



# Small Business Readiness Playbook:

## A Practical Guide for Mega Event Preparation in Washington State

in partnership with the Seattle FIFA World Cup 26™  
Local Organizing Committee



# A statement from the Seattle FIFA World Cup 26™ Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

As the non-profit local organizing committee for Seattle's six FIFA World Cup 26™ matches, SeattleFWC26 is proud to partner with the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce to create this Small Business Readiness Playbook. The playbook is a key part of our work to provide small businesses across Washington with more information and opportunities to benefit when the world's largest sporting event comes to our state while creating a resource that can be updated for future major events.

SeattleFWC26 thanks the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Washington State Department of Commerce, Washington State Public Stadium Authority, and Seattle Foundation for their generous support of this project.



# Playbook Legacy: A Statewide Game Plan for Small Business Support

As the official small business liaison partner to the Local Organizing Committee (SeattleFWC26), the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, through its Community Business Connector (CBC) initiative, supports businesses in preparing for the increased international visibility and economic impact associated with the World Cup tournament. Outside of Seattle, the Chamber has supported cities across King County through World Cup Ready early activation grants and watch party funding in South King County and unincorporated areas, business readiness webinars, and now a statewide Small Business Readiness Playbook.

The Seattle Metro Chamber is a business advocacy organization that helps our members thrive in an equitable and inclusive regional economy. Since 2018, the Chamber has served as the designated Associated Development Organization (ADO) for King County, funded in part by the Washington State Department of Commerce and local partners. In this role, the [ADO](#) functions as Commerce's economic development liaison and strengthens the region's alignment with statewide goals. This affiliation has deepened regional partnerships, including with the Washington State Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA), and enhanced our ability to support a more equitable and inclusive business environment.

The Community Business Connector initiative shapes many of the strategies presented here. CBC provides clear steps and resources, so businesses know where to go for help, who to contact, and what support already exists. While CBC is gaining awareness across King County, this Playbook introduces its community-centered approach to a statewide audience and offers shared guidance to connect business resource networks throughout Washington.

With the release of this Playbook, we want to build on CBC's regional and national recognition, including the 2023 Washington Economic Development Association Award for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the 2024 International Economic Development Council Excellence Silver Award for Regional and Cross-Border Partnership.

Looking ahead, a CBC business resource network in any community can use the Playbook to apply shared practices, connect businesses to resources, and promote more consistent support statewide. Following the Playbook's release, King County can take part in a free one-stop business support portal featuring event calendars, technical assistance booking and service ratings, B2B exchange boards, partner forums, and more. Together with its accompanying online tools, the Playbook demonstrates how Washington can strengthen networked support for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and partner organizations well beyond FIFA World Cup 26™.

*The Small Business Readiness Playbook: A Practical Guide for Mega Event Preparation in Washington State* will be updated as new resources are developed and as Washington's small business support ecosystem continues to advance. As AI influences business operations and marketing strategies, future editions may include an AI overview, a social media toolkit, or industry-specific guides. At present, we have delivered a foundational tool that serves as a starting point for small businesses, technical advisors, and trusted connectors to get ready to do business in Washington State.



Vaughn Taylor

Vice President of Economic Development  
Seattle Metro Chamber of Commerce

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## Conclusion & Acknowledgements

# Introduction

The Small Business Readiness Playbook is designed to help small businesses prepare with confidence. This guide explains how mega events work, outlines the roles of federal, state, county, and city partners, and shares practical strategies to help businesses stay open, compliant, and ready to serve customers. Topics include operations, staffing, cash flow, technology, marketing, customer experience, sustainability, public safety, and coordination with nearby businesses and community organizations.

This playbook is intended as a general guide to help small businesses prepare for and navigate large events. It does not replace official rules, regulations, professional advice, or requirements from federal, state, county, or city authorities. Laws, regulations, and conditions can change, and individual circumstances may vary. Business owners are responsible for understanding and complying with all applicable requirements and for making decisions that are appropriate for their specific situations.

**Each section of the Playbook offers clear, practical steps to support business readiness:**

## 1 **Mega Events Overview & Case Studies**

Explains what qualifies as a mega event and how these events affect business activity. It includes case studies from Washington State and other cities.

## 2 **Business Readiness**

Focuses on planning ahead. This section covers what it means to be “business ready,” including management practices, technology needs, permits, and support available through place-based, regional, and statewide organizations. It also includes guidance for freelancers, independent contractors, and solo entrepreneurs.

## 3 **Day-of Readiness**

Provides tools for event days, including compliance checklists, daily routines, staff communication, and guidance for managing crowds and customer flow. This section is designed for quick reference when operations are busiest.

## 4 **Marketing & Promotions**

Covers how to market to visitors in a responsible and effective way. Topics include social media best practices, working with neighborhoods and local media, privacy considerations, promotional opportunities, and rules for using official logos and branding.

## 5 **Special Topics & Safety**

Addresses safety and risk topics that become more important during large events, including security planning, scams and fraud prevention, hate crimes, disorderly conduct, weather events, and sustainability practices that support long-term business readiness.



**U**The Playbook also connects businesses to trusted regional partners, technical assistance providers, and support organizations, making it easier to find help when it is needed.

***Throughout the playbook, contacts and resources are marked with a paper clip icon for easy reference.***

This resource is intended to support small businesses as they prepare for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™, one of the largest sporting events in the world. Hosting matches in Washington is a major milestone for the state and reflects its long history of hosting large public gatherings, cultural festivals, and sporting events. While the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ is a central focus, the guidance in this Playbook is designed to be useful for many types of large events, now and in the future.

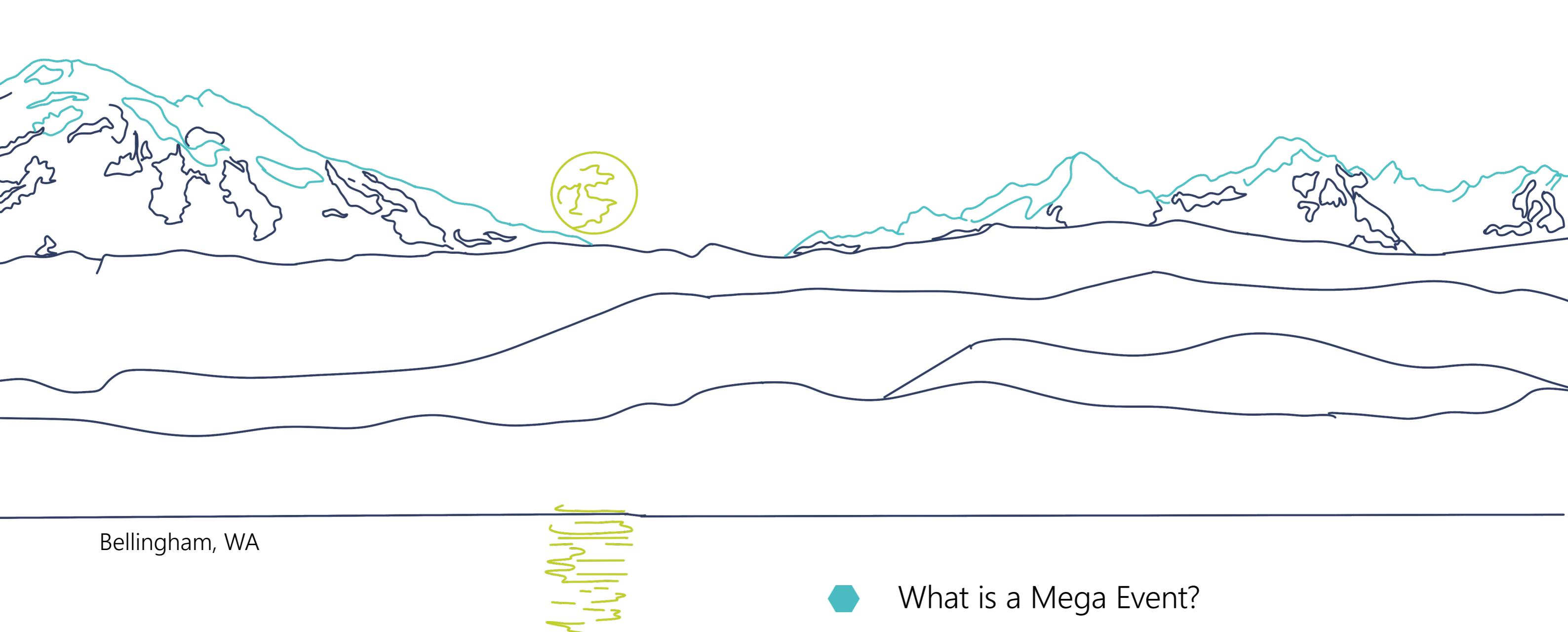
To balance long-term value with event-specific needs, each section includes a 2026 Game Day Ready conclusion. These sections highlight timelines, links, and regulations specific to the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ for businesses seeking event-specific details, while keeping the main guidance broadly applicable.



***Keep an eye out for the soccer ball icon to find information specific to the FIFA World Cup 26™.***

It is important to note that mega event details can and do change as event dates get closer. Permitting rules, security plans, transportation impacts, and official guidance may shift. Businesses are encouraged to use this Playbook as a planning foundation and to regularly check linked resources and partner updates as events approach.

The goal of this Playbook is to provide clear information and practical tools that help small businesses prepare, stay informed, and build resilience. With early planning and strong connections to local partners, businesses can be better positioned to navigate major events and strengthen their operations for whatever comes next.



# 1 **Mega Events** Overview & Case Studies

- ◆ What is a Mega Event?
- ◆ Case Studies: Mega Events in Washington State & U.S Cities
- ◆ What Mega Events Teach Us About Small Business Readiness in Washington State
- ◆ Conclusion and 2026 Game Day Ready Information

Click on any topic title to jump to topic.

# What is a Mega Event?

Mega events are large-scale, highly visible, gatherings that draw massive crowds and national attention.

They include the World Cup, the Olympics, sporting events, major concerts and festivals. An unfortunate large-scale emergency or weather event may be considered a mega event due to the significant public attention and response it generates.

These occasions transform how a city moves, shops, and operates, affecting traffic patterns, public transit, safety protocols, and customer behavior.



For small businesses, mega events may create short periods of high demand followed by quieter stretches once the crowds leave.

There is also no guarantee that the crowds will stumble upon your business.

Businesses that plan early are best positioned to make the most of these short windows and turn them into long-term gains.





Click on any case study title to jump to it.

## Case Studies: Real-World Mega Events in Washington State & U.S. Cities

The following studies highlight how businesses in Washington have experienced and adapted to mega events. They show what worked, what didn't, and what local owners can do now to get "event-ready" for the opportunities ahead.

[Taylor Swift Eras Tour: Seattle, July 2023](#)

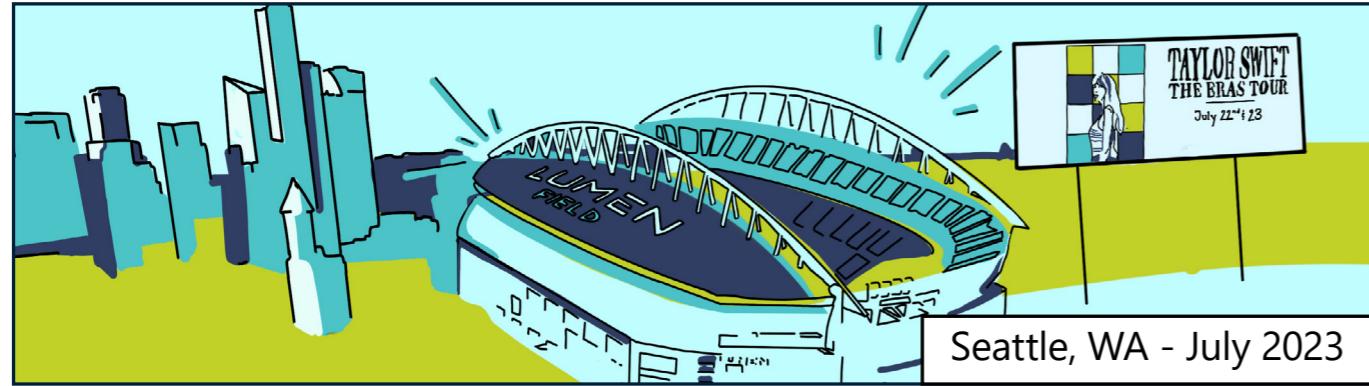
[Major League Baseball All-Star Week: Seattle, July 2023](#)

[Hoopfest: Spokane, WA June 2024](#)

[NFL Draft 2024: Detroit, Michigan](#)

[Centennial Olympic Games: Atlanta, Georgia 1996](#)

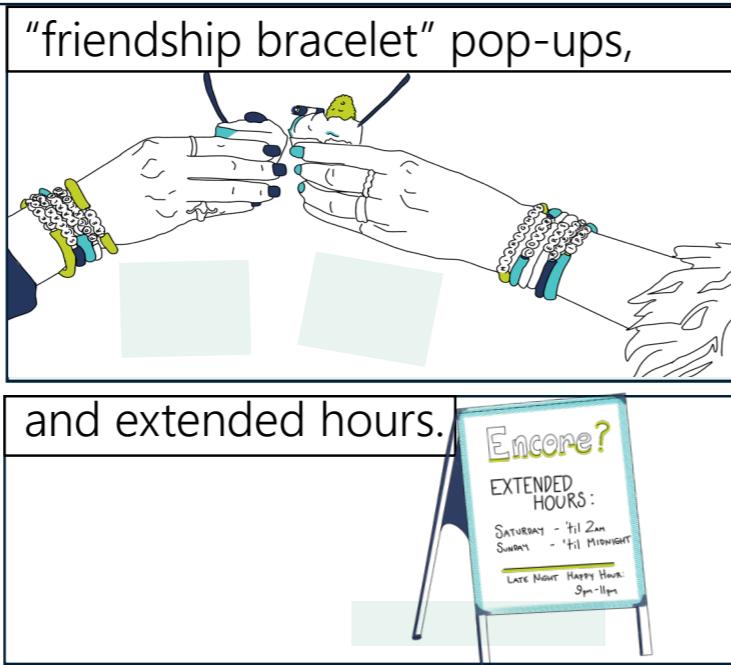
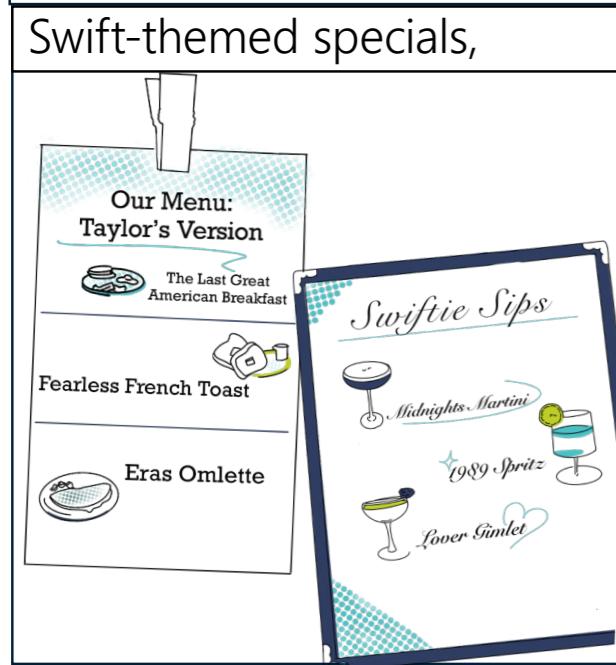
# Taylor Swift "Eras Tour"



Taylor Swift's Eras Tour brought two sold-out shows to Lumen Field. According to the Downtown Seattle Association, the weekend drew 1.15 million visitors to downtown Seattle, the highest two-day total since before the pandemic. The concerts created intense spikes in pedestrian activity, transit use, hotel demand, and pre- and post-event crowd movements across Pioneer Square, Downtown, SoDo, and the stadium district.



