

## **HOW TO APPLY FOR A MAKE MUSIC NEW YORK BLOCK PARTY**

Updated on Feb. 8, 2009. Send questions to [aaron@makemusicny.org](mailto:aaron@makemusicny.org).

It's easy to close a street for Make Music New York. But it's often hard to figure out how. This document explains how the process works. Please read through this entire document carefully. If you follow these 8 steps, your street closure will be approved, I promise! — *Aaron Friedman*

### **Step 1: Choose a block.**

First, decide which block you want to close for Sunday, June 21st. Keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Only single blocks may be closed; the City has a moratorium on new multi-block closures.
- Small side streets are more likely to be approved for closure than big thoroughfares (like Broadway, Queens Boulevard, Atlantic Avenue...).
- Don't choose a block that would require rerouting a bus line.
- Avoid blocks with parking garages that would become inaccessible if you closed the street (unless it's OK with the garage owner)
- Avoid blocks with firehouses, hospitals, senior centers, or funeral homes.
- If there are churches or schools on the block that will be in session, you must get approval from them first, before closing the block. (Ask them to sponsor the event!)

### **Step 2: Find a sponsoring organization.**

In order to close a street, we need to work with a local nonprofit or community based organization who will agree to "sponsor" the block party. This organization must have an indigenous relationship with the block being closed, and must sign a form from the Street Activity Permit Office (below), saying that they take responsibility for the event.

Let's break that down.

- **The sponsoring organization must be a non-commercial enterprise.** Possible sponsors include schools, churches, soup kitchens, block associations, community centers, 501(c)(3) organizations, and Business Improvement Districts.
- **The sponsor needs to have a connection to the street being closed.** Maybe its offices are on that street, or just a block or two away. Maybe the sponsor is a nonprofit musical organization that sometimes performs in a club on that street, or rehearses around the corner. Maybe it's a school that uses the ballfields in the park next to the street. Any of these would be considered an "indigenous relationship" to the block.
- **The sponsor must sign a form from the Street Activity Permit Office,** taking responsibility for the event in case something goes wrong. Note that the City does not require that anyone show proof of insurance for a block party; most block associations don't have insurance, but they close blocks anyway and take their chances. Other organizations, like Churches, Schools, and established nonprofits, generally have insurance, and by signing the form, they're agreeing to use that policy in the case that someone gets hurt and files a lawsuit. Some organizations will call their insurance brokers to take out additional coverage to cover a block party.

New York City has over 6,500 nonprofit organizations, tens of thousands of houses of worship, 60 Business Improvement Districts, and countless schools. Most likely, you already know people who work for one of these organizations — you might call them up and say "I'm trying to put together a block party for Make Music New York; would your organization be interested in having this on your street, and taking part in the event?"

Note: the City has determined that an organization can have an annual block party **and also** a Make Music New York block party, in the same year. Applying for one does not affect the application for the other.

### **Step 3: Decide on the sponsoring organization's role.**

Option 1: The block party sponsor agrees to sign the form, and has no interest in doing anything else. As long as someone else is willing to take on the organizing work, that's fine.

Option 2: The sponsor signs the form, and helps promote the event around the neighborhood in various ways. Perhaps they speak at a community board meeting (see below). Or they send invitations to all the neighbors, and to their members, telling them about the event. Otherwise, they stay out of the way.

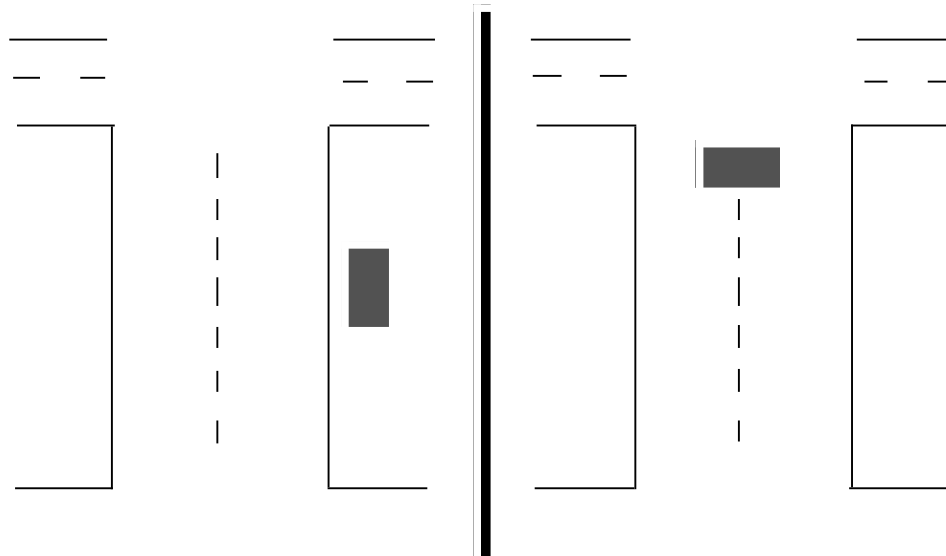
Option 3: The sponsor takes an active role in the event itself, setting up tables with information about their organization, deciding who the performers will be, finding local vendors to serve food, etc. This is a great option, as long as live music remains the focus.

