

Event Planning Sample Timeline

A sample timeline for event preparation is outlined below for individuals to use as a tool. Please keep in mind that events often have specialized needs and this checklist was created only to help in the planning process to ensure a successful event. Please alter the timeline to fit your events individualized needs.

1 Year Out

- Research site options – schedule site visit
- Check proposed date for conflicts
 - Refer to campus calendar, Office of the President, community calendars
 - Consider days and time of the year (Holiday Schedule, religious considerations)
- Negotiate and sign venue contract
- Complete Entertainment/Speaker contracts

6 Months Out

- Schedule and complete site visit(s) if not yet completed
- Contact catering and secure date
- Begin planning/ordering decorations/entertainment/rental items
- Make arrangements for AV needs
- Compile guest list
- Draft invitations
- Alcohol Waiver Form completed if needed

3 Months Out

- Contact catering and select menu
- Forward updated AV needs to Media Services
- Contact Physical Plant and request tables/chairs, etc.
- Make provisions for signage
- Send invitations to print
- Schedule appropriate staff help
- Arrange for volunteer help
- Contact Public Safety as a courtesy informing them of the date and time of event
- Order give-away if needed

10 – 8 Weeks Out

- Mail invitations
- Develop program (written) if needed

8 – 6 Weeks Out

- Begin taking RSVPs
- Finalize catering
- Request confirmation sheets from and departments/staff providing services to ensure accuracy
- Confirm entertainment or rental items
- Send program or additional print materials to printer

2 Weeks Out

- Purchase speaker/VIP gifts as needed
- Begin gathering supplies in a designed area
- Send staff/volunteers itinerary and expected job duties

1 Week Out

- Re-confirm final menu with catering and give guarantee amount
- Prepare nametags
- Prepare registration lists
- Send VIP's registration lists
- Prepare any directional signage if needed

Day of Event

- Set-up room/decor
- Introduce yourself to operations staff – give any last minute instructions
- Practice any AV to make sure everything is functioning correctly
- Set-up registration table
- Show time!

Day After

- Return items borrowed/rented
- Make deposits if money was received

Week After

- Send out speaker/VIP/volunteer/vendor thank-you notes
- Pay invoices
- Hold event debrief with key members
- Book facility for a repeat event