Restaurants, cafés, and retailers saw record one-day sales with...



## Key Impacts:



Downtown hotels generated \$7.4 million in revenue over the weekend.



Restaurants downtown saw 30% increase in sales compared to typical summer weekends.



Quick-service, grab-and-go, and small themed items performed best.



Businesses that over-ordered large "Swift weekend" merchandise were left with excess stock.



Pre-event dining drove the most revenue, with long lines forming hours before each show and limited spending afterward.



Retailers selling outfits, accessories, and fan-culture items saw major spikes in foot traffic, with some reporting their strongest weekend of the year.



Craft stores and small vendors selling friendship-bracelet supplies connected to fan culture saw unusually high sell-through.



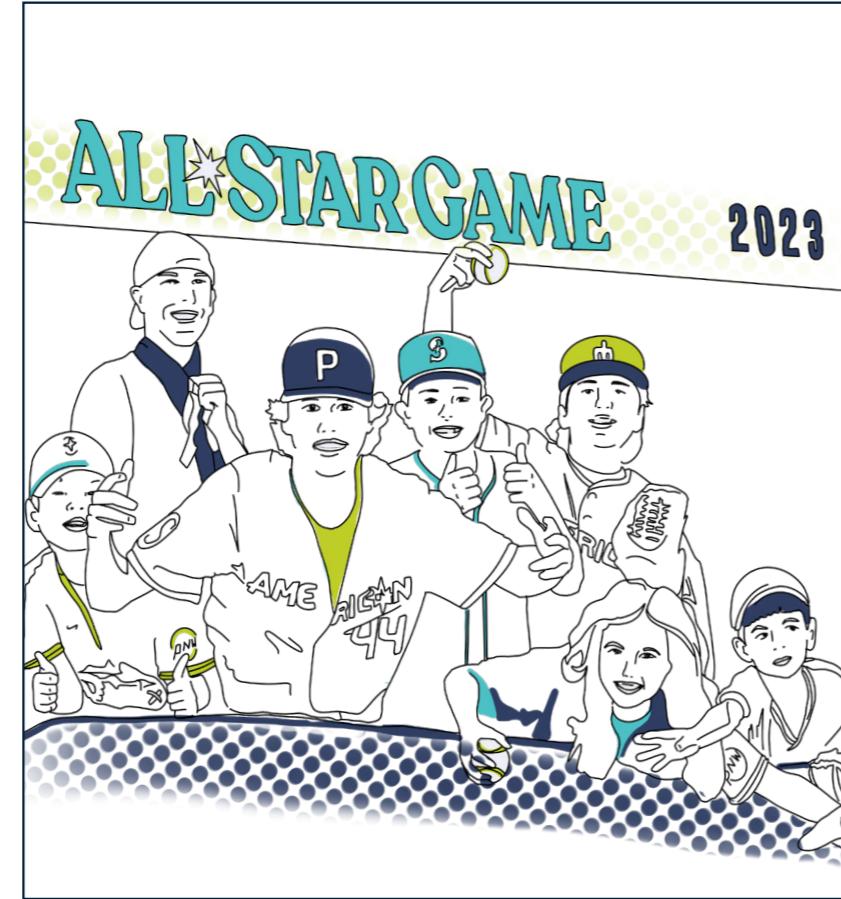
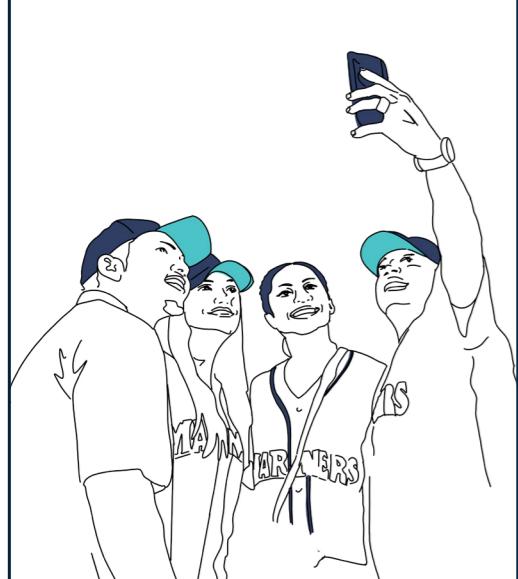
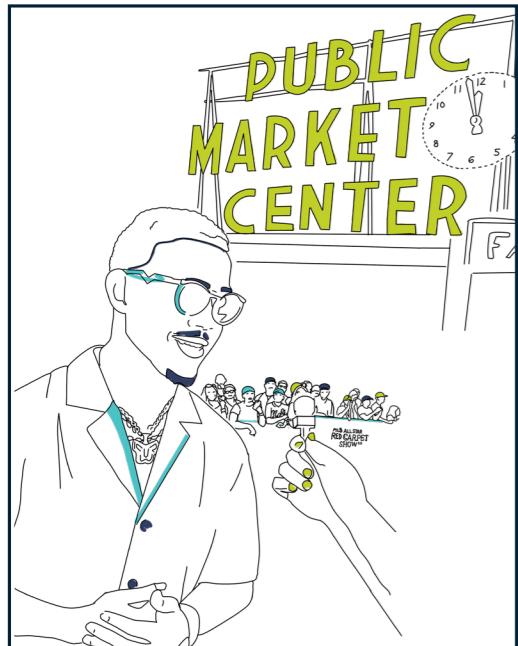
Partnering with community organizers and business support organizations helped increase business activation.



Activity extended well beyond the stadium area, with businesses downtown by the airport and even by the border crossings reporting an influx of activity.

# MLB All-Star Week

Seattle hosted MLB All-Star Week from July 7–11, 2023, drawing roughly 100,000 attendees across multiple days of events at T-Mobile Park and the Lumen Field Event Center.



The region saw strong hotel performance and increased activity in the stadium district, but economic benefits were uneven for small businesses. Companies closest to the stadium reported major revenue spikes, while many downtown, Pioneer Square, and neighborhood retailers saw flat or lower-than-expected sales. Visitor behavior centered heavily around official MLB venues. Neighborhood activations were a key to planning and coordinating programming, promotions, or wayfinding to bring visitors to commercial corridors.

## Key Impacts:



Visit Seattle projected \$50M+ in regional economic impact and 100,000+ visitors across All-Star events including the All-Star Game, Home Run Derby, and PLAY BALL PARK.



Downtown hotel occupancy hit 95.8% and 95.3% on July 10–11, generating \$5.38M and \$5.4M in revenue — the highest single-day totals ever recorded in Seattle.



Downtown Seattle Association programming (roller skating, arcade games, music, food) drove strong pre- and post-game foot traffic in Pioneer Square.



Visit Seattle, Intentionalist, and the Mariners launched the Green Path walking route and curated maps highlighting small BIPOC-, women-, and LGBTQIA+-owned businesses.



The Chinatown–International District was initially excluded from fan materials; advocacy led to its inclusion and creation of the Home Run Hangout festival. Uwajimaya reported increased fan traffic afterward.



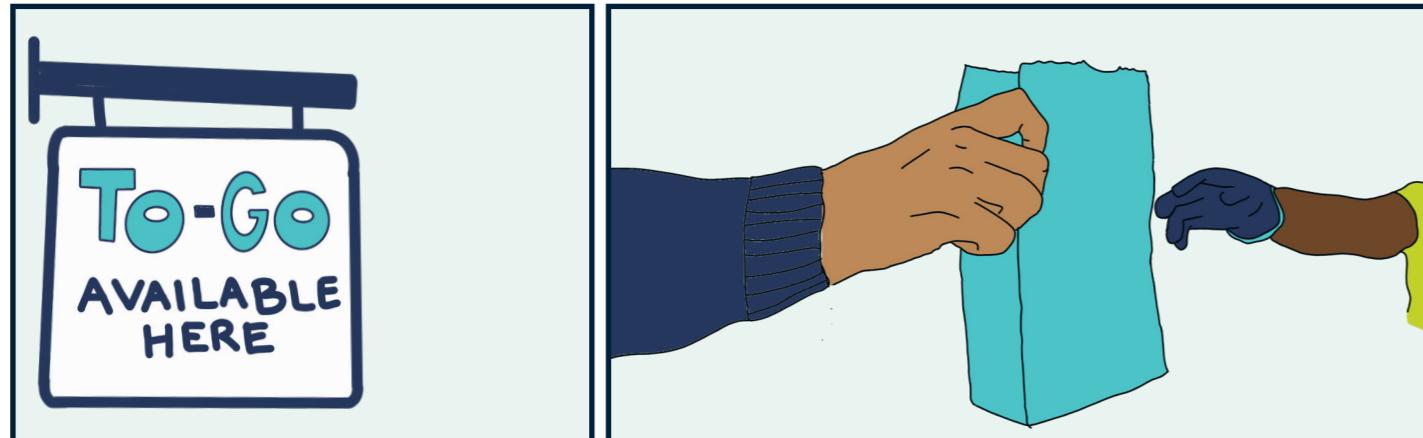
# HoopFest



Hoopfest 2024 reinforced Spokane's position as home to the world's largest 3-on-3 basketball tournament. The event continued to grow post-pandemic, drawing thousands of players, families, and spectators into downtown Spokane.

According to local business reporting, Hoopfest delivered one of the busiest weekends of the year for restaurants, bars, shops, and hotels.

The Spokane Hoopfest Association estimates the event generates around \$47 million annually in economic impact, driven by visitor spending on lodging, food, souvenirs, and activities—making it one of Eastern Washington's most important tourism and business drivers.



Festival-style purchasing means quick-service food and portable menu items are popular with customers during this busy weekend.

## Key Impacts:



With 24,000+ players, 6,000 teams, 3,000 volunteers, and 450+ courts, Hoopfest is easily one of the highest-foot-traffic weekends of the year in downtown Spokane.



After Hoopfest 2024, KHQ reported that downtown Spokane businesses saw a major sales boost, with consistent customer traffic from early morning until evening.



KHQ interviews highlighted that festival-style purchasing dominated. Long lines formed at food vendors, cafés, and restaurants offering fast, mobile options.



Those that plan ahead with extra staff, inventory, and event-specific offerings see the strongest revenue gains during this \$47 million economic-impact weekend.



# NFL Draft

In April 2024, Detroit hosted the NFL Draft, which welcomed over 775,000 fans and was the largest in the event's history. It also included visitors from all 50 states and

more than 20 countries. The three-day event activated Detroit's downtown core, cultural districts, and riverfront with concerts, fan experiences, public art, and community programming. State and local partners highlighted the Draft as a milestone for Detroit's resurgence, boosting national visibility and hospitality activity across Southeast Michigan.



Detroit, MI - April, 2024



Placemaking installations, concerts, and other creative activations drew crowds to new areas, expanding economic impact to businesses across the city.



Visitors travelled to Detroit from all 50 states and more than 20 countries, boosting visibility for hospitality businesses across Southeast Michigan.



Business corridors that set up "Fan Zones" drove heavy foot traffic to surrounding businesses.



Oxford Economics found the Draft generated \$213.6 million in economic impact, including \$161.3 million in direct spending and \$28 million in state and local tax revenue.



Hotels across Metro Detroit booked more than 275,000 room nights, the highest in years.



Detroit also saw \$10 million in economic activity even before the Draft began, due to early visitors, media, and event crews.

The Downtown Detroit Partnership reported that Campus Martius, Cadillac Square, Hart Plaza, Woodward Avenue, and the Riverwalk hosted fan zones, concerts, placemaking installations, markets, and performances. These activations drove heavy foot traffic into surrounding restaurants, bars, and retail corridors.

NFL Football Operations organized community cleanups, youth football clinics, school visits, food distribution events, and park revitalization projects

Visit Detroit highlights that murals and sculptures by Detroit artists animated the Draft footprint and celebrated local

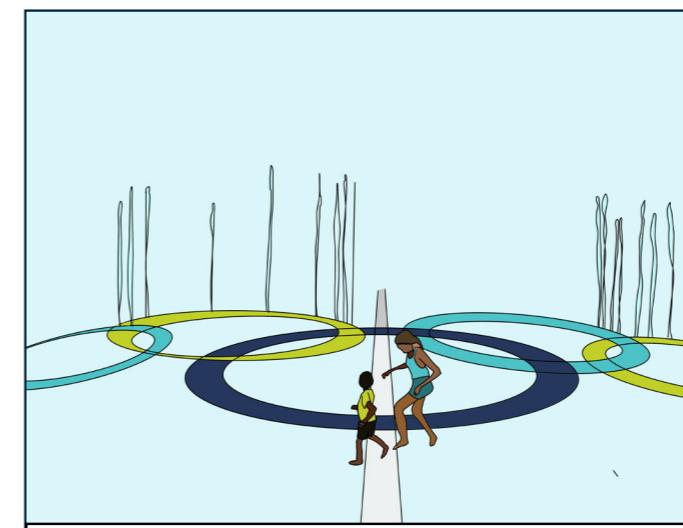
The Detroit Regional Chamber noted that the Draft delivered more than \$160 million in advertising value and strengthened Detroit's reputation as a world-class host city. State and local leaders expect the event to drive continued tourism, investment, and future event recruitment.



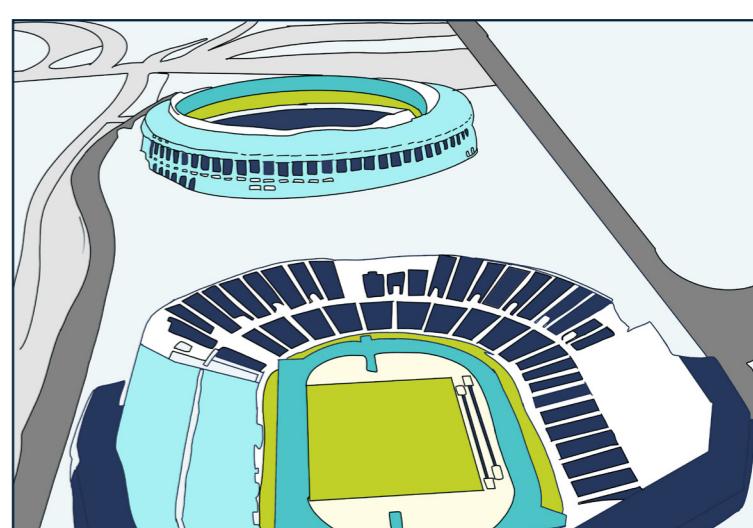
## 1996 Centennial Olympic Games



The 1996 Centennial Olympic Games brought over 2 million visitors, 197 nations, and unprecedented global attention to Atlanta. The Games reshaped the city's infrastructure, downtown development, and long-term economic trajectory. Overall, the Olympics brought a spotlight to Georgia that shaped the state for generations to come and lead to additional opportunities and business development.



