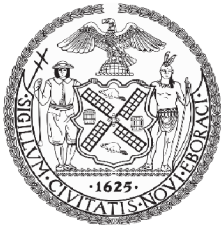


THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

**The Open Culture Roadmap:
Tips for a Successful Performance in the Street**

The Open Culture Roadmap: Tips for a Successful Performance in the Street provides help to Open Culture participants with little to no experience mounting productions in New York City streets. The *Roadmap* provides tips for community relations, preparation before the Open Culture event, and activity on the day of the event, and it gives examples of set ups of street performances. The *Roadmap* complements the mandatory [Open Culture program guidelines and rules](#) and responds to questions participants have posed. Most of the tips in this *Roadmap* are voluntary; we noted the mandatory requirements.

Note: The guidance included in this *Roadmap* is current as of July 2, 2021. Response to the pandemic is rapidly changing so please check for updates to this document. Where there is a discrepancy between this document and law or mandatory guidelines, law or mandatory guidelines apply.

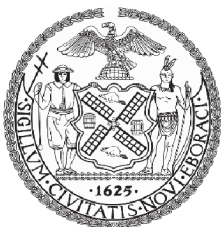


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Table of Contents

I.	The Open Culture Program	1
II.	Before Your Open Culture Event	1
A.	Planning.....	1
1.	Review.	1
2.	Run of Show.	2
3.	Site plan.	2
4.	COVID-19 Event Safety Plan and Checklist Affirmation.....	2
5.	Communications Plan.....	3
6.	Budgeting	3
7.	Production equipment and other items.....	4
8.	Emergency plans.....	4
B.	Site Visit.....	5
1.	Audience, performers/talent, and event staff needs.....	5
2.	Potential sources of noise, crowds or traffic.	5
3.	Potential obstructions and dangers.....	5
C.	Event Staff	6
1.	Event coordinator.	6
2.	“Front-of-house” event staff.	6
3.	Production assistant(s).	6
4.	Stage manager(s).	6
5.	Crew.	7
D.	Training and Preparation	7
E.	NYPD	7
1.	Sound permit.....	7
2.	No parking signs.....	7

F.	Ticket sales and audience communication	8
1.	Ticket sales.	8
2.	Information.	8
3.	Signs.	8
III.	Community Relations	9
A.	Make contact	9
B.	Support local businesses	9
C.	Consider the neighborhood’s residents and culture	9
IV.	Day of your Open Culture Event	9
A.	Bring small items	9
B.	Set, props, and equipment delivery	10
C.	Create a safe space	10
D.	Performers/talent and event staff	10
E.	Patrons/Audiences.....	11
F.	Clean Up	11
V.	Further Help.....	11
VI.	About the Authors	11
A.	Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment	12
B.	Department of Transportation	12
C.	Street Activity Permit Office	12
D.	Department of Cultural Affairs	12
	Appendix A: Signage	13
	Appendix B: Sample Street Performance Configurations	14



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

I. The Open Culture Program

[Open Culture](#) is a new City government program that allows ticketed, socially distanced outdoor performances, rehearsals, and classes at nearly [200 street locations](#) throughout the five boroughs. Arts and cultural institutions, as well as entertainment venues, can apply for an Open Culture permit from the New York City Street Activity Permit Office for the low fee of \$20.

Open Culture permittees are required to follow the Open Culture [program guidelines, rules about face coverings and social distancing in Title 10 of the Codes, Rules, and Regulations of the State of New York Subpart 66-3 \(10 NYCRR 66-3\)](#), applicable laws, and government guidance. The [New York State Department of Health Interim Guidance for Small and Medium Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#) is optional, and although it is not required, it provides useful guidance on keeping participants safe.

This document, *The Open Culture Roadmap: Tips for a Successful Performance in the Street*, complements the mandatory [Open Culture program guidelines and rules](#) and [10 NYCRR 66-3](#). Many of the tips in this document are voluntary; but note that some are marked mandatory.

II. Before Your Open Culture Event

A. Planning

1. *Review.*

Mandatory: Carefully read the [Open Culture program guidelines and rules](#) and [10 NYCRR 66-3](#)¹ for mandatory requirements and take notes on the items that apply to your event.

¹ [Section 66-3.1](#) requires individuals participating in Open Culture Events who are not fully vaccinated (2 weeks from final shot) to either wear a face covering or maintain at least six feet from individuals who do not live in the same household. [Section 66-3.2](#) requires talent/performers and event staff who are not fully vaccinated to wear a face covering when in direct contact with customers or members of the public, or when unable to maintain social distance.

