

Evaluate the event

Don't forget that your work isn't over once the event ends. The evaluation process allows you to review an event in terms of its success and in the way it may be improved. Evaluations can also serve as a historical file for the organization and can be a useful reference for future program planners. Be sure to think about these three areas: the audience's feedback, the presenter's experience and recommendations, and the planner's thoughts and recommendations. Each group member should be asked whether they feel the program accomplished what it was intended to. What went well? What could have been better?

Coordinate clean-up

Be sure to make plans for clean-up if necessary. This needs to be done in a timely and thorough way so that the facilities staff doesn't get stuck with the dirty jobs. They'll appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Send thank-yous

Thanking the people or departments that helped you is important. If people feel that their assistance was valuable and appreciated, they'll be more likely to help you in the future.

Organize your records

Make sure to leave detailed information for the next signator or others who may work on this event. Include details like budgets, timelines, meeting notes, contracts, and evaluations. Leave your records where they will be accessible to future signators.

This brochure is one in a series on achieving effective campus involvement

- who's who at Reed
- budgeting
- contracting
- event planning
- funding
- passing it on
- publicity
- student activities programs and resources
- conflict resolution
- showing movies on campus

guide to Event Planning

a how-to for creating a
successful event

For more information, please stop by the student activities office in Gray Campus Center 104, call us at 503-788-6692, or email student-activities@reed.edu

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Student Activities Office
Gray Campus Center 104
503-788-6692
student-activities@reed.edu

So you're going to plan a big event, but you don't know where to start. Don't panic. All you need to do is break it up into smaller tasks and work on each one. Don't forget to ask for help from the other members of your group and from staff on campus; you have many resources at your disposal. Below are some steps you need to take when planning your event. If you need a little more guidance, the Student Activities office staff is available to help.

Identify audience and needs

To start, you need to ask yourself a series of questions to determine what it is you hope to accomplish with your program.

- Who is the audience?
- What does the audience want?
- What are the audience's needs?
- What method of assessment will you use to determine this (word of mouth, surveys, a suggestion box)?
- How big do you want the program to be?
- Does the type of event you're planning limit the audience size?
- If so, how will you determine who can attend?

Develop program goals

After you have identified your program's audience and needs, center in on which ones you want to address with your event. Define specifically what you want the participants to learn or experience from the program. This will be the goal of your event.

Organize your plans

What do you specifically need to do to accomplish your goals? When do you want to hold this event? Be sure to consider whether you have enough time to make all the necessary arrangements and whether your members will be able to complete all of their tasks.

Many program planners find it helpful to make a time line using backwards planning; start at the day of the event and fill in information on publicity deadlines, facility arrangements, etc., until you reach today's date. This can help you see if planning this is realistic or if you are setting yourself up for too much work in too little time. Getting everything down on paper can seem like an arduous process, but it can save lots of complications later. A Student Activities staff member can help you with the process.

Establish a budget

How much money do you have to work with? Will revenue need to be generated? What kind of resources do you have at your disposal? If you plan on charging admission, consider what costs you anticipate this fee will cover as well as how much you can reasonably expect participants to pay. Think about what all of your potential costs could be. These may include band or speaker fees, lodging, travel, publicity costs, refreshments, SU cleaners, Sound Kollektiv, and equipment rental, among other things.

Implement plans

Be clear regarding who will perform which tasks, what roles each person in your organization will take, and what you expect of one another. Be realistic when delegating tasks and responsibilities. Give people enough time to complete their work and assign to them tasks that are within their capabilities— set people up to succeed.

Register the event and schedule facilities

Once you have developed a plan, stop by the student activities office to register the event. Registering helps avoid scheduling conflicts, and the staff can be helpful with ideas and troubleshooting. This is also your chance to request help from facilities services, food service, AV, or community safety. Student activities will forward your information to the conference and events planning office to schedule the space and confirm your reservation.

Negotiate contracts

Speakers and entertainers often ask you to sign a contract. Contracts protect both you and the artist or performer and prevent misunderstandings. Avoid making verbal contracts over the phone, and be sure to read paper contracts and riders thoroughly. If you have questions, make note of them and ask for clarification. Student Activities staff members can also help if you have questions or concerns. More information is available in the Guide to Contracting brochure.

Arrange for publicity

An event may be publicized in many different ways. You're limited only by your imagination (and your budget). To help you decide on the most effective publicity, refer to the Guide to Publicity brochure.