Once the site of the 1996 bombing, Centennial Olympic Park now anchors a vibrant business district.



Centennial Olympic Stadium, now known as Georgia State Stadium, has been in near constant use since built.

## Key Impacts:



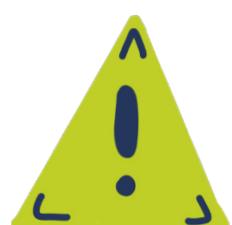
Atlanta welcomed over 2 million visitors and gained long-term global visibility as a modern, business-friendly city, boosting tourism, conventions, and investment.



The Games catalyzed major infrastructure upgrades. This continued fueling economic growth for decades, with Centennial Olympic Park transforming a former industrial area into a thriving district that attracted hotels, entertainment venues, and private development and became the anchor of today's downtown Sports-Entertainment District.



Local and minority-owned businesses secured construction, logistics, and service contracts, with many firms expanding capacity and visibility through Olympic supplier participation.



A bombing at Centennial Olympic Park killed 2 and injured over 100, underscoring that while such incidents are rare, mega-events require strong emergency planning, communication systems, and security coordination.

## What Mega Events Teach Us About Small Business Readiness in Washington State

Past mega events show a consistent pattern: the businesses that prepare early, stay flexible, and collaborate with partners see the strongest returns. Visitor spending is real, but don't automatically reach every neighborhood or store front. Across events in Seattle, Spokane, and national comparison cities, we can learn the following lessons.



# ✓ Opportunities for Small Businesses:

## Leaning Into Fan Culture Pays Off

 Businesses that aligned their products, menus, or displays with event themes (bracelets, outfits, quick souvenirs, themed menu items) saw major spikes in foot traffic and impulse buying.

## Activations Beyond the Event Site Pull Visitors into Neighborhoods

 During All-Star Week and the Eras Tour, businesses outside the main event zones benefitted when they partnered early with BIAs, tourism groups, or community organizers to create maps, walking routes, and neighborhood activations.

## Simplified Operations Drive Higher Sales

 Fast-service menus, grab-and-go items, and streamlined ordering allowed restaurants and cafés to move lines quickly and capture peak surges—especially during Hoopfest, Taylor Swift pre-show rush, and the NFL Draft.

## Matching Hours to Visitor Behavior Increases Revenue

 Retailers and restaurants that extended hours to align with event schedules (late-night foot traffic, pre-event rushes) doubled or tripled evening sales.

## Staying Within Branding Rules Still Works

 Businesses that used compliant, non-trademarked language ("soccer weekend specials," "big game menu," "tournament ready") attracted fans without risking takedowns.

## Technology Upgrades Reduce Bottlenecks

 Stronger Point Of Sale (POS) systems, mobile ordering, and reliable Wi-Fi helped businesses handle heavy visitor volume without slowing down lines.

## Staffing and Training Before the Event Protects the Customer Experience

 Teams that prepared early—cross-training, assigning crowd roles, planning breaks—performed smoothly even during intense surges.

## Potential Pitfalls & Lessons Learned:

### **Waiting Too Long to Prepare**

 Businesses that delayed planning missed opportunities, struggled to hire staff, or couldn't adjust menus and inventory in time for peak demand.

### **Not Accounting for Traffic, Deliveries, and Street Closures**

 Businesses lost inventory or experienced long delays because drivers couldn't access loading zones. Early coordination with suppliers is essential.

### **Overestimating Demand Without Data**

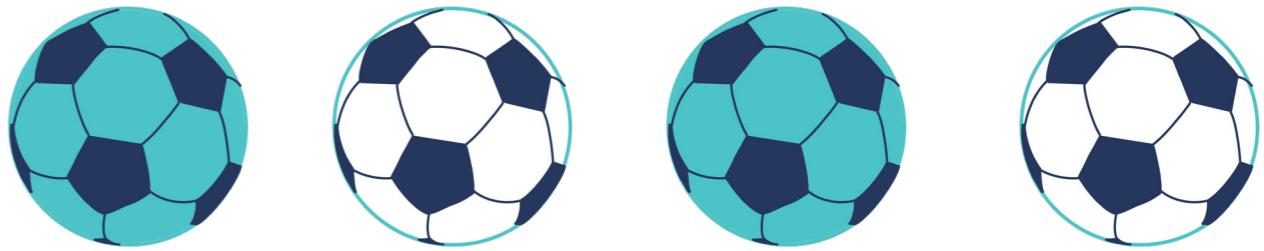
 Some retailers overordered themed merchandise and were left with unsold stock; forecasting should be based on real visitor behavior, not assumptions.

### **Ignoring the “Week After” Dip**

 There are predictable slowdown after the crowds leave. Businesses that planned for the dip managed cash flow more effectively.

### **Missing Permit Requirements**

 Businesses that skipped early permit checks missed chances for outdoor dining, sidewalk sales, or pop-up activations—and in some cases faced enforcement issues.

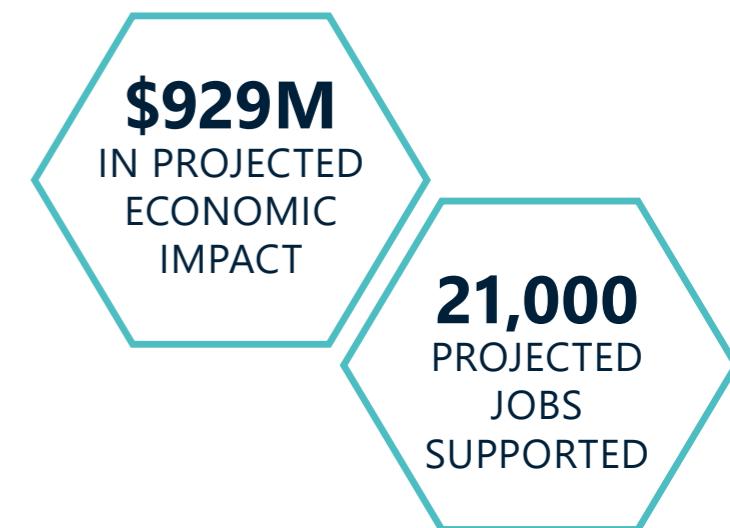


## Conclusion and 2026 Game Day Ready Information

This section covers mega events and key lessons learned by small businesses during past mega events. This is meant to prepare small business for the upcoming largest mega event in Washington state history, the FIFA World Cup 26™.

This event brings 48 national teams, 104 matches across North America, and unprecedented global attention. Seattle is one of 16 host cities across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, making this a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Washington's small businesses.

Visit Seattle projects that this event will generate \$929 million in regional economic impact and support 21,000 jobs.



The Seattle FIFA World Cup 26™ [Local Organizing Committee \(SeattleFWC26\)](#) is the official group responsible for planning, coordinating, and delivering everything related to the FIFA World Cup 26™ outside the stadium in the Seattle region. [FIFA](#) oversees activities inside the stadium. The LOC manages everything else required to host the event safely, successfully, and in a way that benefits local communities and businesses.

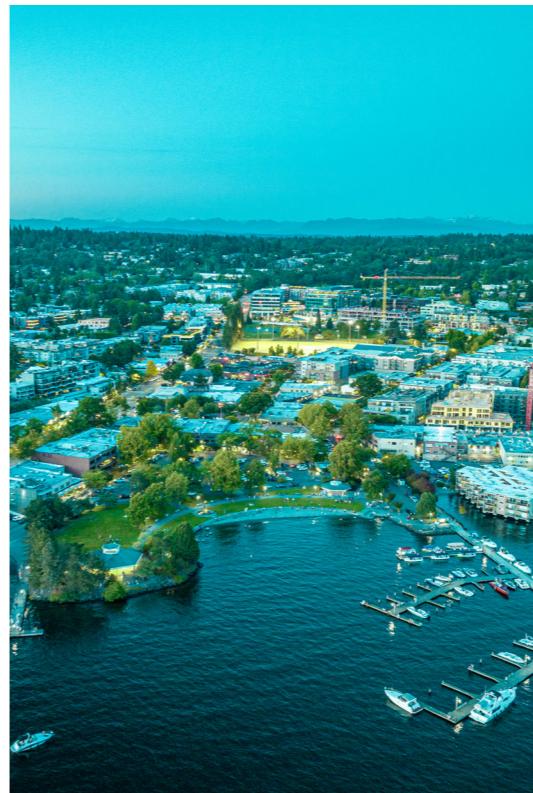
***Subscribe to the [Local Organizing Committee \(SeattleFWC26\)](#) to stay up to date.***



## Tournament Dates: June 11 – July 19, 2026

### SEATTLE STADIUM MATCHES:

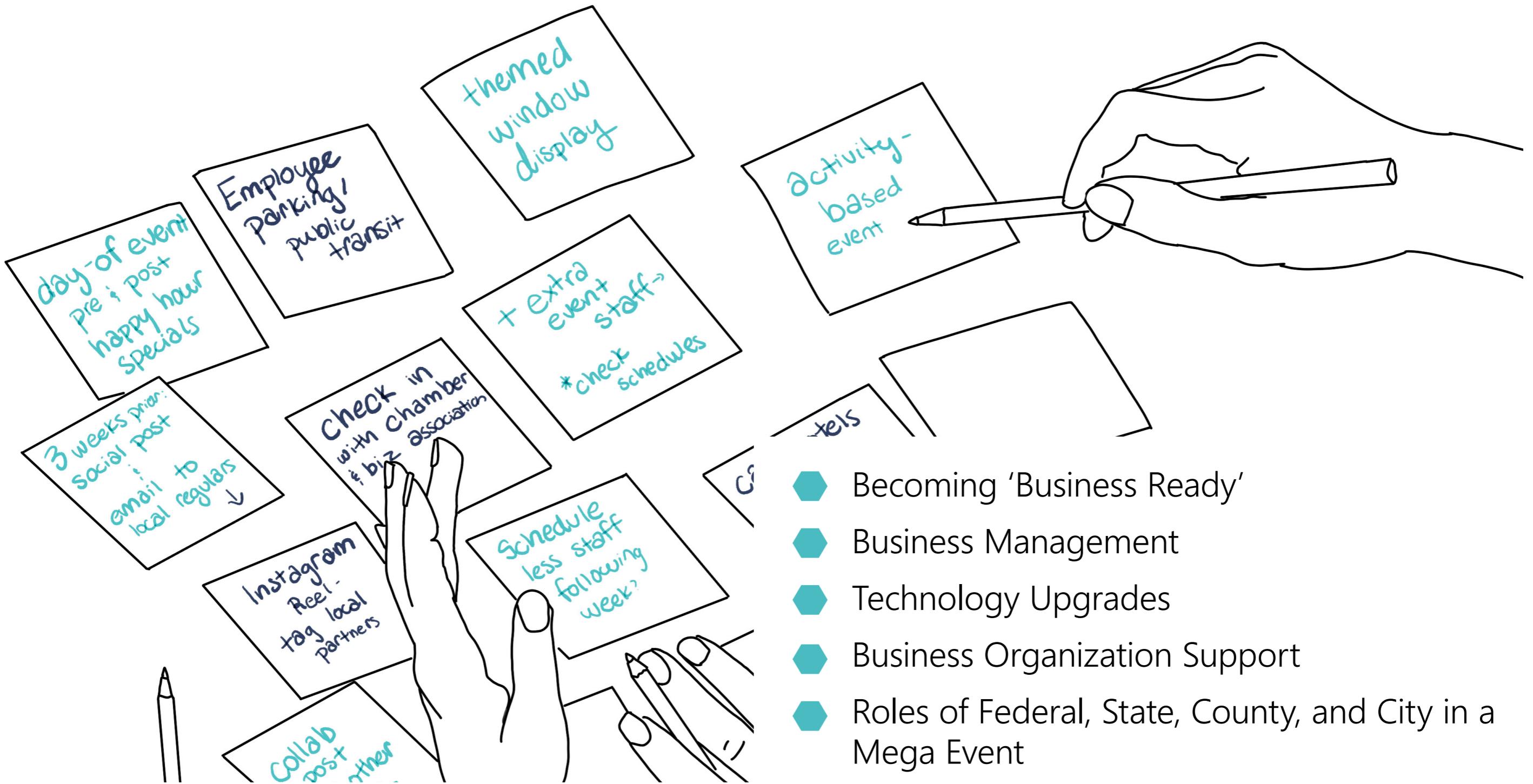
June 15	Group Stage (Belgium vs. Egypt)
June 19	Group Stage (USA vs. Australia / Juneteenth)
June 24	Group Stage (Qatar vs. Playoff Team TBD)
June 26	Group Stage (Egypt vs. Iran / Pride match day)
July 1	Round of 32
July 6	Round of 16



But the impact will not be limited to Seattle.

SeattleFWC26 is partnering with nine Washington communities—Bellingham, Bremerton, Everett, Olympia/Lacey, the Tri-Cities, Spokane, Tacoma, Vancouver, and Yakima—to host official fan zones, ensuring residents statewide can participate in the excitement.

The flagship Seattle Fan Celebration at Seattle Center will anchor the region's festivities, while initiatives like the Unity Loop, a new 4.25-mile pedestrian pathway connecting the stadium, Downtown, and Seattle Center, will guide visitors through local businesses and cultural spaces.



2

## Business Readiness

Click on any topic title to jump to topic.

-  Becoming 'Business Ready'
-  Business Management
-  Technology Upgrades
-  Business Organization Support
-  Roles of Federal, State, County, and City in a Mega Event
-  Permits During Mega Events
-  Freelancers, Independent and Solo Entrepreneurs
-  Contract and Temporary Work During Mega Events
-  Conclusion and 2026 Game Day Ready Resources: Business Readiness



Mega events bring new visitors, unusual travel patterns, and sudden spikes or drops in demand.

Being "business ready" means preparing your operations, staff, finances, and partnerships to manage spikes in demand and welcome visitors, protect your core business, and turn event activity into lasting revenue. This section covers the essentials, including understanding visitor behavior, strengthening operations, using technology, navigating permits and government roles, accessing business support networks like Washington Dollars and Washington Sense, and supporting freelancers who are part of the event economy.

## Becoming 'Business Ready'



Mega events in Washington show the same pattern: businesses that prepare early and plan around visitor behavior see the strongest results.