2. *Run of Show.*

Mandatory: Plan an item-by-item sequence of events that will happen at your Open Culture Event—this is called a “Run of Show” (ROS). A Run of Show is a mandatory part of your [Open Culture application](#). Include **names of performers/talent (e.g., artists, musicians, guests) description and programming, and timing** for:

- the event set-up,
- rehearsals and technical checks,
- performers/talent and event staff² arrival times,
- performance/event duration,
- timing of different acts, if applicable,
- breaks and intermissions,
- end of performance,
- audience exiting, and
- event breakdown/clean-up.

You can use the [template for a run of show](#) provided by the NYC Street Permit Activity Office (SAPO). You can see a [sample run of show on SAPO’s website](#). (You do not need to use SAPO’s template.)

3. *Site plan.*

Mandatory: A site plan is a mandatory part of your [Open Culture application](#). See the section below called “Site Visit” to help create the site plan.

Create a site plan that includes:

- the location of fire hydrants,
- a 15-foot emergency lane,
- all items placed on the street (e.g., the stage, seating, portable restrooms),
- audience standing arrangement or an audience seating arrangement, and
- other items in the instructions on [SAPO’s template for a site plan](#).

You can see an [example site plan](#) on SAPO’s website. (You do not need to use SAPO’s template.) You can see example street performance configurations in Appendix B.

4. *COVID-19 Event Safety Plan and Checklist Affirmation.*

² In this document, “event staff” includes production personnel, front-of-house personnel, back-of-house personnel, contractors, and vendors; it does not include performers/talent or audience/patrons.

Mandatory. Submit COVID-19 Event Safety Plan and Checklist Affirmation using [SAPO's template](#).

5. *Communications Plan.*

- You should develop a communications plan for employees, performers/talent and patrons that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information.
- You should also consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and social media that explain health and safety precautions.
- You should provide a pre-event announcement outlining safety and health protocols in effect at the event. For example, "If you are unvaccinated, please wear your face covering at this event. If you are vaccinated you may choose to wear your face covering or take it off."

6. *Budgeting.*

Plan your budget. Consider the costs of the following, if applicable:

- wages for performers/talent and event staff,
- licenses for music, scripts, and other third-party copyrighted materials (for information about music licenses, see <https://repertoire.bmi.com>; <https://www.ascap.com/repertory#>),
- transportation,
- sound permit (\$45), **mandatory** if you want to use a sound device,
- printing health and safety signs,
- printing programs,
- sets, props, costumes, and equipment and their care,
- laundering of costumes,
- seating and barricade rental,
- reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities (**mandatory**),
- marketing,
- **mandatory** face coverings for employees, and
- **mandatory** commercial general liability insurance (unless SAPO granted a waiver) and, if required by law, workers' compensation insurance and disability and paid family leave benefits insurance. (Find out if you need to [maintain workers' compensation insurance here](#) and call the NYS Workers Compensation Board at (877) 632-4996 if you have questions.)

7. *Production equipment and other items.*

Order the production equipment and other items you will need to have a successful show to be delivered no later than your technical run-through. Review the list of “Prohibited Elements” in the [Open Culture guidelines](#). Some items you might need are:

- generator, if you need electricity (note the guidelines prohibit (1) a generator with greater than 2.5 gallons of gasoline or greater than 10 gallons of diesel capacity (2) a truck/trailer-mounted generator or any generator equal to or greater than 40 kw output),
- tents and sandbags/weights (note the guidelines prohibit a tent or canopy exceeding 400 gross square feet),
- cables and cable ramps,
- music,
- speakers,
- microphones and microphone stands,
- playback source (e.g., a laptop) and a mixer,
- lights,
- cooling equipment in hot weather,
- a device to collect tickets, either electronically or in paper form,
- tables and chairs,
- temporary fencing, barricades, or other delineators to enclose the event and restrict access to ticketholders (provided that they do not prevent members of the public from viewing the event from outside of the designated event space),
- water (for drinking and handwashing),
- face coverings (**mandatory**),
- PPE, cleaning, and disinfection supplies.

8. *Emergency plans.*

- Make a plan to inform your participants and ticket holders if you need to cancel or postpone the event due to inclement weather, a performer’s/talent’s illness, or another exigent circumstance.
- Make an evacuation plan in case of emergency.

