:

If event is in an Arlington County park or trail:

Rfernandez@arlingtonva.us
703-283-7889

If event is not in an Arlington County park or trail:

Solid Waste Bureau
dkrietemeyer@arlingtonva.us
703-228-0443

11. Coordinate with the Commissioner of Revenue Office Business Division if Selling Prepared Food Items for a Profit

What you need to know:

- a. The special event sponsor's business license is required under the [Arlington County Code §11-38.1](#) if the events are held at public places as described above. The sponsors pay \$30 flat fee per year.
- b. **Participating vendor expectations:**
 - a. All participating vendors are required to complete and submit the [Virginia Temporary Sales Tax Certificate/Return](#) form to report and pay tax collected at special events.
- c. **Food vendor expectations (additional):**

- a. If food vendors will be participating in the special event, the event sponsors are required to provide our office with the name, mailing address, phone number, and email address of each vendor.
- b. Food vendors must have a business license and collect Arlington County's 5% meals tax on prepared food sold at special events.
 - i. Vendors that do not have an active Arlington County business license and meals tax account must file a meals tax return for the specific event.
 - ii. Arlington restaurants and food vendors with active County accounts should include their event sales on their regular monthly meals tax return and should not file a separate return for the event.

Contact:

Commissioner of Revenue Office, Business License Division
703- 228-3060 (option 0)
Business@arlingtonva.us

12. Coordination around Live Animals**What you need to know:**

- a. Animals will need to be health certified, have all the proper immunizations such as the Coggins Test and show proof of certificate.
- b. Waterfowl/birds are not permitted due to disease concerns.

Fees/Requirements:

Requirements are dependent on the event and animals.

Contact:

Office of Special Events
specialevents@arlingtonva.us

13. Obtain and Submit ABC License**What you need to know:**

- a. Events that will include the consumption, distribution, or sale of alcohol require a valid Virginia ABC license. Event organizers must obtain one through the application process on the [VABC website](#).
- b. Please submit obtained ABC Special Event Permit to the Office of Special Events at specialevents@arlingtonva.us.
- c. Must have a Virginia ABC special event permit (can take 3-4 weeks to obtain).
- d. The use, consumption, or possession of alcoholic beverages on certain County-owned property, as defined in Section 17-2 of the [Arlington County Code](#), is unlawful except as

defined in Section 17-2. Alcoholic beverages may be allowed in designated park areas listed on the County's [Park Rules & Regulations page](#) with proper license and permits.

- e. Alcohol and Beer sales require Food and Beverage Tax managed through the Commissioner of Revenue at 703-228-3060

Fees/Requirements:

Virginia ABC Special Event permit fees start at \$75.

Contact:

Virginia ABC local office
703-313-4432

Arlington Police Special Operations
703-228-4186

14. Obtain and Submit Certificate of Insurance**What you need to know:**

- a. The County requires most events to provide evidence of a commercial general liability insurance policy with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 annual aggregate.
- b. The policy must be endorsed to include: "The Arlington County (including its elected and appointed officials, agents, and employees) as an additional insured with respect to [name of event]" and "Coverage afforded under this policy shall be primary to all other insurance with respect to Arlington County (including elected and appointed officials, agents, and employees)."
- c. The County can direct events to lower cost insurance policies. Events sponsored by civic associations and small neighborhood events where attendance is anticipated to be 150 people or less, that require street closure of not more than two blocks or a non-primary, residential street and do not include vendors do not require insurance.
- d. Events must consciously plan safety and risk control measures.
- e. Certificate must be submitted no later than one week prior to the event.
- f. For events where a COI is required, event organizers must submit their COI to specialevents@arlingtonva.us.
- g. Insurance is typically required for:
 - Events on County property
 - Events that require use of a public right of way (usually involve street closures)
 - Events that involve commercial, food, or community vendors
 - Events that have inflatables or moon bounces (vendors must provide insurance)
 - Events that involve DJs, performers, or contracted services
 - Events that involve higher risk activities
- f. Insurance is typically not required for:
 - County sponsored events
 - Events that are not on County property
 - Events that do not use public right of ways (no street closures)

- Civic association events that are limited to residents and not publicly advertised
- Small private gatherings with no vendors or added risk

Fees/Requirements:

- Insurance policy providers and associated fees are determined by the special event organizer.
- Most rental operators and insurance providers offer special insurance and/or are amenable to adding Arlington County as “additionally insured”.
- For more information about what insurance is required or help obtaining special event insurance, contact the Office of Risk Management.

Contact:

Arlington County Office of Risk Management
riskmanager@arlingtonva.us
703-228-4444

15. Submit a Request for a Water Bottle Filling Station**What you need to know:**

- a. In some cases on County property, the County can provide a connection to an existing water line to allow for a water bottle filling station.
- b. Reach out to Department of Environmental Services – Water, Sewer, and Streets for coordination.

Fees/Requirements:

No fee

Contact:

Department of Environmental Services – Water, Sewer, and Streets
rwhitejr@arlingtonva.us 703-228-0656