### What it Means to be Business Ready

- ◆ You know who the visitors are and what they want: Event crowds behave differently than regular customers: They arrive early and stay longer; They travel in groups; They follow rituals (friendship bracelets, tailgating, merch hunting, themed outfits, social media groups); They spend across multiple neighborhoods.
- ◆ Your operations can handle a surge. Are you prepared to handle a line out the door? Can your Point of Sales (POS) run fast enough? Can your kitchen or back-of-house keep up? Do you have backups if a delivery is late?
- ◆ Your staff is prepared and supported: Make sure your team knows peak times, how to serve visitors quickly and clearly.
- ◆ Your customer experience is easy for visitors: Visitors don't know your neighborhood. They follow clear signage and convenience to bring them in the door.
- ◆ Your financial and inventory planning matches demand: Events bring both a revenue spike and cost spike.
- ◆ You can adapt quickly on the day-of: Conditions can change fast and bring transit delays, weather shifts, security adjustments, last-minute closures.



## Quick "Business Ready" Checklist

### Staffing

- Add extra coverage for peak times
- Cross-train staff
- Build backup plans for delays and absences

### Cash Flow

- Prepare for higher upfront costs
- Keep extra change on hand
- Test POS, chip readers, and mobile wallets

### Inventory

- Order early for fast-moving items
- Avoid over-stocking perishables
- Confirm backup suppliers

### Customer Experience

- Clear signage + pricing
- Updated Google listing, website, & social media
- ADA access + varied payment options
- Short, simple menus during peak surges



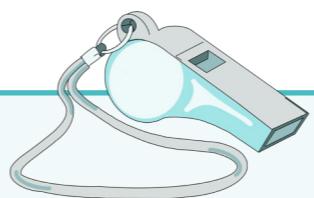
### A word of caution:

Some businesses tend to over-prepare by either ordering excessive stock or hiring too many staff members for crowds that never arrive. To strike the right balance, consider the following strategies:

- Utilize city and tourism forecasts
- Engage with neighboring businesses
- Concentrate on flexible, high-margin products that can be utilized after the event

# Business Management

A business continuity and management plan helps you stay open when something goes wrong such as power outages, delivery delays, blocked streets, or staffing disruptions. A simple plan ensures your team knows what to do, who to call, and how to stay operational during a mega event.



### Quick Actions:

**Identify likely risks:** traffic delays, power loss, internet disruption, supply issues.

**Set up backups:** alternate suppliers, backup delivery plans, emergency equipment (chargers, hotspots, flashlights).

**List emergency contacts:** staff, suppliers, landlord, utilities, local emergency services.

**Plan communication:** group text, backup messaging app, offline instructions.

**Review with your team:** walk through "what if" scenarios before event week.

**Download a free business continuity plan** template from [Impact Washington](#) or the [Washington State Emergency Management Division](#), and fill out at least the first two pages with your staff this month.

## Washington State Resources:

### Impact Washington

Offers a downloadable “Business Continuity / Crisis Management / Supply Chain Disruption” template and guidance.

### Washington Military Department Continuity Program page

Provides state-level continuity guidance, tools and training.

### Spokane County Emergency Management

Local business continuity/disaster preparedness resources; useful example for regional applicability.

### Fire Adapted Washington

Business-owner focused continuity toolkit (especially around disasters but adaptable) in Washington.

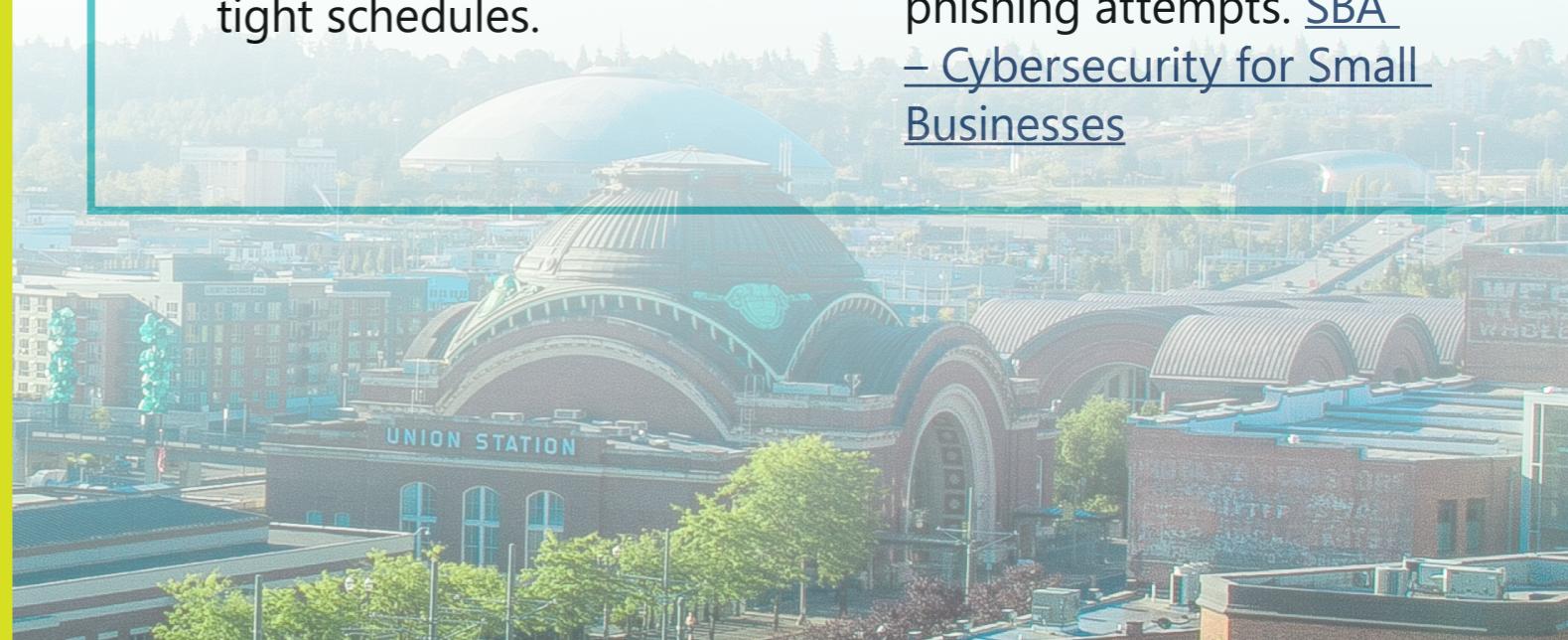


## Technology Upgrades

Technology makes or breaks customer experience during a mega event. Slow payments, dropped Wi-Fi, or system failures can quickly turn visitors away. Preparing now ensures you can handle higher demand smoothly and securely.

### Focus on Four Areas:

- Upgrade your POS: Ensure your system processes transactions quickly and supports mobile wallets and tap-to-pay options.
- Enable mobile ordering: Offer customers the convenience of ordering ahead—especially important for visitors on tight schedules.
- Provide guest Wi-Fi: Reliable Wi-Fi keeps customers connected, encourages social sharing, and supports mobile payment apps.
- Strengthen cybersecurity: Use strong passwords, enable multi-factor authentication, and train staff to recognize phishing attempts. [SBA – Cybersecurity for Small Businesses](#)





## Technology Tools as a Thought Partner for Small Businesses

**AI tools** can help with marketing, planning, customer engagement, and administrative tasks.

### [Grow with Google](#)

Free AI-powered tools and training for small businesses

### [Microsoft 365 for Small Business](#)

Productivity and security tools

### [Amazon Small Business Academy](#)

Free digital commerce training

### [AWS Think Big for Small Business](#)

Technical assistance for small and minority-owned firms



## Business Organization Support

Washington state has a strong, interconnected network of business-support organizations that help small businesses prepare for and benefit from mega events. These partners provide guidance, resources, advocacy, and on-the-ground support before, during, and after major events. Together, they help ensure that businesses of all sizes, locations, and backgrounds can participate in the increased visibility, visitor activity, and economic opportunity that mega events bring.

This section provides an overview of the key types of organizations in Washington and the roles they play.



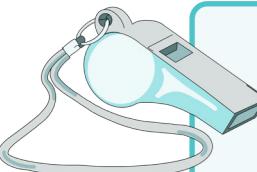
## Place-Based Partnerships

Local organizations are closest to the ground, supporting businesses where mega events are felt most directly through increased foot traffic, street closures, customer surges, and public activations.

They enhance clean and safe services with hospitality ambassadors and wayfinding, coordinate neighborhood activations including extended hours, pop-ups, and public programming, provide real-time updates on traffic, safety, and street impacts, and help businesses prepare for and manage increased visitor flow within their district.

### Examples:

- [Business Improvement Areas \(BIAs\)](#) and [Metropolitan Improvement District \(MID\)](#)
- [Pioneer Square Alliance](#)
- [Friends of the Waterfront](#)
- [Washington State Main Street Program](#)



### Form a Business Alliance.

Mega events reward collaboration. Consider forming a temporary or ongoing business alliance with neighboring businesses to share information, co-host promotions, bundle services, and jointly market your area to event visitors.

## Regional and Statewide Economic Development Organizations

These organizations ensure that businesses across entire counties and regions are informed, prepared, and connected to opportunities. They coordinate across jurisdictions to support business retention, expansion, and readiness; connect businesses to capital, technical assistance, and government programs; ensure regional benefits extend beyond the urban core to rural communities and suburbs; and serve as communication hubs for statewide small business resources.

### Examples:

- [Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Office of Economic Development & Competitiveness \(WA Dept. of Commerce\)](#)
- [Thurston Economic Development Council](#)
- [Economic Development Board for Tacoma–Pierce County](#)
- [Greater Spokane Inc.](#)
- [Economic Alliance Snohomish County](#)

### Washington State Department of Commerce Has a [Tribal Liaison](#)

who helps connect Tribal governments and Native-owned businesses to state resources and economic opportunities.



## Technical Assistance & Microenterprise Support Organizations

Businesses and early-stage entrepreneurs seize mega-event opportunities. Visit [Evergreen BizLink](#) for a statewide directory of technical assistance providers, CDFIs, training partners, and business-support organizations manage increased visitor flow within their district.



**Example:** [Business Impact NW](#) is a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that helps small businesses start, stabilize, and grow—especially entrepreneurs who face barriers to traditional financing. They provide free business coaching, practical trainings, and access to flexible business loans, supporting entrepreneurs across Washington and the broader Northwest while focusing on long-term business sustainability and job creation.



## Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

CBOs are essential for reaching businesses that may not be connected to mainstream networks—particularly immigrant-owned, BIPOC-owned, home-based, and micro businesses. They support mega events by conducting door-to-door outreach. CBOs support mega events through door-to-door outreach and business walks, as well as assistance with permits, licensing, community promotion, and referrals to capital access for local businesses. They also provide culturally appropriate resource navigation designed to reach immigrant and BIPOC communities, while helping businesses and neighbors understand how to participate in event activations.

**Example:** [The Community Business Connector](#) initiative in King County, led by the Seattle Metro Chamber, has reached thousands of small businesses especially those facing linguistic, cultural, or geographic barriers, by connecting them to capital, training, permitting guidance, and other resources.

CBC is a business resource network that partners with trusted connectors—including CBOs, local service providers, and technical advisors—to support ecosystem building and business activation.





# Small Business Spotlight

A small, rural beverage business in Central Washington shared how working with the Small Business Administration (SBA) and its partner network became the foundation for long-term growth.



The business first connected with SBA-supported advising to work through business planning, operations, and financial decision-making. With guidance from an advisor, the owner clarified growth goals, strengthened internal systems, and gained confidence in pitching the business and telling its story. That early engagement increased the business's visibility and led to formal

recognition at the state and federal level for rural small business success.

As the business continued working with SBA and Small Business Development Center (SBDC) advisors, new opportunities emerged. The owner was introduced to export education and trade readiness support, helping the business understand international regulations, pricing, logistics, and market selection. With hands-on guidance, the business began exploring overseas customers and successfully entered at least one international market—

expanding beyond its original local and regional footprint.

Over time, the business also gained exposure to additional learning cohorts, peer networks, and one-on-one advising that supported leadership development, certifications, and government readiness. Each experience built on the last, and created connections that reinforced growth rather than a single linear path.

What began as a single advising relationship evolved into sustained engagement, recognition, and market expansion. Today, the business is better equipped to manage operational complexity, respond to change, and pursue new opportunities—locally and globally.



## Takeaways for small businesses:

- Start with one free or low-cost program to build momentum
- Active participation can lead to recognition and new opportunities
- Each program can open doors to the next
- Learning and networking often come together
- Businesses do not need to be large to benefit from these resources



## Roles of Government Operations and Support: Federal, State, County and City

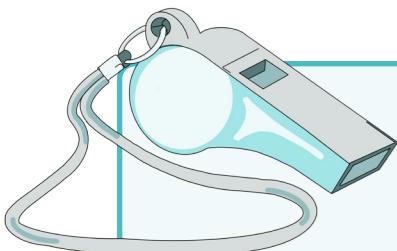
When a mega event comes to Washington, many government agencies work together to keep things running smoothly. Understanding who does what helps you get reliable information, apply for the right permits, and stay connected before, during, and after an event.

### United States Federal Government: Oversight and Security, Emergency Support

Federal agencies coordinate large-scale safety and emergency response and provide tools to help businesses plan. You may need federal support if a major disruption requires disaster recovery loans, if you want continuity planning templates or emergency checklists, or if airport congestion is affecting employees, deliveries, or customer flow.

#### What They Do:

- Manage high-security zones: Homeland Security, TSA, and Secret Service.
- Provide disaster and emergency assistance: FEMA and the Small Business Administration.
- Offer national preparedness tools: Ready.gov provides disasters and emergencies, including the Ready Business Toolkit.
- Manage international arrivals: Customs and Border Protection.
- The Executive Office of the President provides a task force for global events to coordinate interagency operations.



## U.S. Small Business Administration – Seattle and Spokane Offices

[Seattle & Spokane Offices](#) help Washington businesses prepare for large events. They provide:

**Access to Capital:** SBA-backed loans can help businesses increase inventory, hire temporary staff, or make improvements ahead of an event.

**Advising and Planning:** [Washington's Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDCs), [SCORE mentors](#), [Veterans Business Outreach Center](#), and [Women's Business Centers](#) provide one-on-one support for marketing, budgeting, and staffing strategies tied to event demand.

**Business Continuity:** SBA offers planning guides and disaster assistance to help businesses stay open during street closures, emergencies, or unexpected disruptions.

**Contracting Opportunities:** [SBA's 8\(a\) Business Development Program](#), [HUBZone](#), and Women-Owned Business programs connect local firms to federal, state, and municipal contracting tied to event operations.



SBA Microloan Program offers up to \$50,000.  
[Microloans](#) | [U.S. Small Business Administration](#).