B. Site Visit

Before the performance and as you develop your site plan, visit the location of your Open Culture event on the day of the week and at the time of day that your event will take place. Ask yourself these questions:

1. *Audience, performers/talent, and event staff needs.*

- How far is the nearest available restroom?
- Is security needed due to crime in the area?
- Where is the closest emergency room if a participant or attendee gets hurt?
- Where is parking? Where can vehicles with equipment be unloaded?
- Are there special requirements to make the event accessible to people with disabilities (e.g., is a ramp from the sidewalk necessary to help a person with a mobility disability reach the audience area in a street bed)?

2. *Potential sources of noise, crowds or traffic.*

- Is there a school near your Open Culture event?
 - If yes, prepare for potential noise during recess periods and noise and crowds at the end of the school day.
- Is a funeral home, church, synagogue, mosque, or other house of worship active during the time of day of your performance?
 - If yes, prepare for the potential gathering of crowds.
- Is there a senior center or large capacity facility or store nearby?
 - If yes, prepare for potential high-volume client or customer traffic.
- Are lunch vendor carts or food distributions nearby?
 - If yes, prepare for potential high-volume foot traffic and gatherings.

3. *Potential obstructions and dangers.*

- uneven pavement or holes
- street furniture
- trash cans
- bike stands
- traffic signs
- walkways and sidewalks
- mailboxes, and
- trees, plants, shrubbery
- inadequate streetlights at night for safe audience exit

You are responsible for safety during the duration of your Open Culture permit. You will not be allowed to obstruct street furniture, trash cans, bike stands, traffic signs, walkways/sidewalks, and mailboxes, and you cannot use or damage plants, and shrubbery.

C. Event Staff

In addition to performers/talent like musicians and dancers, you will need event staff for your Open Culture event. How you delegate the work is up to you, but events often hire these positions:

1. *Event coordinator.*

Organizes and manages the Open Culture event, including event planning and on-site event management. Duties may include obtaining the permit(s), creating a site plan and run of show, budgeting, signage, hiring event staff, creating timelines, assessing technical needs, logistics and transportation, overseeing ticket sales and audience communication, securing equipment, overseeing event set-up, breakdown, and clean-up, holding the SAPO and NYPD sound permits, and liaising with government officials and enforcement.

2. *“Front-of-house” event staff.*

Interfaces with the public on the day of the event. Duties may include taking tickets, operating the box office overseeing audience compliance with health and safety requirements, security, assisting audience members with seating or escorting them to their standing position, assisting people with disabilities if requested, and fielding questions and complaints from the public.

3. *Production assistant(s).*

Helps with event set up and breakdown. Duties may include setting up a tent and equipment, posting signs, setting up street closings, arranging barriers, setting up chairs or drawing marks on the pavement to maintain social distancing, and marking fire lanes.

4. *Stage manager(s).*

Oversees all “backstage” activity on the day of the event. Duties may include: managing performers/talent and crew arrivals, coordinating rehearsals,

coordinating the work of the technical crew, calling all cues during the show, providing information to performers/talent and crew as needed (such as the site plan, COVID-19 health and safety information), maintaining a contact sheet with performers/talent and crew phone numbers.

5. *Crew.*

Sets up, breaks down, and operates all technical equipment, the stage, and the set. Depending on your event, you may need a technical director, sound manager, lighting manager, props manager, and costume and makeup manager in addition to assistants for each of those positions.

D. Training and Preparation

- Provide training to performers/talent and event staff about COVID-19 safety protocols before the event.
- Provide front-of-house event staff training in accommodations for people with disabilities (**mandatory**).
- Give performers/talent and event staff arrival times.
- Ask performers/talent to arrive “show ready” in costume and makeup, if possible.

E. NYPD

1. *Sound permit.*

At least five days before the event: If you are using a sound device, you **must** [apply for a sound permit](#). File your application [at the precinct](#) where your Open Culture event is located. **This is mandatory if you are using a sound device such as a speaker.**

2. *No parking signs.*

Two to three days before the event, pick up “no parking” signs from [the precinct](#) where your Open Culture event is located and, 24-48 hours before the event, post them on the street where your Open Culture event is located. The “no parking” signs notify residents and visitors that there will be no parking on the street on the day of your performance. NYPD tow trucks likely will not be available to remove vehicles in your way. After the signs are posted, check daily to make sure they are still there. If someone has taken down the signs, replace them.

F. Ticket sales and audience communication

1. *Ticket sales.*

Determine how to sell tickets, if you wish to charge the audience.

- Set-up of pre-event digital or contactless ticketing is recommended.
- On-site and cash purchase of tickets is allowed.

