

Special Event Guide and Checklist Overview

Form a Plan

Six to twelve months before your event, begin gathering ideas for your event. Then, form a framework plan to build up with details closer to the time of the event.

Gather Ideas

- Decide on a theme or purpose for your event (Fundraiser, celebrate an event, promote awareness of a cause, etc.)
- Select a team to help you with various tasks during the event planning
- Research possible locations for your event
- Research possible entertainment for your event
- Estimate the number of attendees for your event
- Set a budget for your event

Get Bids on Services

- Meeting place
- Caterer
- Flowers, if applicable
- Decorations
- Media coverage, including newspaper announcements for weddings and anniversaries
- Entertainment

Seek Additional Funding (if applicable)

- Set an admission price for the event if appropriate
- Seek out sponsors at various commitment levels
- Form mock-up of advertising space for local businesses who help sponsor the event

Create a Framework

- Finalize location of the event
- Finalize the date and time of the event
- Create an alternative plan for outdoor events in case of inclement weather
- Obtain written contracts for services to be provided at the event
- Create an invitation mailing list
- Select Invitations
- Prepare press release, newspaper announcement or other advertising media
- Hire a photographer and/or videographer for the event

Three to Six Months Before the Event

- Select flowers and decorations
- Decide on a menu for the event
- Secure permits for the event
- Finalize sponsorship contracts and advertising

Two Months Before the Event

- Mail invitations
- Arrange for transportation for the guests of honor
- Arrange lodging for guests arriving from out of town

One Month Ahead

- Print tickets and/or RSVP list
- Publish newspaper announcement and/or ads
- Compile seating arrangements
- Confirm number of expected guests with caterer
- Create a schedule of events for the event
- Confirm lodging accommodations for guests
- Hire security if desired

One Week Before the Event

- Delegate a team to handle unexpected events, including a few medical personnel to handle emergencies
- Enlist volunteers to assist with set up, errands, tear down and odd and ends during the event
- Schedule rehearsal
- Prepare payments for services and goods used during the event

All activities that can be done beforehand should be completed the day before the event. The day of the event should be kept as simple as possible. Arrive early and review arrangements with key member like the caterer, entertainment, and service staff.