There are many possibilities — just be sure that everyone knows what they're agreeing to do.

### **Step 4: Print out and complete the SAPO form at the end of this document.**

Complete the Street Activity Permit Office form, and have it signed by the sponsor on page 3.

- The "Applicant Name" should be the name of a contact person at the sponsoring organization. If you or someone else is actually organizing the event, list that person as the "Producer Name."
- **IMPORTANT:** For "Type of Event," check "Other," and write in "Make Music New York."
- Give yourself plenty of time to set up. The NYPD may need a couple of hours just to tow the cars that missed the "No Parking - Street Closure" signs and stayed parked on the street. It's often easiest to close a street for the entire day, 9am to 9pm. Also, give yourself plenty of time to pack everything up and clean up after the event. Once a permit is approved, it's almost impossible to extend the hours after the fact.
- Any stage higher than 18 inches must be approved by the fire department. To make it simple, keep the stage height low. Or maybe you don't need a stage at all.
- You must leave at least one lane free for the use of emergency vehicles. If you have a stage set up, make sure that there's enough room on one side for a vehicle to drive through. See diagram below.
- If you decide to power your equipment with a pole tap, you'll need to hire a licensed electrician with the right credentials from the Department of Transportation. In the end, it's much easier to rent a generator, or run extension cords if your power needs are minimal. See diagram below.
- Do not serve alcohol at the event. Your application will not be approved if you do.



Two options for stage placement.

*On the left:* Stage area is on the sidewalk, with audience in the street. Power can be provided from extension cords going into one of the buildings, or by a generator. The entire street is clear for emergency vehicles.

*On the right:* Stage area is in the center of the street, at one end, with audience in the street. Power is provided by a generator, or extension cords taped down to the street. At least one lane is clear for emergency vehicles (here, both parking lanes are clear).

**Step 5: Submit the SAPO form to your local Community Board.**

Once you have a plan, and a completed SAPO form, the local community board must approve your application and send it to City Hall by April 21st.

**Each community board handles street closures differently.** Some of them will sign the forms, no questions asked. Others require you to speak in front of a particular committee, or in front of the full board at one of their monthly meetings, and present your plans. A few boards require you to show letters of support from neighbors or businesses on the block you plan to close. The only way to figure it out is to call up the community board and speak directly with the **District Manager**, and ask what to do.

In some community boards, street closure applications need to be put on the agenda for the March meeting in order to be processed by the City Hall deadline, which means **you must contact the board before March 1st.**

In the last two years, thirty-one groups have applied to community boards for MMNY street closures; every one that applied before the board's deadline was approved. Please contact your community board ASAP to find out how they handle street closure applications, and when their deadline is.

- Community board districts are not the same as City Council districts, or police precincts. To find out what community board your street closure is in, go to [www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/lucds/cdstart.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/lucds/cdstart.shtml).
- Once you've identified the right board, look up the name and phone number of the District Manager here: [www.nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/directory.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/cau/html/cb/directory.shtml).
- If you need to speak in front of a committee, or the full board, ask someone from the sponsoring organization to come along with you.

- Most community boards want to make sure your event is not going to be another bland “street fair” selling tube socks and cotton candy. Make it clear that you’re proposing a community-based cultural event, involving local organizations and musicians.

### **Step 6: Once it’s approved, submit your SAPO form to City Hall, with a money order for \$15.**

Follow the directions on the SAPO form. Community boards will typically fax a copy of the approved form to SAPO themselves, but then you’ll need to send in the money order yourself. Ask the community board what to do, and call SAPO to confirm that they’ve received everything.

### **Step 7: Ensure that all other permits are in order.**

Once SAPO receives your form, they will send copies around to the NYPD, the Fire Department, the Department of Sanitation, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Consumer Affairs (if you’re selling anything), and the Department of Buildings (if you are putting up a stage or other structure).

Each agency must approve your application. In some cases, they will ask you to apply for a separate permit for street vending, electrical pole taps, etc. The SAPO form explains all of these permit requirements on pages 4-5.