2. *Information.*

- If you have an event website or marketing materials, include directions to the event and highlight restaurants, shopping, and cultural interests nearby.
- Provide information about accommodations for people with disabilities and who to contact to make a request for a reasonable accommodation (e.g., an American Sign Language interpreter will be available)
- Roughly 25% of New Yorkers have limited English proficiency; consider providing translated information so that all can enjoy your event.

3. *Signs.*

Prepare signs for your event, such as:

- a sign for the name of your event,
- instructions for social distancing and face coverings,
- entrance and exit areas for the ticketed audience area,
- the location of restrooms,
- seating reserved for people with disabilities,
- a sign notifying the audience they might be filmed, if applicable.

Lightweight signs attached to a portable pole can help create a “mock stage,” and can be used to maintain a safe distance (at least 12 feet) between performers/talent and audience members.

See Appendix A for a photograph of a street event with signage.

III. Community Relations

The success of the Open Culture program depends on support from the communities that host Open Culture locations. We urge you to follow these recommendations to make sure that you are considerate to the New Yorkers who live and work where you will be performing.

A. Make contact

Contact businesses, local community associations, and the local Business Improvement District(s) (BID) before your event and tell them when and what you are doing. SAPO can provide contact information for Business Improvement Districts.

Contact community boards and local elected officials and let them know you are performing in their districts. They may want to support your event!

B. Support local businesses

Support businesses near your performance location by suggesting them to your performers/talent and event staff for lunch or purchases (such as hardware).

Consider asking businesses for space to store participants' personal belongings or access to a restroom and offer to pay them for this help.

C. Consider the neighborhood's residents and culture

Get a sense of who lives, works, and goes to school near the location of your Open Culture event. Consider tailoring your content to these individuals and providing translated materials for limited-English-proficient neighbors. Be sensitive to facilities like schools, funeral homes, or houses of worship nearby. Designate a member of the event staff who can promptly respond to community complaints and questions.

IV. Day of your Open Culture Event

A. Bring small items

- copy of the permit, Run of Show, and other required plans (if any),
- cue cards for performer timekeeping,
- contact information for all performers/talent and event staff,

- extra cell phone batteries and portable cell phone chargers,
- brooms, containers, trash bags, and any supplies and equipment needed to clean and prepare the site and for the required cleanup following your event,
- pens, pencils, chalk,
- toolkit,
- gaffer's tape, blank signs, rope/string, sharpies or markers, covers, pylons,
- safety pins, needles and thread for costume problems,
- bags for used costumes that require cleaning,
- sunscreen and a first aid kit,
- face masks, rubber gloves, and hand sanitizer for performers/talent, event staff, audience, and onlookers,
- cleaning and disinfection supplies,
- small bills for last-minute purchases and cash ticket sales.

B. Set, props, and equipment delivery

- Coordinate delivery of sets, props, and equipment so they are set up in advance of technical run throughs and performance rehearsals.

C. Create a safe space

- tape down cords and use protective cable covers,
- use pylons or signs to mark wet or uneven pavement,
- place heavy equipment like generators and speakers away from the audience and passersby,
- make sure generator fumes, if any, blow away from people,
- provide a secure area to store performers/talent and event staff personal belongings (perhaps near equipment cases, in a nearby car, or with a guest or colleague accompanying them),
- sweep glass and debris from the street.

D. Performers/talent and event staff

- Assign event staff to greet and guide performers/talent upon their arrival.
- Advise performers/talent and event staff to bring minimal personal belongings onsite, in case storage is not available.
- Account for instruments, props, or other essential items brought by performers/talent.

E. Patrons/Audiences

- Consider hand stamps or wrist bands for ticketed audience members so they can leave and return.
- Mark lines on the pavement in chalk or use tape or markers to give audience directions (e.g., where to wait in line, where to exit).
- Help unvaccinated individuals to follow the State's rules for masking and social distancing by posting COVID-19 safety signs and monitoring compliance.
- Provide seats for people with disabilities who need to sit (**mandatory**).
- If you provide seats for the audience, test the seats on the sides and in the rear to make sure they have clear sightlines to the performance.

F. Clean Up

Open Culture permittees must maintain the cleanliness of the location during the event and thoroughly clean the street after the event (**mandatory**).

- Place garbage receptacles at the event site for performers/talent and event staff and public use.
- Take down the set, chairs, barricade and other elements promptly after the event ends each day.
- Bag all trash and remove trash bags promptly daily after the event ends.
- Bring a broom and gloves to pick up discarded masks and litter from the event.

V. **Further Help**

If you have questions about the Open Culture program or tips in this *Roadmap*, please contact Carla Hoke Miller at cphokemiller@media.nyc.gov.