List of WA Microlenders

[List of microlenders](#) | [U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

## Washington State: Transportation, Licensing & Business Rules

Small businesses typically turn to state agencies when highway closures or ferry delays affect staff or deliveries, when they need support with business licensing, growth, or access to capital, or when serving alcohol or hosting a special event requires guidance from the Liquor and Cannabis Board. State partners also become essential when workplace safety or labor rules apply, or when severe weather or emergencies disrupt operations and require updated alerts or coordination.

### What They Do:

- Help businesses understand which permits they need and which agency provides them: [The Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation & Assistance \(ORIA\)](#).
- Manage highways, ferries, detours, traffic alerts: [The Washington State Department of Transportation \(WSDOT\)](#).
- Oversee business licensing and economic development: [The Washington State Department of Commerce](#).
- Regulate alcohol and cannabis for events: [The Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board](#).
- Enforce workplace safety and labor rules: [The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries \(L&I\)](#).
- Coordinate statewide disaster response: [The Washington State Emergency Management Division \(EMD\)](#).





## Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation & Assistance (ORIA):

ORIA is a Washington state agency that helps people and businesses navigate complex regulatory systems across local, state, and federal levels. When in doubt about what your small business needs, you can contact ORIA at 1-800-917-0043, 1-360-725-0628, or [help@oria.wa.gov](mailto:help@oria.wa.gov). Visit [Business.wa.gov](http://Business.wa.gov) for more information.

## County Governments: Health, Safety, and Regional Services

County governments provide public-health oversight, regional safety coordination, and transportation management across local jurisdictions. Find local contacts at the [Washington State Association of Counties Directory](#).

### What They Do:

- Issue food-service permits and conduct inspections.
- Coordinate countywide emergency alerts and weather response.
- Manage regional transit and park-and-ride systems.
- Handle permits in unincorporated areas.

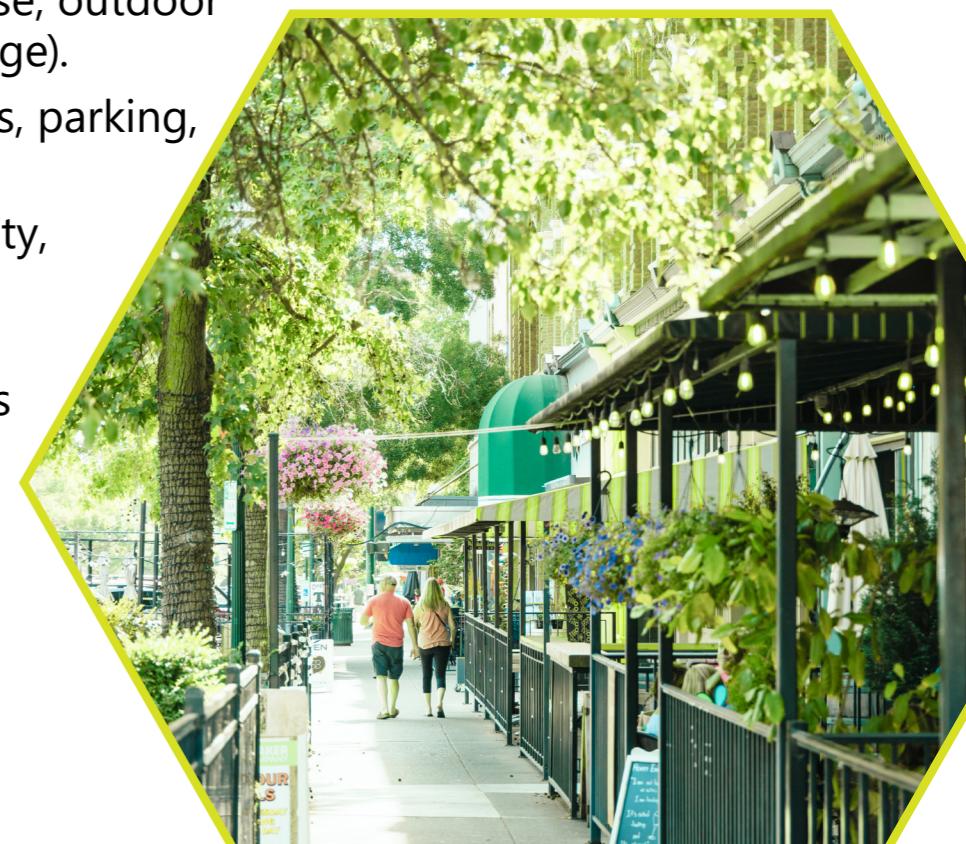


## City Governments: Frontline Operations

Cities are the direct link between small businesses and event operations. They control streets, permits, utilities, and communication with the public. Find local offices through the [Association of Washington Cities Directory](#).

### What They Do:

- Issue permits (street use, outdoor dining, pop-ups, signage).
- Manage street closures, parking, and delivery zones.
- Coordinate public safety, crowd control, and emergency response.
- Provide direct business support through small business offices.
- Update trash, recycling, and utility schedules.





## City of Seattle Office of Economic Development (OED)

The [Seattle Office of Economic Development \(OED\)](#) helps local businesses prepare for and benefit from large-scale events such as large sporting events and concerts, major conventions, and citywide celebrations. OED works to ensure that Seattle's small businesses can thrive during periods of high visitor activity and citywide change.

During mega events, OED connects business owners to practical tools and direct support:

- **Funding and Capital Access:** Through programs like the [Capital Access Program](#), OED helps small businesses secure financing for inventory, staffing, or facility upgrades ahead of major events.
- **Permitting and Operations Guidance:** OED staff help businesses understand temporary permits, extended hours, signage rules, and construction or transportation impacts tied to citywide events.
- **Neighborhood Business Support:** OED partners with Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), neighborhood associations, and community organizations to coordinate outreach, cross-promotions, and visitor-friendly initiatives across business districts.
- **Technical Assistance and Resources:** Businesses can access the Small Business Handbook, multilingual resources, and one-on-one navigation help through the OED's small business advocates.

# Permits During Mega Events

During major events, cities often tighten enforcement and add event-specific requirements.



The most important first step for any business is to check with your local permitting office (Special Events, Street Use, Permit Center, or similar) to confirm what applies for that event.

As a general guideline: expect you need a permit if you plan to operate outdoors, change your footprint, use the sidewalk or street, host an activation, serve food or alcohol in a new way, or add temporary structures. The most common pitfalls during mega events include applying too late, assuming small changes don't require approval, letting licenses lapse, expanding outdoors without permission, and failing to post required permits on-site.

Below are the most common permits small businesses may need in Washington during large events.

- **Street Use / Sidewalk Café / Outdoor Display** – For outdoor seating, tents, retail displays, or vending in the right-of-way (Example: Seattle's SDOT Street Use).
- **Special Event Permits** – Required if your activation affects streets, parks, plazas, or needs city services (barricades, waste, staffing). Even small pop-ups may qualify. You should apply through your City's Special Events Office or Parks Department.
- **Temporary Food Service Permits** – For any food service outside normal operations, issued by your County Health Department.

- Liquor Endorsements / Special Occasion Licenses – For temporary alcohol service, expanded patios, beer gardens, or themed event activities (example: WA Liquor & Cannabis Board).
- Fire & Safety Permits – For tents canopies, heaters, generators, propane/charcoal cooking, or high-capacity gatherings.
- Temporary Signage or Banners – For A-frames, outdoor banners, window signage, or inflatable displays.
- Film & Photography Permits – For promotional shoots or hosting media in public space (example: The Seattle Film + Music Office).
- Temporary Vending / Pop-Up Operations – Many cities require a short-term license or event vending permit for food trucks, artists, and mobile retailers. (example: Seattle Street Use – Vending).

### Quick Compliance Checklist

- Local and state business licenses active
- Health and alcohol permits valid
- Outdoor seating and sidewalk permits approved
- Fire, electrical, and tent permits secured
- Signage rules followed
- Noise/music permits checked
- Insurance current
- Accessibility requirements confirmed
- Waste and recycling plans finalized

## Permitting Timeline for Major Events

Use this timeline to stay on track if you plan to change operations or create activations during a large event. This timeline is based on permitting guidance from the City of Seattle (SDOT and Special Events Office), Public Health Seattle & King County, the Washington State Liquor & Cannabis Board, local fire departments, and statewide permitting resources from ORIA. Requirements vary by city, so businesses should always check local rules first.

### 60 Days Before the Event

- Apply for street use or outdoor seating permits
- Apply for temporary structures, tents, heaters, or electrical permits
- Confirm business license, food permits, and alcohol permits are active
- Contact your city's permitting office to confirm requirements

### 30 Days Before the Event

- Submit applications for sidewalk displays, special promotions, or pop-ups
- Confirm any needed fire department approvals (propane, occupancy, heating, crowd management)
- Schedule any required inspections
- Check waste and recycling requirements (especially for food businesses) requirements

### 14 Days Before the Event

- Confirm approvals have been issued
- Print and post all required permits
- Double-check occupancy signage and emergency exit compliance
- Verify your insurance coverage aligns with planned activities

### 7 Days Before the Event

- Share permit conditions with staff (hours, footprint, safety rules)
- Walk through your site to confirm layouts match what was approved
- Have backup plans for weather, equipment, or staffing changes

## Consequences of Not Having a Required Permit

Mega events come with heightened inspections. Businesses operating without proper approvals risk:

- ✗ Fines or penalties
- ✗ Immediate shutdown of outdoor dining, alcohol service, or pop-ups
- ✗ Suspension of business licenses
- ✗ Delayed reopening
- ✗ Liability issues or invalidated insurance claims
- ✗ Public reputation damage

## Freelancers & Independent / Solo Workers

Not every business impacted by a mega event has a storefront. Freelancers, photographers, performers, consultants, designers, rideshare drivers, event crew, and technicians also need to plan ahead.



### Key Considerations:

- Business licensing: All freelancers earning income in Washington must hold a Washington State Business License through the [Department of Revenue](#) and, if applicable, a city business license where they operate. Example: [Seattle's Business License Tax Certificate](#).
- Tax reporting: Check local B&O tax obligations (example: [Seattle's B&O Tax Rules](#)) if you work within city limits during events.
- Permits & credentials: Freelancers providing on-site services (photography, entertainment, mobile repair, pop-up booths) may need temporary credentials or background checks from the event organizer.
- Insurance: Carry general liability coverage; some venues require proof before issuing an access badge.
- Mobility: Expect delays around venues; build travel time and parking fees into quotes.
- Networking: Many large events hire local freelancers. Check with city event offices, Chambers, and creative-sector networks for contracting opportunities.

# Contract and Temporary Jobs During a Mega Event

## Freelancer Readiness Checklist

- Washington State Business License** through [Department of Revenue](#)
- City Business License** if working within city limits (e.g., Seattle Business License Tax Certificate)
- Proof of Insurance** (general liability or equipment coverage)
- Tax ID** and Record System for invoicing and B&O reporting
- Event Credential or Pass** if required by organizers
- Transportation Plan** – build in extra time for road closures and parking
- Portable Payment Options** – Square, tap-to-pay, or offline POS ready

Mega events create thousands of short-term jobs from security and transportation to hospitality, signage, tech support, and fan-zone activities. Both individuals and businesses can benefit if they know where these opportunities come from and prepare early.

### Where the Jobs Come From

- Event operations: security, guest services, ticketing, transportation, crowd management
- Setup & infrastructure: signage, stadium rebranding, staging, A/V, cleanup
- Hospitality & services: catering, bartending, retail, interpreters, drivers

### How Individuals Can Get Hired

- Apply through staffing agencies, venues, hotels, and security firms.
- Look for customer service, labor, transportation, and event support roles.
- Expect background checks, short-term contracts, and variable schedules.

### How Businesses Can Secure Contract Work

- Register in event and city supplier/vendor portals.
- Track procurement opportunities through city, county, and state postings.
- Attend vendor fairs, event briefings, and outreach sessions.



## Conclusion and 2026 Game Day Ready Resources: Business Readiness

Strong business management is about being prepared, not perfect. By planning for disruptions, testing your technology, and leaning on trusted partners across Washington's small business ecosystem, you reduce risk and increase confidence during a mega event. The businesses that fare best are those that plan early, communicate clearly with their teams, and know where to turn for help. Use the tools and organizations in this section to stay operational, serve customers smoothly, and turn a high-pressure moment into a long-term opportunity for your business.

These are a few organizations that are specializing in Business Readiness around the FIFA World Cup 26™:

- The [Seattle Office of Economic Development](#) as a permitting guide specific to FIFA World Cup 26™.
- If you serve alcohol or plan to extend outdoor service, you'll want to check how HB 1515 is being implemented locally ([through the Washington State Liquor & Cannabis Board](#)) and whether your business can participate in a "libation zone." To expand outdoor alcohol service beyond the traditional fenced beer garden.
- Seattle Chinatown – International District (CID) did an [FAQ](#) for businesses on the FIFA World Cup 26™.
- City government specific updates and sign-up for [AlertSeattle](#) to receive customized emergency alerts via text message, email, voice message, or social media.
- The Seattle Stadium will share updates important to fans including match day logistics and entry rules.
- Check for updates at your local chamber or tourism organization for watch party and fan zone activity.



Bainbridge Island, WA

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## Day of Readiness

Click on any topic title to jump to topic.

- ◆ Permits & Compliance Checklist
- ◆ Daily Readiness Routine
- ◆ On-The-Day Operations Checklist
- ◆ Staff Communications and Coordination
- ◆ Managing Crowds and Customer Flow
- ◆ Freelancers, Solo Entrepreneurs, pop up vendors and Day of Sellers
- ◆ Conclusion Day-of Readiness



This section focuses on what your business needs to do on the actual day of a major event.

It covers the practical steps that keep things running smoothly, including checking permits, preparing your staff, managing crowds, and confirming inventory and equipment. You will also find simple tools for communication, safety, and last-minute troubleshooting. The goal is to make sure your business is ready, confident, and able to deliver great customer experiences when event traffic is at its peak.

## Permits & Compliance Checklist

On event days, inspectors may be more active and stricter in enforcing the rules. Keeping all required permits, certifications, and insurance easily accessible, either in a physical binder or a digital folder, prevents interruptions to service and ensures your team can respond quickly to any requests from city agencies. Designate one location (digital or physical) where every required document lives and ensure at least two staff members know how to access it.

### Checklist of Documentation to Store

- Food safety certifications, temporary food permits, and health documentation
- Alcohol service licenses (MAST), special-occasion permits, or extended-hours approvals
- Entertainment or amplified sound permits
- Sidewalk/street-use or temporary activation permits
- Fire/occupancy approvals
- Business license and insurance documentation
- Contact info for your property manager and any required inspectors

# Daily Readiness Routine

Mega events create fast-moving variables: road closures, transit delays, security advisories, heat or weather challenges, and unexpected crowd surges. Starting each day with the most up-to-date information helps your business avoid disruptions and adjust smoothly.

Assign a Daily Monitor who begins each morning by reviewing official updates and translating them into simple operational adjustments.