In rare cases, the NYPD or Department of Transportation may propose moving your event to an adjacent block, for safety or traffic flow reasons. If this occurs, you do *not* need to go back to the community board for approval — just make arrangements directly with the city agency, and notify SAPO.

### **Step 8: Pick up the approved SAPO permit, and bring it to Police Precinct, with a money order for \$45.**

Call the Community Affairs officer at your local police precinct, and make an appointment to come in. (He or she will already have seen your SAPO application, and will be expecting you.) Don’t wait until the last minute; come in at least two weeks before June 21st.

- Bring a copy of the approved SAPO permit, and a money order for \$45 for an amplified sound permit. They should be able to write up the sound permit for you while you wait.
- The precinct will give you “No Parking Sunday” signs to post along the street before the event. You will need to post these signs yourself, beginning on Friday June 19th.
- Talk to the Community Affairs officer about when they will come with barricades to block off the street, and when they will come to tow cars (if necessary). Try to get the officer’s cell phone number, so you can call them on June 21st if there are any problems.

Unfortunately, we’ve found that the police precincts do not always bring barricades to block off the street, even when they say that they will. Have a backup plan ready in case they don’t show up — for instance, you could block the street with a parked car, or with orange cones.

That’s it!



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT OFFICE  
100 GOLD STREET- 2ND FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10038  
PHONE: 212-788-7437 ~ FAX: 212-788-7887

# STREET FESTIVAL / BLOCK PARTY PERMIT APPLICATION

A STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT IS NOT VALID BEFORE 8AM OR AFTER 11:30PM

APPLICATIONS FOR BLOCK PARTIES MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT OFFICE  
AT LEAST 60 DAYS PRIOR TO THE EVENT

APPLICATIONS FOR MULTI-DAY AND MULTI-BLOCK EVENTS MUST BE FILED DIRECTLY WITH SAPO BY THE FILING DEADLINE  
OF DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> OF THE PRECEDING YEAR.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH A \$15 NON-REFUNDABLE MONEY ORDER OR CERTIFIED CHECK  
(MADE PAYABLE TO THE CITY OF NEW YORK - DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE)

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

APPLICANT NAME _____	(____) _____ - _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER	(____) _____ - _____ CELL NUMBER
ADDRESS _____	ZIP CODE _____	E-MAIL ADDRESS _____
SPONSOR NAME/COMPANY NAME (ON BEHALF OF) _____	(____) _____ - _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER	(____) _____ - _____ FAX NUMBER
ADDRESS _____	ZIP CODE _____	
PRODUCER NAME IF APPLICABLE _____	(____) _____ - _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER	(____) _____ - _____ FAX NUMBER
ADDRESS _____	ZIP CODE _____	E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

## EVENT INFORMATION

**Type of Event:**  Block Party     Street Festival     Clean Up     Mobile Unit     Religious Ceremony     Farmers Market  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Event Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Event Description:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requesting permission to conduct street activity on:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Between Locations:** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity to take place on (Check ALL that Apply):**  
 Sidewalk     Curb Lane     Partial Street Use     Full Street Closure     Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Event:** \_\_\_\_\_    **Rain Date (Block Party's ONLY):** \_\_\_\_\_    **Number of Days:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Borough:** \_\_\_\_\_    **Actual Time of the Event:** \_\_\_\_\_    **Estimated # of People:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Number of Blocks:** \_\_\_\_\_    **Set-Up Time:** \_\_\_\_\_    **Break-Down Time:** \_\_\_\_\_



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Street Activity Permit Office

Street Festival/Block Party Permit Application – Page 2

**PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS (If yes, other support permits might apply; see page 4 for details)**

