



The Trade Show Ordinance, 117002 was designed to make licensing easier for event organizers and vendors and exhibitors at temporary events in Seattle. The Trade Show License is secondary to your Seattle Business License. Trade Show License requirements are:

The Trade Show organizer must be licensed with the city of Seattle.

A Trade Show must have 25 or more total participants and cannot last more than 14 days; it cannot occur at the same location more than 4 times per year.

The application and fee are due one (1) business day before the opening of the event. A postmark counts as the day of mailing for regulatory purposes. A ten per cent (10%) late charge may apply thereafter. The vendor list should be received approximately 30 days prior to the event to allow time to process and correspond if needed. Contact us at [tradeshow@seattle.gov](mailto:tradeshow@seattle.gov) prior to sending if there any circumstances that would affect that.

The Trade Show License fee is calculated at \$10.00 per unlicensed participant, per day of the event. Exemption is allowed for any participant who holds a current Seattle Business License. This participant fee should be clearly stated to participants as \$10.00 per day per participant. This is not a temporary business license. Businesses located within Seattle must obtain a Seattle Business License. A listed participant of this event is not exempted from holding a Seattle business license should the participant be tax based in Seattle.

The Trade Show application must be filled out and will auto populate the fee as numbers are entered. Send the application along with the list BEFORE sending payment via email. Inspectors will verify the list and make any updates and send it back to you for review. At that time, you will be able to send in payment with a signed copy of the application. Payment must be made by check or can be made in person at the Seattle Municipal Tower. If making payment in person you will need to advise us of that method prior to coming in. There is no online option to pay the regulatory Trade Show license currently. The trade show application can be found here if not included with this document :

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/departments/fas/regulatoryservices/seattle-trade-show-license-application.pdf>

The application must be preceded by a list of all participants and a list of all event support companies. Participants include exhibitors, vendors, and infrastructure suppliers. The list should be sent in Excel format utilizing the attached template or online here:

[ADD\\_G\\_Vendor-SupplierListInstructions.pdf](#)

[ADD\\_H\\_VendorSupplierList.xlsx](#)

Do not be concerned about event day adds/drops. We can revise your application and fee within 10 days after the event is over.

The participant list must include the following:

business/organization name and contact person

business address

phone number

Addressee

Page 2

Date

email address

Seattle business license number (businesses within Seattle need a Seattle business license)

Seattle business licenses may be verified at <http://www.seattle.gov/licenses/find-a-business>

A state UBI number (ex. 601000111) is not the same as and does not replace a Seattle business license customer number. You will be charged for participants who do not list a business license and are tax based in Seattle.

Other exemptions include religious or political organizations (with 501c status, and activity labeled as “tabling”) and government entities. (NOTE: not all 501C’s are exempt). Nonprofits are not exempt by nature from any licensing requirements in Seattle. If there are any questions on an entity regarding tabling activity or exemption, please contact us.

### **Vendor Types**

Vendors related to a special event fall into two main categories - vendors/suppliers who are servicing the event as contractors and vendors who are participating in the event.

Examples of vendors/suppliers **servicing an event** may include:

- Companies renting items to the event such as tents, canopies, portable restrooms, generators, etc.
- Sound system management
- Private security
- Waste management
- Fireworks technicians
- Caterer serving food or alcohol (but not selling)

Vendors who are **participating in the event** and are present at the event for commercial activity and/or to share information. Examples of vendors participating in an event for commercial activity may include companies and individuals who:

- Sell merchandise such as t-shirts, posters, souvenirs
- Sell handicrafts
- Sell food and/or beverages
- Sell services on-site such as massages or face painting
- Accept orders for merchandise or services
- Promote services or merchandise to be purchased later
- Promoting a commercial brand

Addressee

Page 3

Date

- Solicit donations for an organization or cause

Examples of vendors participating in an event for **information only** include:

- Non-profit organizations offering literature, demonstrations, or other information free of charge (often called "tabling")
- Government entities giving information about free government services
- Political campaigning
- Soliciting signatures on petitions

Businesses needing a license can be referred to: [Business Licenses - City Finance | seattle.gov](https://seattle.gov/businesslicenses)

The organizer/promoter must inform each participant that in the event his/her taxable annual gross revenue for business in Seattle exceeds Two Million Dollars, (\$2,000,000), he/she is obligated to report and pay City Business and Occupation Tax.

**When an event does not meet the criteria for Trade Show (less than 25 participants or event longer than 14 days) all participants based in Seattle must first obtain a Seattle Business License.**

Please submit a list of all participants as noted above but no tradeshow license application is required.

Admission Tax Registration may be required when a fee is charged for entry to your event.

As the organizer, you will have to file a business tax return to Seattle.

- If gross receipts do not exceed \$100,000 in a calendar year, no business tax is levied.
- If gross receipts exceed \$100,000 in a calendar year, the Business Tax is levied at the following rates:  
Service –Use this classification for ticket sales & booth rental fees. Subtract only actual Admission Tax paid. Gross ticket sales less Admission Tax multiplied by .00415 equals business tax due.

Retail – Concessions, programs, novelties, T-shirts, etc. Gross receipts multiplied by .00215 equals business tax due.

Thank you for your interest in doing business in Seattle. For additional information or clarification, email License Enforcement Inspectors at [tradeshow@seattle.gov](mailto:tradeshow@seattle.gov)