## Daily Monitor Checklist

- Review** city and county event updates
- Check** known road closures and new traffic advisories
- Verify** transit and rideshare conditions (delays, reduced service)
- Check** weather forecast and prepare for wind, heat, rain, or cold
- Look** for police/fire/EMS advisories
- Confirm** event schedules nearby (parades, games/matches, concerts)
- Adjust** staffing arrival times based on access routes
- Reschedule** or reroute deliveries, as needed
- Update** front-of-house team on expected peak times

## Day of Operations Checklist

A strong opening routine ensures your business is stocked, staffed, and ready long before crowds arrive. This includes checking your systems, supplies, equipment, staffing plan, and safety measures. Create a checklist and walk through before opening to confirm that critical parts of the business (such as staffing, inventory, systems, and safety) are fully operational.

### Opening Checklist

#### Inventory & Supplies

- Refill all high-volume items (food, beverages, utensils, cups, most sold items)
- Restock paper goods, cleaning supplies, sanitizer
- Ensure grab-and-go items are prepped and displayed

#### Tech & Payments

- Test POS systems and reconnect devices
- Charge handheld devices and backup batteries
- Have a backup system in place for WiFi outages (portable hotspot)
- Confirm mobile ordering platforms
- Have cash change bank ready

#### Staffing

- Confirm role assignments for peak periods
- Ensure staff breaks have coverage
- Identify point person or shift lead

#### Property & Safety

- Clean and restock restrooms
- Confirm emergency exits are clear
- Ensure outdoor equipment (tents, heaters, fans) is secured

# Staff Communication & Coordination

Clear and consistent communication is key to a successful mega event day. With large crowds and possible disruptions, businesses should emphasize staff coordination, emergency readiness, and morale-boosting check-ins. Schedule quick team huddles before opening. Use this time to reinforce expectations, review updates, and confirm responsibilities.

## Team Checklist:

- Conduct morning huddle** (share updates and assignments)
- Verify radios, headsets, or group messaging apps are working**
- Share and post emergency contacts** (owners, managers, local police, fire)
- Identify staff “point person”** for quick decisions during the day if managerial staff are not around
- Confirm closing/clean-up responsibilities** before shifts start
- Schedule brief mid-shift check-in** for adjustments and morale



A low-tech hack is to **laminate your checklists and use dry-erase markers** so they can be reused daily during the event period. However, customized digital tools for managing to-do lists and workflows can also be useful for some businesses.





## Daily Stand Up With Staff Script:

### Quick Updates (Staff Lead or Daily Monitor)

"Here's what we know for today."

Today's major event activity:.....

Expected peak times: .....

Any road closures or traffic alerts:.....

Any transit or rideshare delays:.....

Weather conditions to prepare for:.....

### Staffing and Roles

"Here's how we're staffed and what we need today."

- Confirm who is covering opening, peak hours, and closing
- Adjust roles if needed (register, back-of-house, crowd flow, greeter)
- Identify shift leads or point persons for the day

### Customer Experience Notes

"Here's what we want customers to feel today."

- Any specials, promotions, or limited menus
- Quick guidance for handling longer lines or larger crowds
- Accessibility reminders (clear walkways, clean signage, helpful communication)

### Operations Check

"Let's confirm our essentials."

- POS systems tested and charged
- Supplies stocked (hot items, cold items, grab-and-go, utensils, napkins)
- Outdoor equipment ready (fans, heaters, umbrellas, signage)
- Trash and recycling stations set up
- Deliveries confirmed or adjusted



### Small Business Spotlight: Team Communication

A small brewery and taproom business operating in Everett and Snohomish County shared how strong internal communication is essential to delivering great customer service during busy periods and major events. The team holds daily staff meetings, with extra focus before and during large events, so everyone understands what is happening, what to expect, and how to support one another during high-volume days. To keep information clear and accessible, the business uses multiple communication tools in the workspace, including:

- A shared Slack channel
- WhatsApp
- A physical whiteboard

On major event days, staff meetings focus on event details, staffing plans, and any specials or limited-time offerings. Staff are expected to feel confident talking with customers about the event, sharing excitement, answering questions, and helping visitors feel welcome.



## Takeaways for Small Businesses:

- Hold short daily check-ins before and during busy periods
- Use more than one communication tool so information is easy to find
- Make sure staff understand event details and special offerings
- Prepare staff to talk confidently with customers about what is happening
- Clear communication leads to calmer teams and better customer experiences



# Managing Crowds & Customer Flow

Crowds can build faster than expected during mega events. Clear pathways, purposeful signage, and thoughtful queuing prevent stress for both customers and staff. Crowd flow also ties into accessibility and safety, especially near public rights-of-way. Decide where lines will form, how guests will enter and exit, and how you'll prevent congestion around your front door.

## Crowd Management Checklist

### Signage & Wayfinding

- Mark "Order Here," "Pick-Up," "Enter," and "Exit"
- Keep signage large, clear, and weatherproof
- Provide multi-language or icon-based signs if possible

### Queueing

- Use stanchions, ropes, or tape to form guardrails
- Develop overflow plan if lines exceed storefront
- Avoid blocking ADA curb ramps or transit stops

### Staff Roles

- Assign a greeter during peak hours
- Adjust staff between roles (runner, register, line flow)

### Customer Experience

- Keep menus visible to people waiting in line
- Prepare express or grab-and-go items
- Encourage mobile ordering if available

# Freelancers, Solo Entrepreneurs, Pop-Up Vendors, and Day-Of Selling

Mega events create new opportunities for sellers, solo entrepreneurs, and small retailers to reach excited visitors. With planning, both businesses and day-of sellers can participate safely, legally, and successfully.

During major events, many local entrepreneurs look for ways to join in by selling packaged food items, handmade goods, fan accessories, or limited-time merchandise. Businesses may also be approached by local sellers who want to set up a small table or pop-up near their store front. Event days are an excellent chance to showcase local creativity and support community entrepreneurs, as long as everyone follows basic permitting, safety, and space-use requirements.



## Ways to Sell Legally & Successfully:

- **Pop Up Inside an Existing Business:** This is the simplest way to participate. Retailers, cafés, and boutiques often welcome guest makers because it adds energy and gives customers something unique to browse.
- **Partner with a Restaurant or Café:** If you make a packaged or shelf-stable food product—syrups, sauces, spices, coffee beans—ask a local business if they would like to feature your product in a special drink or dish during the event week.
- **Join an Indoor Market or Collective:** Pop-Up Business districts, neighborhood organizations, or community markets may host multi-vendor pop-ups during event weeks.
- **Outdoor Vending (With the Proper Permit):** Selling outdoors requires a street-use or vending permit, and some areas near event zones may have extra restrictions. If you're interested in outdoor vending, it's best to plan ahead.

## What You Need to Sell

*(Requirements vary by city, but these are common across Washington State)*

- A Washington State business license
- For food: a cottage food permit or food-processing permit (for packaged items)
- For outdoor sales: a street-use or vending permit
- Written permission from any business or property owner hosting your pop-up
- Trademark-safe designs or merchandise



## Small Business Spotlight: Managing Pop-Up Events

A small gluten-free bakery in Tacoma has extensive experience working at and operating within food festivals and large public events. Over time, the owner learned that successful festival participation depends on realistic planning, strong communication, and disciplined inventory decisions.

Before committing to a festival, the business reviews prior-year sales data and speaks directly with organizers and fellow vendors to understand the audience, typical spending patterns, and operational requirements. Large attendance estimates are treated cautiously; the focus is on what will realistically sell given the crowd, price point, and event format.

Permits are a non-negotiable. Food festivals often involve multiple jurisdictions and rules, and requirements can vary by location. The business confirms all permits for each specific site in advance, knowing that missing paperwork can result in being turned away on event day.



Inventory planning is intentionally conservative. The bakery only brings products that can be resold through other channels—such as wholesale or direct sales—if festival demand is lower than expected. This approach limits losses and keeps the business financially flexible.

Clear, ongoing communication with festival organizers is essential. Event details can change quickly, and carefully reading emails and confirming logistics helps avoid costly misunderstandings. Staying responsive to the event organizers, even briefly, signals reliability and protects the business's spot.

By approaching food festivals with the mindset of an experienced operator—planning for realistic demand, securing permits, communicating consistently, and bringing flexible inventory—the business reduces risk and improves outcomes at large events.



## Where to Report Unpermitted Vendors

While most vendors are legitimate, some lack the required permits, and allowing them on your property can make you liable for injuries, trademark violations, or city enforcement actions. If you see unpermitted vending in the public right-of-way, report it through your city's non-emergency channels.

### City of Seattle

- Street Use / Vending Violations Report via the Find It, Fix It app or SDOT Street Use <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/permits-and-services>
- Police Non-Emergency Line (if blocking access or creating safety issues) 206-625-5011

### King County

- Public Health (food vendors without permits) <https://kingcounty.gov/health>

### Washington State

- Department of Revenue (business license violations) <https://dor.wa.gov>



## Conclusion: Day of Readiness

Being ready on the day of a major event is about turning preparation into action. When your permits are in order, your staff are briefed, your communication tools are working, and your operations are calibrated for higher traffic, you can focus on delivering a great customer experience. While every event brings unpredictability, businesses that have clear checklists, strong internal communication, and a plan for quick decision-making are better positioned to adapt. Day-of readiness ensures you can stay safe, stay compliant, and stay open for opportunity, allowing your team to operate with confidence and your customers to feel welcomed and supported.

Downtown Vancouver, WA



- Marketing to Visitors
- Best Practices for Social Media During a Mega Event
- Privacy Considerations for Small Businesses
- Promotions & Campaign Opportunities
- Partnering with Neighborhoods
- Working with Local Media
- Enhancing Customer Experience
- Using Official Logos
- Conclusion and 2026 Game Day Ready Resources: Marketing and Promotions

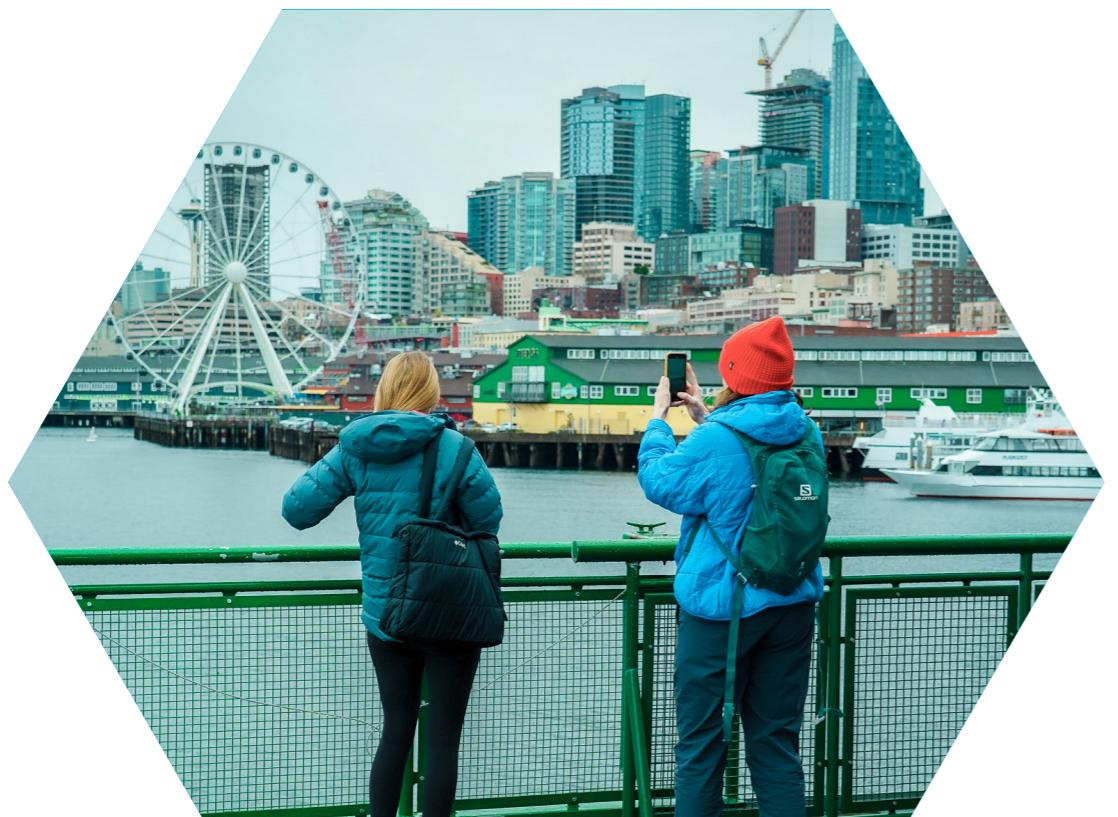
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## Marketing & Promotions



Click on any topic title to jump to topic.

This section helps your business connect with visitors and make the most of the increased activity that comes with major events. You will find guidance on reaching different types of customers, creating simple promotions, and strengthening your online presence. It also explains how to celebrate the spirit of an event without violating trademark or logo rules. The goal is to help your business stand out, be welcoming, and turn event excitement into new opportunities.



# Marketing to Visitors

Large events bring a mix of customers, from locals to domestic and international visitors, each with different expectations. Before investing time or money in marketing, be clear about who you're trying to reach. Effective marketing should be simple, clear, and welcoming. When possible, use multiple languages, culturally inclusive images, and platforms visitors already rely on, such as social media, travel guides, and neighborhood maps.

## Marketing Set-Up Checklist

### Claim your [Google Business Profile](#)

- Make it easy for visitors to find you in “near me” searches with accurate hours, location, and photos.
- Update it before and during the event so customers know you’re open and ready.

### Ask customers for reviews

- Post QR codes in your restaurant where customers can leave reviews on Yelp and Google.
- Reviews help visitors decide where to go and boost your visibility during high-traffic periods.

### Focus on one Channel

- Post event-week updates, hours, specials, and photos where visitors already spend time.

- Consistency on one platform is more effective than trying to manage several at once.

### Make Wifi Accessible to Customers

- Display a QR code so customers can connect to your Wi-Fi to make it easier to leave reviews and follow your business on social media.

### Translation Tools

- [Google Translate](#) and [Microsoft Translator](#) are free, easy tools for translating basic marketing materials.
- AI tools can also help bridge language gaps, especially for short descriptions, menus, or event promotions.

# Best Practices for Social Media During a Mega Event

Social media is one of the fastest ways to get noticed during a mega event. Visitors search for what's open, what's nearby, and what looks fun.

## What to Post

- **Daily updates:** hours, specials, restocks, wait times, event-themed item
- **Quick photos or short videos;** keep it simple, friendly, and positive
- **Behind-the-scenes,** friendly staff moments, or customer highlights (with permission)
- **Helpful tips for visitors** (parking, nearby transit, how to find your entrance)

## Stay Active

- **Post at least once a day** during event windows
- **Repost customer content** (with permission)
- **Check Direct Messages (DMs);** visitors often use them like a customer-service line
- **Respond quickly;** people decide where to go based on who answers

## How to Get Found

- **Use relevant hashtags** (event + neighborhood)
- **Tag business partner networks** (BIAs, organizing committee, nearby businesses)
- **Pin your hours, address, and directions;** keep your link in bio updated
- **Ask every visitor to post a review** on Google and Yelp

## Where to Post

- **Instagram:** Best all-around tool
- **Facebook:** Great for locals and neighborhood groups
- **TikTok:** Optional but high-reward for fun/visual brands
- **X/Twitter:** Best for super-fast updates ("Open late tonight!")
- **Google Business Profile:** Update hours, photos, and respond to reviews — most visitors check Google before anything else.

