

EVENT PLANNING TIMETABLE

Specific events require particular steps, e.g., contracting musicians or buying arts and crafts supplies. This is a general guideline to help you map out the basic steps entailed in putting on a general event.

AT LEAST SIX MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- ✓ If the event requires your group to raise funds, identify sources of support and reach out to them.
- ✓ Grants programs & corporate sponsorships often have a long turnaround time and you don't want to be caught out without support for the event.

AT LEAST TWO MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- ✓ Form an organizing committee and delegate tasks—e.g. publicity, fundraising, volunteer recruitment.
- ✓ Choose a date for the event.
- ✓ Notify Parks of the final date and apply for a permit (this **must** be done at least 30 days in advance).
- ✓ Alert your Community Board and your elected officials if you'd like them to attend.
- ✓ If needed, reserve the Wenger Wagon (a portable stage and sound system owned by Parks) for concerts and performances.
- ✓ Contact any professional artists and performers; their schedules will book up quickly for summer weekends.
- ✓ Partner with other community groups to co-sponsor the event.
- ✓ Talk to elected officials and your Community Board for support. Your Community Board can advertise your event to its mailing list but contact them early if you'd like them to do this.

AT LEAST ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE

- ✓ Solicit in-kind donations from local businesses.
- ✓ Recruit volunteers to work at the event.
- ✓ For large events, start advertising with posters at local businesses and other community hubs; attend meetings of other community groups to make announcements.
- ✓ Contact local newspapers to list the event in their calendars (check deadlines carefully; different papers have different rules).
- ✓ Send official invitations to elected officials, community leaders, civic groups, etc.

TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE

- ✓ Publicize the event by hanging flyers in the neighborhood, through email, and by word of mouth.
- ✓ Confirm everything—performers, sound system, food, volunteers.
- ✓ Send a press advisory to local papers announcing the event.
- ✓ Remind VIPs by phone.
- ✓ Be in close contact with Parks, police, and any other partner agencies.

ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT

- ✓ Meet with all your volunteers before the event for a short orientation. Make sure everyone knows what they're doing and where they should be.
- ✓ When assigning tasks to volunteers, assign clean up as well so that people don't just disappear and leave you alone at the end of the day. If the park is left a mess, you may be asked to pay clean-up costs, even if this fee was waived in advance.
- ✓ If there are safety issues, make sure all of your volunteers are aware of them. For example, during a clean-up no one should ever touch a needle. If kids will be participating, make sure someone will be keeping track of them at all times.
- ✓ Set up a table with information about the group, a sign-in sheet, and a collections jar—never miss a chance to recruit new members. Have an outgoing, chatty volunteer sit at the table.
- ✓ Make sure someone from the event committee is always present to answer questions and deal with emergencies
- ✓ If you give out tools or anything else you need back, put a volunteer in charge of keeping track of them and getting them back.

FOLLOW-UP

- ✓ Thank everyone—volunteers, donors, the City employees who helped. If you show your appreciation you'll get more help next time.
- ✓ Meet with the organizing committee to debrief and assess the event—try to figure out how you can improve next time.