

Basic Event Planning Checklist

Create a Timeline. When tackling a project, it's often a good strategy to develop a personal timeline that specifies when certain tasks need to be completed and in what order you plan to complete them. Below is a general event-planning timeline. Feel free to customize this checklist to include the specific needs for your group's activity.

Four or More Weeks Before Event—Goal Setting

- Define goals of program (cultural, educational, faculty, community service, social)
- Brainstorm program ideas, keeping in mind target audience
- Be honest: Do you have enough "advance time" to do this event?

Four Weeks Before Event—Program Development

- Determine the needs/interests the program will serve
- Determine how this program meets organization's goals/mission
- Determine budget for program (see *Funding* section)
- Determine funding source(s)—use organization's budget, but also collaborate with student organizations, Social Council, Program Board, academic departments, Theme Houses, etc. (see *Networking* section)
- Determine division of responsibilities within your group and with other groups when appropriate.

Three to Four Weeks Before Event—Program Registration/Approval and Choosing Dates

- Schedule a meeting with the Director of Student Activities to review the proposed activity details. This meeting helps ensure you have all of the information you need to plan a successful event and comply with College policies.
- Ask about contract requirements, Event Notification Form, Party Notification Form and Catering and Take-Out policy (see Dean Fatemi for advice on these matters before you sign any form of contract or hire a caterer. Do not make a personal contractual commitment—if you do, you may be personally liable for the contract fee.
- Plan food (see Catering and Take-Out Policy). If food will be part of the event review the Food/Catering Policy before contracting services.
- Check for conflicts with major campus events, activities of group members, etc. To do so, please visit the Academic Year at a Glance Calendar at <https://www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/news/calendar/glance> as well as the Amherst College Events Calendar at <https://events.amherst.edu/upcoming/>.
- Reserve room for a specified date (see *Reserving Rooms* section)
- Identify speaker/performer
- Ask about performance fee
- Find out technical/media requirements
- Request promotional materials from speaker/performer (if applicable—create your own publicity for the event in either case)

Three to Two Weeks Before Event—Event Notification Form, Party Notification Form, Catering/Food Policy & Publicity

- Fill out appropriate form through Student Activities office (Event Planning Form, Party Notification Form). Completed Event OR Party Notification forms must be submitted to the Director of Student Activities (room 116 Campus Center). You must meet with the Director of Student Activities to review the event or party details upon submitting the notification form. An event or party is approved when the Director of Student Activities signs the form.
- If your event has a food service please consult with the Director of Student Activities in advance of contracting the caterer and/or deciding on any food options. All events with food must be approved at least two weeks in advance by the Director of Student Activities and must comply with the College's Catering and Take-Out Policy.
- Advertise to group members and rest of student body via e-mail, word of mouth, flyers/posters, Facebook, Announcements, etc. (see *Publicity* section)

One to Two Weeks Before Event—Forms and Supplies

- Ensure that an Event Notification Form or a Party Notification form has been completed and is registered with the Student Activities Office. This should be done two weeks before an event.
- Fill out Neighbor Notification Form (including phone number of contact person for event) and distribute to neighbors
- Coordinate hospitality for speaker/performer (if applicable)
- Order any tables/chairs/extra trash cans/media needs (see *Equipment* section)
- Plan decorations

One Week Before Event

- Send reminders to group members and people who've RSVPed to the Facebook event
- Purchase decorations
- Figure out how you're paying for the event—e-mail AAS about their credit card if applicable

Day Before Event

- Send reminder to presenter, group members and people who've RSVPed to the Facebook event
- Reconfirm any materials/equipment (AV, tables, chairs, etc.)
- Order food
- Purchase non-perishable food as well as cups, plates, napkins, utensils

Day of Event

- Pick up any final food/materials
- Decorate
- Remove any valuables, such as artwork, that you think may be damaged
- Walk through the building 15 minutes before the event to recruit additional participants

After Event

- Clean up space used and take down all advertising/flyers/posters
- Send thank you notes to speaker/performer, volunteers, and other special people (including funding sources)
- Finalize budget expenditures—submit honorarium, all itemized receipts, purchase order copies, etc. to Comptroller