# Privacy Considerations for Small Businesses



Large international events bring visitors from places with strict privacy laws, especially the EU, where posting identifiable photos of people without consent can violate regulations like GDPR. Even though your business operates under U.S. law, it's best practice to avoid posting images that clearly identify customers unless you have their permission.



## What to Keep in Mind

- **Avoid identifiable faces** in photos or videos unless you have explicit consent.
- **Get permission** in writing (even a quick email or signed note) if you want to feature a customer.
- **Use wide shots** or back-of-crowd images that don't show faces.
- **Don't post videos with clear audio** of private conversations.
- **Be cautious with captions.** Don't tag or describe customers without consent



# Promotions & Campaign Opportunities

Event periods are strong opportunities to offer promotions, including discounts, themed menus, or special product bundles. Businesses can also participate in official city or Chamber campaigns, which often provide social media toolkits and shared advertising. Promotions work best when they align with event days and community celebrations, when visitor spending is highest.

## Ideas to Try



- **Event-Themed**

You can offer game-day specials such as discounts for fans wearing team gear or for ticket holders. You might create limited-time items named after teams, players, or musicians, or run a pre- or post-game happy hour with food or drink deals.

- **Community & Partnerships**

You can join city or Chamber campaigns to benefit from shared toolkits and increased visibility. You might also collaborate with nearby businesses on cross-promotions or tie a promotion to charity by donating a percentage of sales to local causes.

- **Countdowns and Deals Timed to the Event**

You can build excitement with countdown offers that increase as the event approaches. You can offer specials the day after a team victory or extend your hours on major game nights.



## Small Business Spotlight: Promotions & Campaigns

A neighborhood coffee shop in Seattle shared how local events can become a reliable marketing and growth strategy when planned for intentionally. Instead of treating street festivals, holidays, and seasonal moments as disruptions, the business prepares in advance by adjusting staffing, inventory, and hours to meet increased demand. The café also connects events directly to the customer experience. During the University of Washington's cherry blossom season, they created a limited-time cherry matcha drink that attracted both regular customers and visitors in the area.

The shop reinforces this approach by staying open during nearby events, using clear exterior signage to capture foot traffic, and promoting offerings through social media and email newsletters. Strong relationships with event organizers, city offices, and neighboring businesses help them anticipate crowds and coordinate logistics. By aligning operations, marketing, and community engagement, the café consistently turns neighborhood activity into increased visibility and sales.



### Takeaways for Small Businesses:

- Treat local events as planned opportunities, not last-minute surprises
- Adjust staffing, inventory, and hours ahead of high-traffic moments
- Create simple, event-specific products or promotions to attract visitors
- Use signage and digital channels to capture foot traffic in real time
- Build relationships with organizers and nearby businesses to stay informed

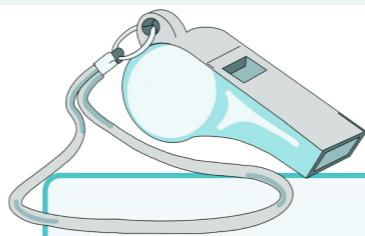


## State of Washington Tourism (SWT) offers for small businesses & events

### State of Washington Tourism (SWT)

offers free tools that help small businesses and events strengthen their marketing and attract more visitors. You can use SWT's statewide ["True to Nature"](#) brand, guidelines, and campaigns to better align your event or business with what travelers are already seeing. Their large consumer [marketing](#) efforts also boost overall visitor interest, which you can reference or tap into if your event fits a relevant theme or region.

SWT also provides [grants](#), training, and practical support. Eligible events can apply for funding to support marketing or production needs. Organizers can also join [co-op marketing programs](#), access photo and video assets, and use visitor research to improve planning, targeting, and sponsorship pitches. Overall, SWT helps small businesses and events increase visibility, professionalism, and impact.



## Partnering with Visit Seattle: Marketing Ideas for Small Businesses

[Visit Seattle](#) is the region's official destination-marketing organization and offers tools that small businesses can use to reach visitors. Their website highlights experience-focused storytelling, seasonal campaigns, and curated guides, all of which you can mirror by framing your business through a Seattle lens and sharing what makes you locally rooted. Visit Seattle promotes major events and seasonal themes, giving businesses natural moments to align specials, hours, or limited-time offerings with citywide activity.

Through membership and partnership programs, businesses may gain marketing support such as mentions in visitor guides, editorial features, or shared promotional campaigns. Visit Seattle also collaborates with hotels, cultural organizations, and business districts, creating opportunities for cross-promotion and neighborhood visibility. They encourage all businesses to be "visitor-ready" by keeping websites, search listings, and basic information easy to find, improving the overall experience for people exploring Seattle.

Check out other marketing opportunities in your area:

[Visit Bellevue](#)

[Visit Tacoma](#)

[Explore Kirkland](#)

[Snohomish County Tourism](#)

[Visit Vancouver](#)

[Visit Walla Walla](#)

[Olympic Peninsula](#)

[Visit Bellingham](#)

[Explore Seattle Southside](#)

[Experience Olympia & Beyond](#)

[Leavenworth Commerce](#)

[Visit Lewis Clark Valley](#)

[Visit Skagit Valley](#)

[Visit Spokane](#)

[Visit Kitsap Peninsula](#)

[Visit Issaquah](#)

[Gig Harbor Chamber](#)

[Visit the Long Beach Peninsula](#)

[Visit Chelan County](#)

[Visit San Juans](#)

[Visit Yakima](#)

[Visit Tri Cities](#)



## Partnering with Neighborhoods

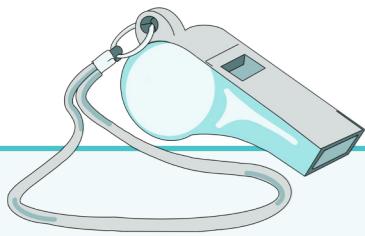
Working with nearby businesses can increase visibility and sales. Joint promotions, themed events, and activation zones create a stronger neighborhood draw. Highlighting hidden gems and community-owned businesses makes visitors feel welcome and connected to the local culture.



### What to do first: Set up a meeting with 2–3 nearby businesses.

- **Joint discounts:** Show a receipt from one store and get a perk at another.
- **Bundle deals:** Package items from multiple businesses into one “Neighborhood Pack.”
- **Shared loyalty card:** Shoppers and customers collect stamps across several businesses for a reward.
- **Block parties:** Team up for outdoor screens, themed decorations and experiences, or shared seating during big games.
- **Neighborhood passport:** Visitors get a stamp at each spot; a full card earns entry into a raffle.
- **Rotating spotlights:** Take turns highlighting a “hidden gem” or quirky Seattle business each week on social media.





## How Pioneer Square Alliance Supports Local Business Marketing

Pioneer Square Alliance shows how powerful neighborhood partnerships can be for small businesses. By unifying marketing, branding, and programming across the district, they boost visibility that individual businesses can't generate alone.

Their collaborations—like Trail to Treasure with the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park—help visitors find their way, understand the neighborhood's story, and explore more local shops.

A great example is the Holiday Ornament Scavenger Hunt. In partnership with local shops, galleries, and cafés, the Alliance hid 25 handblown ornaments throughout the neighborhood. The event drew big crowds, increased holiday sales, and sparked strong social media engagement because of the collaboration between businesses.



## Working with Local Media

Major local events often draw media attention, creating opportunities for Washington small businesses to increase visibility, build credibility, and reach new customers. Media coverage can help introduce your business to broader audiences, reinforce trust through familiar local outlets, and highlight your role in the community in ways that paid advertising often cannot.

When working with media, your goal is to clearly explain what your business offers and why it matters locally. Prepare a short description of your business, identify one key message you want customers to remember, and select a spokesperson who can respond quickly. Having a few strong photos of your storefront, products, or team can make it easier for reporters to cover your story.

Local ethnic media are especially valuable for reaching culturally and linguistically specific audiences. These outlets are often deeply trusted within their communities and can help businesses connect with customers who may not follow mainstream media. When engaging with ethnic media, use clear language, be mindful of cultural context, offer translated materials when possible, and share authentic stories about your business's roots and community connections.



## Small Business Spotlight: Working with Media



A long-standing, family-owned restaurant in South Seattle shared that partnering with ethnic media connected to their customers has been one of their most effective marketing tools. By working with a Black-owned newspaper and local radio shows, they promote culturally meaningful moments like MLK Day and Bob Marley's birthday. These outlets already have trust and reach within the community, and the results are immediate. Customers often arrive saying they heard about the restaurant on the radio or read about it in the paper.

The business found that this approach does more than increase foot traffic. It creates stronger customer engagement. Guests arrive feeling connected, informed, and excited to be there. For this restaurant, ethnic media is not just advertising. It is storytelling that turns shared culture into loyal customers.



### Takeaways for Small Businesses:

- Partner with media that already speaks to your customers
- Align outreach with cultural or seasonal moments that matter
- Telling stories, not just promotions, to turn awareness into visits

## Enhancing Customer Experience

Visitors remember good service. To prepare, businesses can improve signage, offer translation support, and provide quick and convenient payment options. Training staff to handle large crowds with patience and friendliness is just as important as products and prices.



### Ideas to Try

**Clear signage:** Make it easy for customers to find entrances, restrooms, menus, and checkout lines. Use simple temporary signage with symbols so international and non-English-speaking visitors can navigate quickly.

**Translation support:** When needed, offer printed materials or digital menus in multiple languages, or use simple translation apps and AI for key phrases.

**Fast, flexible payments:** Accept cards, contactless payments, and mobile wallets to keep lines moving.

**Staff training:** Prepare your team for large crowds by encouraging patience, friendliness, and proactive help.

**Crowd flow adjustments:** Rearrange seating, checkout, or display areas to reduce bottlenecks.

# Using Official Logos

Major events come with strict rules about how their names, logos, and artwork can be used. Whether it is the World Cup, the Olympics, the Super Bowl, or a major concert tour, businesses cannot use official marks, images, or slogans without permission. Violating trademark rules can result in penalties or required takedowns.

Instead of using official logos, find creative ways to join the excitement. Focus on original designs, themed promotions, colors, or experiences that fit the moment without infringing on protected trademarks. Many businesses have successfully leaned into fan culture by offering event-inspired experiences, such as themed drinks, special playlists, or community traditions like friendship bracelets during the Taylor Swift Eras Tour.

Event organizers usually provide public guidelines about authorized use of their brand. When in doubt, assume you need permission and avoid using the official name, logo, mascot, or stylized graphics. Describe what you are offering in general terms, such as "big game weekend," "summer concert celebration," or "international soccer festivities."



## DO: Safe and Creative Ways to Join the Excitement

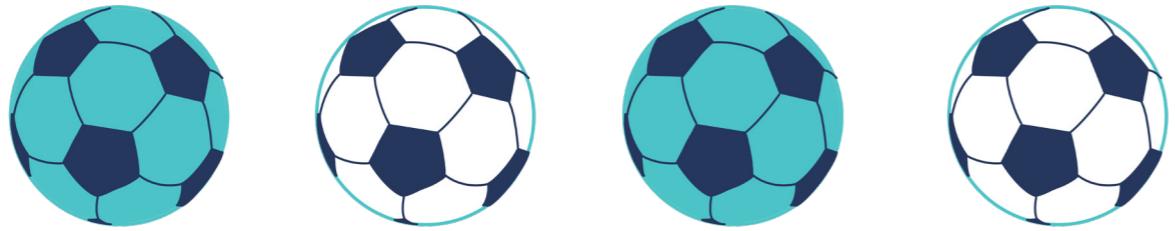
- Use **general language** like "big game weekend," "summer concert celebration," "international soccer festivities," or "citywide fan week."
- Create your own **original artwork** that uses colors, patterns, or themes without copying official designs.
- **Lean into fan culture** (friendship bracelets for the Eras Tour, themed drinks, local artist playlists, fan meetups).
- **Decorate with neutral or thematic elements** such as flags, generic sports imagery, music notes, or city pride graphics.
- **Promote specials and experiences** without mentioning the event name or logo ("Match-day happy hour," "concert weekend menu," "festival-night specials").
- **Check official brand guidelines** if you think you might be allowed to use something, a "hidden gem" or quirky Seattle business each week on social media.



## DON'T: Actions That Risk Trademark Violations

- Do not use official logos, mascots, stylized graphics, or iconography.
- Do not use event-specific names without permission (ex: "Super Bowl Sunday," "Olympics Sale," "Eras Tour Watch Party," "World Cup Deals").
- Do not print or sell anything that looks like official merch.
- Do not call your business an "official partner," "official watch party," or anything implying endorsement.
- Do not use photographs or graphics taken from an event's official social media or website.
- Do not copy fonts, colors, or design systems that are clearly identifiable as official branding.

# Conclusion and 2026 Game Day Ready Resources: Marketing and Promotions



Major events create brief but powerful opportunities for small businesses. Success does not come from big budgets or complex campaigns, but from being visible, welcoming, and prepared. Simple marketing, accurate online information, strong partnerships, and good customer service help visitors find you and feel comfortable choosing your business. Small, consistent actions during an event can lead to repeat customers, stronger community connections, and lasting growth long after the crowds are gone.

## FIFA Intellectual Property Guidelines

FIFA provides strict rules governing the use of official logos, names, terms, marks, mascots, and graphic systems. These guidelines are essential for businesses planning promotions to ensure they remain compliant and avoid trademark violations.



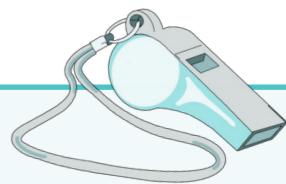
## Visit Seattle Marketing & Branding Resources

Visit Seattle is leading destination-marketing and community-branding efforts as Seattle prepares to host the FIFA World Cup 26™. Its [SEA26 Community Brand Playbook](#) offers approved visual and messaging assets, including logos, color palettes, templates, and tone guidelines, that anyone can use for social media or on their business marketing.

Visit Seattle has also launched the "[There's Never Been More to SEA](#)" campaign, encouraging residents and visitors to rediscover downtown Seattle. The campaign includes the Perks Pass, featuring special offers from local businesses, and supports year-round foot traffic while building momentum ahead of 2026 and engaging people to engage with businesses.

## Seattle Sports Commission Playbooks

The [Seattle Sports Commission \(SSC\) Watch Party Playbook](#) provides guidance for businesses, venues, and community groups interested in hosting public match viewings. It explains event types, outlines FIFA licensing requirements for public screenings, and reinforces brand-use rules, including prohibitions on unauthorized FIFA logos or trademarks. While funding is not provided, the playbook is a critical planning resource for businesses preparing for Seattle's six World Cup matches.