1. Yes  No  **Will you have Vendors?**  
If Yes, Number of Vendors: Merchandise: \_\_\_\_\_ Food: \_\_\_\_\_  
Arts & Crafts: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Yes  No  **Are you interested in being contacted by vendors and others who may wish to participate in your event?**
3. Yes  No  **Have you held this event before?**  
If Yes: Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Permit # (if known): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Yes  No  **Will there be Rides?**  
If Yes, Truck Mounted  Total \_\_\_\_\_  
To Be Erected  Total \_\_\_\_\_
5. Yes  No  **Will there be Amplified Sound?**
6. Yes  No  **Will there be Staging, Press Platforms, Props or other related structures?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dimension: \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_ W \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_
7. Yes  No  **Will Scaffolding, Bleacher(s), Grandstand(s) or other related structures be used?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Yes  No  **Will there be Live Entertainment and/or Celebrity Appearances?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Yes  No  **Will Pyrotechnics and/or Liquid Fuels be used?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Yes  No  **Will Mobile Units and/or Trailer(s) be used?**  
If Yes, Truck Mounted \_\_\_\_\_
11. Yes  No  **Will Canopy(ies) and/or Tent(s) be used?**  
Include Dimensions & Specify if Open Sided or Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Yes  No  **Will Booth(s), Exhibit(s), Table(s), Kiosks and/or other display items be used?**  
Please Include Dimensions: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Yes  No  **Will the event be advertised?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Yes  No  **Electrical needs?**  
If Yes:  Generator  Pole Tap  Overhead Cabling  Other \_\_\_\_\_
15. Yes  No  **Will Banners be hung?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
16. Yes  No  **Will Food be served?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
17. Yes  No  **Will there be Live Animals (Non-Domesticated)?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
18. Yes  No  **Will there be Oversized Vehicles/Truck (Width – 96 inches, Height – 13 ½ feet, Length – 55 feet)?**  
If Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_
19. Yes  No  **Will there be seating?**  
If Yes Please Indicate Capacity: \_\_\_\_\_
20. Yes  No  **Will there be game booths?**
21. Yes  No  **Will beer or wine be sold?**
22. Yes  No  **Will funds be solicited?**



**APPLICANT/SPONSOR RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**IT IS THE APPLICANT'S/SPONSOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:**

- MAINTAIN ONE LANE ON EVERY STREET FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES.
- KEEP ALL FIRE HYDRANTS AND ALARM BOXES FREE OF OBSTRUCTION.
- SUBMIT EVIDENCE OF INSURANCE PRIOR TO FINAL PERMIT APPROVAL. PLEASE PROVIDE A CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE WHICH NAMES THE CITY OF NEW YORK AS AN ADDITIONAL INSURED AND SHOWS A MINIMUM OF \$1MILLION IN COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE AND A POLICY ENDORSEMENT WHICH INDEMNIFIES AND HOLDS HARMLESS THE CITY OF NEW YORK.
- **PLEASE NOTIFY THE COMMUNITY OF THE EVENT BY POSTING "INFORMATIONAL" SIGNS 48 HOURS PRIOR TO CLOSURE OF THE STREET OR USE OF PARKING (THESE SIGNS WILL BE ISSUED WITH YOUR PERMIT). AND CONFIRM WITH THE NYPD THE POSTING OF "NO PARKING SIGNS" FOR ENFORCEMENT AND TOWING.**

**AFFIDAVIT OF APPLICANT/SPONSOR**

WHEN APPROVED, THIS APPLICATION OR A STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT SHOULD AUTHORIZE THE SPONSOR TO CONDUCT A STREET ACTIVITY AS DESCRIBED. IT IS SUBJECT TO REVOCATION IF THE SPONSOR DOES NOT COMPLY WITH ALL PERTINENT LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS INCLUDING ANY CONDITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY THE STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT OFFICE.

THE SPONSOR AGREES TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS THE CITY OF NEW YORK FROM ANY AND ALL CLAIMS AND JUDGEMENT FOR PERSONAL INJURY OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY RESULTING, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, FROM THE ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH WHICH THIS IS ISSUED, AND FROM ANY COSTS AND EXPENSES TO WHICH THE CITY MAY BE SUBJECTED OR WHICH IT MAY SUFFER OR INCUR BY REASON THEREOF. THE APPLICANT FURTHER AGREES TO COMPLY WITH THE PERTINENT PROVISIONS OF NEW YORK LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS. THE APPLICANT HAS READ THE LIST OF SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND HAS AGREED TO ALL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS APPLICATION.

Applicant Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Community Board# \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone# \_\_\_\_\_

Community Board Recommendation: Approval  Denial  \_\_\_\_\_  
(CB Authorized Signature) (Date)

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

<b>Date of Application</b> _____	<b>Application No.</b> _____	<b>Precinct</b> _____	<b>CB</b> _____
<b>Support Permits/Approval Required (Check all that Apply):</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> NYPD Sound Permit	<input type="checkbox"/> DOB Permit _____	<input type="checkbox"/> DOT _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>Notification:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> NYPD	<input type="checkbox"/> DOT	<input type="checkbox"/> FDNY	<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation
<input type="checkbox"/> Parks	<input type="checkbox"/> DOB	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> CB
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transit/MTA	<input type="checkbox"/> DCA
		<input type="checkbox"/> Office	<input type="checkbox"/> NYC & Co.
			<input type="checkbox"/> DOHMH
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sports Commission



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPORT PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL COMPONENTS OF THE EVENT ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT OFFICE AND MAY REQUIRE APPROVAL BY AND/OR PERMITS FROM OTHER CITY AGENCIES. THE STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT OFFICE APPROVAL DOES NOT CONSTITUTE PERMISSION FROM OTHER AGENCIES. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT/SPONSOR TO SECURE ALL NECESSARY CITY OF NEW YORK PERMITS AND PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION TO THE STREET ACTIVITY PERMIT OFFICE PRIOR TO PERMIT ISSUANCE.

