

STEP 1: FIND PEOPLE TO HELP YOU

Recruit volunteers immediately and divide them into three teams:

Publicity Team (PT):

This group handles publicity and the media. The purpose of their publicity efforts is to get people to attend your fundraising event. Your publicity should reflect the theme of education. Organizing an event is a great opportunity to take your message to the general public through the media—newspaper, radio, and television. By contacting local media with a **public release**, you may receive coverage that will reach far beyond those who attend your event.

Logistics Team (LT):

This team's responsibilities are threefold: fund-raising, soliciting donations of items needed for the event, and recruiting additional volunteers to prepare for and staff the event. You will be working within a budget, so keeping expenses down will be important. Your budget will probably include allowances for food, publicity, a sound system, decorations, and possibly the cost of a venue and/or speaker(s). It is a good idea to make up your own list before planning your fund-raising strategy. Once you have a list, you can begin brainstorming for ways to limit expenditures. Food can be your biggest expense—though through donations, it can often cost nothing at all! If you have a dining hall or cafeteria food service, begin by asking them to donate food. Or ask for donations from local restaurants and grocery stores. Ask your potential donors if they will share publicity through printed material, and social media. Seek out community stores, businesses, institutions, and individuals able to assist you. When talking with potential sponsors, emphasize the positive nature of your event. When seeking outside support, be sure to write a professional letter first and then follow up immediately thereafter with a call or a visit.

Planning Team (PNT):

The planning team oversees the structure and design of the program and makes sure that your event effectively conveys its message. This committee also plans the agenda and content of the program, including how much time is allocated to each part. It arranges for a master of ceremonies (MC), speakers, and VIP guests. Create a dramatic, interactive event that enables participants to experience the extent of our mission. Take into account the experiences, values, and environment of your specific audience, and plan an event that will resonate with them. Consider distributing information to your audience before the event. Will your audience members have a better reaction if they are well-informed? Or will the element of surprise be more effective?

STEP 2: GET ORGANIZED

This suggested "SAMPLE" sequence of a food event will assist you as you complete the tasks necessary to prepare for your event:

Potential speakers

- Returned volunteers
- Professors
- Teachers
- University presidents
- Local elected officials
- Community leaders
- Directors of area food banks and shelters
- Leaders of faith groups
- Local celebrities or media personalities

Five to eight weeks before

- Set a date for the event. (LT)
- Reserve a venue. (LT)
- Select an MC and a speaker. (PNT)
- Create a list of local celebrities to invite. (PNT)
- Seek out food donations. (LT)
- Print invitations, fliers. (PT)

Four weeks before

- Send out invitations. (PT)
- Post your event online. (PT)
- Prepare press release. (PT)
- Determine seating arrangements. (PNT)
- Decide on decorations. (PNT)

Three weeks before

- Publicize. (PT)
- Design menus. (PT)
- Purchase or make decorations. (PNT)
- Put up posters. (PT)
- Send out press releases and make follow-up calls. (PT)
- Check all final details. (LT)
- Review the suggested script. (PNT)
- Make follow-up calls to media. (PT)

Three days before

- Make tickets for all income groups. (LT)
- Buy food, pick up donated food, or review plans with chef.(LT)
- Check on table settings for each group. (LT)
- Make last-minute press calls. (PT)

The big day

- Continue publicity. (PT)
- Set up and decorate room. (PNT)
- Set up information table. (LT)
- Orient volunteers. (LT)

- Coordinate food for each income. (LT)
- Greet guests and make sure everyone has a ticket. (PNT)
- Begin! (PNT)

STEP 3: RUN YOUR EVENT

The big day is here! To ensure that everything goes smoothly, assign the tasks at hand to four people or groups:

Master of ceremonies

This is the most demanding of all the responsibilities. The MC needs to have a commanding presence to hold the audience's attention for the duration of the event. It falls on the MC's shoulders to get the audience to participate in the sharing session, one of the most important parts of the event. Along with being an effective public speaker, the MC should have a good grasp of the event concept and objectives.

Volunteer coordinator(s)

The volunteer coordinator assigns people to specific tasks and leads the orientation for all volunteers before the event. Some volunteers will put up the decorations, set up the room, and perhaps prepare the food. Others will greet the guests, have them add their names to the sign-in sheet and pick their tickets, serve the food, and clean up once the event is over. The volunteers need to be fully versed in their roles. Volunteers not only serve a practical purpose, but they are also the first people to interact with participants as they arrive, so they set the tone for the event to come.

Sound system manager

The sound system is an essential feature of the event to keep the audience involved. An effective sound system that can be heard over the crowd, particularly while people are finding their way to their appointed areas, will help your MC maintain control of the event. Look into the quality of the acoustics when you select the site for your event, and arrange for at least two microphones (one for the MC and at least one cordless microphone for the audience).

VIP guest relations

Your VIP guest list may include celebrities, speakers, and sponsors. Celebrities are invited to draw other people to your event, provide insight into our mission.

Speakers need to be briefed on where to sit, as well as when they will speak during the program and for how long. They should be introduced to the MC and other speakers.

Sponsors, whether individuals or heads of corporations, should be shown how their support contributed to the event, and they should be thanked, both in person and by the MC as part of the program.