## Fan Zone Cities in Washington State

Along with Seattle, there are additional official or community-supported fan gathering locations across Washington include:

Bellingham  
Everett  
Tacoma  
Olympia/Lacey

Yakima  
Vancouver  
Spokane  
Bremerton

Tri-Cities (Pasco,  
Richland,  
Kennewick)

Tacoma Narrows Bridge, WA



5

## Special Topics & Safety

Click on any topic title to jump to topic.

- Security Planning
- Public Safety Resources
- National Guard & Emergency Support
- Scams & Fraud Prevention
- Human Trafficking Prevention
- Weather Event or Natural Disaster
- Hate Crimes
- Disorderly Conduct & Health Crises: What Businesses Need to Know
- Conclusion & 2026 Game Day Resources



Major events bring excitement and opportunity, but they also require extra attention to safety and preparedness. Large crowds, street closures, and public celebrations can create new risks for businesses and employees. Understanding how safety plans work and where to find reliable information helps your business stay secure and ready to adapt.

This section explains what small businesses need to know about working with local law enforcement, planning for emergencies, and supporting staff and customers during high-traffic events. It also includes information about public safety resources and what to expect if state or federal emergency assistance is activated.

Being aware of these topics before an event allows you to plan calmly, protect your team, and continue serving customers even if conditions change.

## Safety Check-List for Your Team

- Identify** who on your team monitors local news/ emergency alerts.
- Map** primary and backup access routes for staff, deliveries, customers.
- Post** emergency-access and evacuation instructions in the staff area.
- Update** signage or online notices about possible delays or route changes.
- Review** supplier agreements and inform them about possible access restrictions.
- Ensure** staff know whom to contact if conditions change.
- Check** that your property manager or landlord is aware of any event-security activation.



**Crisis Preparedness & Response Planning Guide.** from the Washington State Department of Commerce helps small businesses prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions. It offers step-by-step guidance on assessing risks, protecting employees, safeguarding operations and data, maintaining emergency communications, and creating a continuity plan to keep the business running.

# Security Planning

Large events bring more people, longer hours, and higher visibility. That also means more risk. Review your security plan now to protect your employees, customers, and property. Small steps can make a big difference, like better lighting, working cameras, and clear communication.

Work to understand safety measures in your area. Review how cash and valuables are handled, confirm how to lock up each night, and make sure staff know who to contact if an incident occurs.

## Resources:

### [City of Seattle Office of Economic Development – Keeping Your Business Safe](#)

Guidance on theft prevention, lighting, camera systems, and emergency contacts.

### [Washington State Department of Commerce – Small Business Guide](#)

Risk management, emergency planning, and multilingual business support.

### [CISA \(Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency\) Security Planning Workbook](#)

A comprehensive, free workbook for physical and cyber security planning.



# Public Safety Resources

In a major event, quick access to information saves time and keeps people safe. Make sure your team knows where to find medical help, evacuation routes, and emergency contacts. Clear communication and visible instructions help everyone respond calmly if something unexpected happens.

Every business should know how to reach local emergency services and where to go if evacuation is required. Identify the closest hospital or urgent-care center, keep fire extinguishers and first-aid kits stocked, and review procedures for severe weather or crowd incidents. Share this information with staff before the event, and post it where everyone can see it.



**Create a simple safety poster** listing emergency contacts, the nearest medical facility, evacuation routes, and the location of first-aid supplies. **Hang it in your backroom or staff area and review it at your next team meeting.** Also create a public facing poster to hang in customer facing areas.

## Public Safety Resources:

### [Washington State Emergency Management Division – Ready Business Program](#)

Offers business emergency-planning templates and continuity tools.

### [Ready.gov – Business Emergency Preparedness](#)

Federal resource on evacuation, communications, and employee safety.

### [Seattle Office of Emergency Management](#)

Local hazard maps, evacuation routes, and neighborhood alerts.

### [King County Alert System](#)

Free regional notification service for severe weather, road closures, and emergency alerts.

### [Ready Business Emergency Response Plan Template](#)

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Ready.gov Make a Plan guide helps businesses and families prepare for emergencies by creating clear communication and response plans. It walks you through how to identify risks, document key contacts, plan evacuation routes, and ensure employees know what to do during disasters or major public events. The site includes downloadable templates for emergency response, continuity of operations, and disaster recovery planning.



## National Guard & Emergency Support

Large events can draw international attention, and with that comes increased security needs. In some cases, the state may activate the National Guard to assist with crowd and traffic management, emergency response, and maintain safe public access and when deployed, their presence is typically light, non-confrontational, and limited to specific event days. For businesses, the key takeaway is that the Guard deployment is temporary, supportive, and designed to keep operations and public spaces running smoothly.

### How to Prepare:

**Stay informed:** Sign up for city and county alerts and follow updates from your Chamber or neighborhood partners.

**Prepare your staff:** Make sure employees understand the Guard's purpose so they can respond confidently to customer questions.

**Report impacts:** If the Guard activity affects access, deliveries, or customer flow, document it and share with your state business liaison.

# Scams & Fraud Prevention

Large events attract visitors and scammers. In the weeks before major events, businesses may see fake vendors, unofficial "event partners," and phishing attempts.

Remind your staff to stay alert and question anything that feels off.



Watch for anyone asking for payment to "reserve" space, promote your business, or sell sponsorships.

Scammers may also pose as inspectors or city officials. Legitimate agencies will never demand immediate payment or request sensitive information by phone or email.

Train employees to:

- Verify IDs
- Double-check payment requests
- Avoid clicking unknown links

When in doubt, confirm all communications through your official channels or known contacts before taking action.

## *Washington and National Resources:*

### [Better Business Bureau Northwest and Pacific](#)

Business alerts and resources to verify vendors and event partners. You can also report a scam.

### [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#)

Learn about common types of scams.

### [Washington State Attorney General's Office – Consumer Protection Division](#)

Information on current scams, how to report fraud, and how to verify legitimate organizations.

### [Seattle Police Department – Fraud and Cybercrime Prevention Tips](#)

Local guidance on business scams, counterfeit money, and identity theft.

### [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) – Small Business Scams](#)

Free training materials and posters for employees on recognizing and reporting scams.

# Human Trafficking Prevention

Major events can increase the risk of human trafficking as large crowds, tourism, and temporary labor demands create opportunities for exploitation. Every business plays a role in prevention by knowing the signs, training staff to respond, and connecting with local resources that protect vulnerable people.

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit someone for labor or commercial sex. It can happen in any community and across many industries, including hospitality, retail, food service, and transportation.



Train your staff to recognize warning signs such as:

- Individuals who appear fearful or controlled
- Guests who avoid eye contact or lack identification
- Someone speaking on behalf of another person.

## *Washington and National Resources:*

### [Washington State Office of the Attorney General – Human Trafficking](#)

Information, awareness materials, and links to victim assistance programs.

### [Washington State Office of Crime Victims Advocacy \(OCVA\)](#)

Provides confidential help and referrals for trafficking survivors.

### [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#)

24/7 confidential support and reporting: 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733 (BEFREE).

### [Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking \(BEST\)](#)

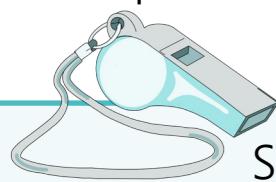
Seattle-based nonprofit offering free online training for employees in hospitality, transportation, and retail sectors.

### [Blue Campaign Department of Homeland Security](#)

# Weather Event or Natural Disaster

Severe weather or natural disasters can happen with little warning. Heavy rain, extreme heat, wildfire smoke, windstorms, or earthquakes can disrupt business operations during major events. A simple plan helps you protect your staff, customers, and property if conditions change quickly.

Know how to respond if the region experiences extreme heat, poor air quality, flooding, or other hazards. Make sure your team understands where to shelter, how to communicate, and when to close early for safety. Keep basic supplies on hand such as flashlights, first-aid materials, portable fans, masks, and water.



Sign up for emergency alerts through [AlertSeattle](#), [King County ALERT](#), and local weather notifications. Post instructions for what to do during heat waves, smoke events, or earthquakes in your staff area.

- Washington Weather & Disaster Resources: [Washington State Emergency Management Division](#)
- Statewide guidance on earthquakes, floods, wildfires, and severe storms: [Ready.gov – Natural Disasters](#)
- Federal guidance on preparing for extreme weather and natural hazards: [National Weather Service – Seattle](#)
- Free regional notifications for severe weather, flooding, and hazards: [King County Emergency Management – Alert System](#)
- Guidance for smoke events and poor air quality conditions. [Washington State Department of Health – Air Quality & Smoke Resources](#)

# Hate Crimes

Large international events bring diverse crowds that may create moments of bias, harassment, or hate crimes that may target staff, customers, or business itself. Small businesses should be aware of this risk, as incidents can include verbal harassment, vandalism, threats, or hostility toward people based on nationality, language, race, religion, gender identity, or perceived affiliation.

## If a Hate Crime or Bias Incident Occurs

- Stay calm and don't escalate. Keep distance, use a neutral tone.
- Ensure immediate safety: Move staff and customers to safety. Call 9-1-1 if anyone is in danger.
- Avoid confrontation: Do not escalate. If safe, note important details (appearance, behavior, direction of travel).
- Document everything: Save security footage, photos, screenshots, and written or verbal threats. Record the time and details.

## Report it Promptly

- 9-1-1 for immediate threats or violence
- Local non-emergency police line for non-urgent reports
- [Seattle Police Department Bias Crimes Unit](#) (if in Seattle)
- [Washington State Attorney General Hate Crime Reporting Hotline](#)

# Disorderly Conduct & Health Crises: What Businesses Need to Know

Large crowds, alcohol use, and long event days can increase the chance that someone becomes intoxicated, disruptive, or experiences a medical emergency inside or near your business. Preparing your staff to respond calmly and safely protects your team, your customers, and your business.

## If Someone Becomes Disorderly

- Stay calm and don't escalate. Keep distance, use a neutral tone.
- Give clear direction. "For everyone's safety, I need you to step outside."
- Set limits. If behavior continues or becomes unsafe, call the non-emergency police line (use 9-1-1 only for immediate danger).
- Have a plan. Know who handles incidents and how to move other customers away.

## If Someone Has a Health Crisis

- Call 9-1-1 for medical help and state it is a medical emergency.
- Provide basic support: keep the person safe, clear space around them, stay nearby until EMTs arrive.
- When unsure, treat it as medical, not criminal, to avoid unnecessary escalation.

# Sustainability and Business Readiness

Mega events bring more visitors and more waste, which can strain your operations if you are not prepared. A few simple steps can reduce trash, prevent overflow, and demonstrate your commitment to a cleaner, greener community. Start by confirming your waste collection schedule and setting up clear recycling and composting systems. Switching to reusable or compostable products and joining local sustainability programs can reduce your environmental footprint while strengthening your brand with customers who value eco-friendly practices.

## Minimizing Waste Checklist

- Order free recycling and composting signs from your local utility provider.**
- Place clearly labeled landfill, recycling, and compost bins in customer areas (green = compost, blue = recycling, black = landfill).**
- Add extra bin checks and pickups during peak days. emergency alerts.**



## Eco Friendly Products Check List

- Ask suppliers about compostable or recyclable packaging options.
- Replace plastic utensils, straws, and cups with compostable or reusable versions.
- Offer reusable bag discounts or sell branded totes.
- Switch to bulk condiment pumps instead of single-use packets.
- Review all packaging and identify items to replace with greener alternatives.
- Explore local reusable service options, such as Reuse Seattle.



## Helpful Links & Sources:

Visit the [EnviroStars](#) website and create a free account.

Visit the [EPA's Smart Steps to Sustainability for Small Business](#) to learn about federal incentives, sustainability goals, resources, and a personal business planning tool, alongside lots of other helpful information.

Visit the [Good Business Network of Washington](#) for simple guides on going green, using sustainable packaging, and finding local suppliers. Consider joining the network to connect with other businesses, events, and recognition programs to highlight your commitment to sustainability!

## Conclusion and 2026 Game Day Resources: Special Topics and Safety



Safety during a mega event is ultimately about preparedness, awareness, and connection. By understanding how security agencies operate, knowing available public-safety resources, and supporting both workers and visitors who may be navigating immigration concerns or large-scale emergency responses for the first time, businesses can create an environment that feels calm, informed, and welcoming. These special topics are not meant to overwhelm, but to empower you with practical tools and clear guidance so your business can operate confidently, even when the region is at its busiest. When safety is thoughtfully integrated into your planning, it strengthens your operations, protects your team, and helps ensure visitors leave with a positive impression of your business and community.

### *FIFA World Cup 26™ Game Day Resources:*

#### [Local Organizing Committee Human Trafficking Prevention Resources](#)

- Awareness materials, Staff training modules, Reporting guidance

#### [FIFA Sustainability Commitment](#)

- Tournament environmental and human rights commitments

#### [FIFA World Cup 2026 Human Rights Framework](#)

- Host city obligations
- Local Human Rights Action Plan structure

#### [City of Seattle Public Safety & Emergency Alerts](#)

- Links to AlertSeattle
- Police, fire, and emergency management updates

# Conclusion

Mega events bring energy, attention, and new customers to Washington's communities. They can also create real challenges for small businesses, from staffing and supply pressures to changes in traffic, safety, and compliance requirements. Preparation helps businesses manage these changes with more confidence and less stress.

This Playbook was created to support small businesses with clear information and practical tools. It is not about becoming an official event partner or sponsor. It is about helping businesses stay open, informed, and ready during periods of high activity. By understanding what to expect, planning ahead, and using the checklists and resources provided, businesses can reduce risk and make the most of busy event periods.

As Washington prepares to host the FIFA World Cup 26™, many businesses will experience increased visibility and demand. This global event is a major milestone for the state, but it is also one example of the many large events that Washington regularly hosts. The guidance in this Playbook is meant to be useful not only for 2026, but for future concerts, festivals, sporting events, and other large gatherings across the state.

Event details can change as dates get closer. Permits, security plans, transportation impacts, and official guidance may shift. Businesses are encouraged to check updates from trusted

partners and agencies and to revisit this Playbook as events approach. Staying informed is an important part of staying prepared.

This playbook is intended as a general guide to help small businesses prepare for and navigate large events. It does not replace official rules, regulations, professional advice, or requirements from federal, state, county, or city authorities. Laws, regulations, and conditions can change, and individual circumstances may vary. Business owners are responsible for understanding and complying with all applicable requirements and for making decisions that are appropriate for their specific situations.

Small businesses do not prepare alone. Chambers, business districts, community organizations, technical assistance providers, and public agencies all play a role in supporting local businesses. Strong connections with these partners can help businesses navigate challenges, find answers quickly, and build long-term resilience.

With preparation, communication, and the right support, small businesses can meet the moment when large events arrive. The steps taken today can help strengthen operations, protect staff and customers, and position businesses for success long after the crowds leave.

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