**Department of Buildings:**

- *DOB Structure Permit:* Stages, Platforms, Press Risers, Truck-mounted structures, Props, Scaffolding, Tents, Canopies
- *DOB Temporary Place of Assembly Permit:* attendance of 200+ seated
- *DOB Contacts:*

Bronx	718-579-2943	Queens	718-286-0622
Brooklyn	718-802-3677	Queens (Alt.)	718-286-0603
Manhattan	212-566-3300	Staten Island	718-816-2178/2314

**New York City Police Department (Local Precinct):**

- *NYPD Sound Permit:* Amplified sound
- *Contact Local Precincts:* ([www.nyc.gov/nypd](http://www.nyc.gov/nypd))

**Department of Transportation:**

- *DOT Electrical Permit Cabling/Wiring Approval:* Overhead/On-Ground cabling or electrical wiring
- *DOT Oversized Truck Permit:* Oversized Truck (Width – 96 inches, Height – 13 ½ feet, Length – 55 feet)
- *DOT Electrical Permit:* Pole Tap for Electricity
- *DOT Removal of Street Furniture Removal Approval:* Streetlights, Bollards, Traffic Lights, Streets Signs, Bus Stop Shelters or any other furnishing on the street and/or sidewalk
- *DOT Street Pole Banner Permit:* Approval for any Street Pole Banners
- *DOT Horse-Drawn Carriage Variance:* Horse-Drawn Carriages Being Used Outside of Central Park and its perimeter
- *DOT Contact:* DOT Special Events Unit  
40 Worth Street, Rm. 1215  
New York, NY 10013  
Phone: (212) 442-1700  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/permits/permits.shtml>

**New York City Fire Department:**

- *FDNY Fuel Permit:* Liquid/Gaseous Fuels
- *FDNY Generator Permit:* Portable, Truck-mounted or an other kind of generator
- *FDNY Pyrotechnics Permit:* Open Flames or Pyrotechnics
- *FDNY Contact:* (718) 999-0320 or (718) 999-1007

**Department of Consumer Affairs:**

- *DCA Thirty-Day Street Fair Vending Permit:* General Vendors at Events
- *DCA Portable Amusement Device Permit/DCA Temporary Amusement Device Permit:* Truck-Mounted Rides/Other Type of Rides
- DCA also accepts applications for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for the Temporary Mobile Food Vendor Permits at events (Temporary Mobile Food Unit Permit, Biennial Citywide Mobile Food Unit Permit, Biennial Borough Specific Mobile Food Unit Permit, Biennial Citywide Veterans Mobile Food Unit Permit, and Restricted Area Mobile Food Unit Permit).
- *DCA Contact :* DCA Licensing Center is located at:  
42 Broadway, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
Phone: 311

DCA 30-Day Street Fair Vendor Permit.  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/licenses/111.shtml>

DCA Portable Amusement Device Permit application  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/licenses/018.shtml>

DCA Temporary Amusement Device Permit application  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/licenses/090.shtml>



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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Street Activity Permit Office

Street Festival/Block Party Permit Application – Page 5

**Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:**

- *DOH Temporary Food Service Establishment Permit:* Non-Processing/Processing Food Unit
- *Animal Exhibit Permit:* Non-Domesticated Animals Present
- *DOH Contact:* DOHMH Temporary Food Service Establishment Permit (via DCA)  
The DCA Licensing Center is located at:  
42 Broadway, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
Phone: 311  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/inspect/ispecial.shtml>  
DOHMH Animal Permit  
Tel: 212-676-2112

**Human Resources Administration/Dept. of Social Services:**

- *HRA Permit to Solicit Funds:* Permit to Solicit Funds at an Event
- *HRA Contact:* 180 Water Street  
New York NY 10038  
Tel: 212-331-5166

**New York State Liquor Authority**

- *SLA Temporary Beer & Wine Permit:* Alcoholic Beverages will be consumed. (Only applicable for vendors currently have a liquor license)
- *New York City Regional SLA Office Contact:* 317 Lenox Ave., 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10027  
Phone: (212) 961-8284  
<http://www.abc.state.ny.us/>

**Department of Sanitation**

- Clean Up
- *Sanitation Contact:* Special Events Office  
New York City Department of Sanitation  
125 Worth Street – Room 807  
New York, NY 10013  
(646) 885-4867 or 4868