



# EVENT PLANNING 101

Presented by: United Nations Association - United States of America

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**Do you want to plan an event but have no idea where to start? This guide will provide you with a few best practices and tips for a successful event.**

## Phase 1:

### 1.1: Identify Needs

Timeline: 12 to 9 months before event

- Who is your intended audience?
- What would you like them to see and experience with this event?
  - Taking Action or Raising Money (Advocating vs. Fundraising)
- How big do you want the event to be? Does this type of event limit the audience size? If so, how will you determine who can and cannot attend?
- Who do you want to influence with your event? Consider your government officials, media/press and your local community.

### 1.2: Develop Event Goals and Objectives

Timeline: 12 to 9 months before event

- What is the purpose of your event? How does this impact when, where and how it will take place?
- What are the desired outcomes of your program?
- What do you want the participants to learn or experience from your event?

### 1.3: Three: Determine a Location

Timeline: 12 to 9 months before event

- Choose a location that best fits your needs, size, and goals.
- Book the venue of your event early in the planning process.
- Check the community calendars and with larger organizations to ensure there are no conflicts for the date you are considering. What marquee moments can you plan your event around to maximize interest/attendance?



## Phase 2:

### 2.1: Finalize your Focus

Timeline: 9 to 6 months before event

- Reach out to UNF about the most timely advocacy ask for your event. They can supply you with the tools necessary (digital and/or print) to make it easy for attendees to act.
- Maintain bipartisan nature as representatives of the United Nations Foundation.
- To comply with federal regulation, do not offer attendees free materials in exchange for actions. We cannot incentivize advocacy actions with gifts and/or rewards.

### 2.2: Organize the Details

Timeline: 9 to 6 months before event

- Establish a budget that includes each item you will need to spend money on.
- Make a list of what needs to be done before, during and after the event. This might include equipment needs, registration tables, volunteers, printing, and more. Even the smallest details should be written down, and someone should be responsible for each item before the event takes place!
- Determine the speaker(s) you will need (experts, those who have a personal story/experience, legislators, community leaders, professors, etc.)
  - Try to find speakers, particularly local speakers, who will donate their time for their event to reduce costs.
- Prioritize your goals by creating a reverse timeline. Begin at the day of the event and list deadlines you must accomplish between now and then.

### 2.3: Form Partnerships

Timeline: 6 to 3 months before event

- One of the best ways to reach wider audiences is to promote your event with partners. Think about like-minded organizations that will help you draw attention to your event.
- Identify the type of collaboration you would like to establish before reaching out to potential organizations. Be sure to clearly state your goals and objectives to those organizations you wish to partner with.



## Phase 3:

### 3.1: Publicize

Timeline: 6 to 1 month(s) before event

- Publicity is vital to the success of your event. Even the best events cannot succeed without proper promotion.
- Create eye-catching flyers and posters to draw in supporters and potential attendees.
- Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are great ways to spread the word far and fast. Make an event page, promote it, and ask your members to invite their friends. Update the event in the lead-up to generate enthusiasm.
- Advocacy-oriented events are a great opportunity to invite local media and legislators.

### 3.2: Organize the Details

Timeline: 3 to 1 month(s) before event

- Create an event program or a handout for participants. It should be short but sweet and informative. Grab their attention and have a compelling focus without creating an information overload.
- Have a backup plan! No matter how well you plan, unexpected issues can arise any time. Be flexible and make sure you have enough staffers to sort out any problems that might come up.
- Test any A/V or media equipment well in advance and make sure you know how to use them.

### 3.3: Follow Up

Timeline: 1 to 2 weeks after event

- Be grateful! Thank attendees after the event for coming and offer more opportunities to get more involved.
- Send thank you cards to speakers and performers.
- Do a little bragging! Share your event's success on social media and with your local media source (i.e. newspaper)
- Keep a record of funds collected at event (donor name, amount, campaign, etc.) for your records.