VI. **About the Authors**

The Open Culture Roadmap: Tips for a Successful Performance in the Street was created by City governmental agencies that have experience organizing hundreds of outdoor public events and performances on New York City streets throughout the five boroughs: the NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME), the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), the Street Activities Permitting Office (SAPO) within the NYC Mayor's Office of Citywide

Events Coordination and Management (CECM), and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA).

A. Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment

The [Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment \(MOME\)](#) works to support New York City's thriving creative economy and make it accessible to all. MOME has created programs, initiatives, and resources for all New Yorkers – from those who work in the creative industries and those who aspire to a career in these industries, to those who simply want to experience the city's cultural offerings.

B. Department of Transportation

The [New York City Department of Transportation's \(NYC DOT\)](#) mission is to provide for the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods in the City of New York and to maintain and enhance the transportation infrastructure crucial to the economic vitality and quality of life of our primary customers, City residents. Arts and culture is an integral part of the efforts of NYC DOT to enhance the quality of life for all New Yorkers in the public realm. Public art, performances and cultural programming presented on NYC DOT property create attractive corridors, activate public space, increase access to arts, cultural and educational resources, establish meaningful partnerships with community stakeholders, and provide paid opportunities to the creative arts sector of New York City.

C. Street Activity Permit Office

The [Street Activity Permit Office \(SAPO\)](#), a unit of the New York City Mayor's Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management (CECM), issues permits for street festivals, block parties, farmers markets, commercial or promotional events, and other events on the City's streets, sidewalks and pedestrian plazas while protecting the interests of the City, the community and the general public. SAPO is the agency that reviews applications and issues permits for the Open Culture program.

D. Department of Cultural Affairs

[The Department of Cultural Affairs \(DCLA\)](#) provides financial support and technical assistance to the City's cultural community, including 34 City-owned institutions that comprise the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) and over 1,000 other cultural nonprofit organizations serving residents and visitors across the five boroughs. The agency manages a significant portfolio of cultural capital projects; provides donated materials for arts programs; and also commissions works of public art.

Appendix A: Signage

This photograph shows signs posted at the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment's *Off Broadway in the Boros*. This partnership with theaters and companies consisted of 20-minute, filmed performances in October 2020. See [videos on MOME's webpage](#).



MOME *Off Broadway in the Boros: Pop Ups*, October 2020
Performance by Whitney White and Dan Rosato, with The Bushwick Starr Theater
Myrtle/Wyckoff Plaza, Ridgewood-Bushwick, Queens/Brooklyn

Appendix B: Sample Street Performance Configurations



Elisa Monte Dance, Open Culture Announcement, February 2021
Old Dock Street, DUMBO, Brooklyn



MOME *Off Broadway in the Boros: Pop Ups*, October 2020
Performance by YACKEZ, with Chocolate Factory Theater
Lowery Plaza, Sunnyside Queens

NYC DOT presents arts and cultural programming annually on public streets as part of two large-scale, car-free events, **Summer Streets** and **Car Free Earth Day** that are similar to the events permitted under the Open Culture program. Dance, music and theatrical performances along with educational classes and workshops are hosted on car-free streets in partnership with arts and cultural partners. NYC DOT hosts 30-minute performances and day-long workshops. Examples of past performances and workshops can be seen on [DOT's Flickr page](#) and below.



HONK NYC (Musical Performance)
Summer Streets
Uptown Rest Stop: 52nd Street and Park Avenue



Robert Anderson Band (Musical Performance)
Herald Square Rest Stop: 36th Street and Broadway
Car Free Earth Day

Below is an example of an equipment and event staff list used by NYC DOT for a street performance:

AV Equipment Type: (2) JBL PRX 612M powered speakers on sticks, playback source (laptop or other storage device), PCDI for Mac laptop playback source, (1) Mackie 8 Channel Analog Mixer, mic stand, wired mic, Madonna mic

Production Equipment: (8) 25 lb sandbags, cables (1/8" to RCA Cables), cable ramps, (1) performance generator (Honda EU3000)

BOH/Sound Tent: (1) 10' x 10' Tent EZ UP w/ weights, (2) sidewalls, (1) table, (2) chairs

Green Room: (1) 10' x 10' Tent EZ UP w/ weights, (4) sidewalls, (1) table with linen, (2) chairs

Signage: 24" x 36" Coroplast

Staffing: Tech Director, Operations Lead, Event Coordinator, Production Assistant, Signage Lead, Support Staff