

# How to... Plan an event

Hosting events is a wonderful way to grow your team, generate awareness for your cause, celebrate your accomplishments and build community. This guide will help you plan, promote and execute an event in your community.

Please consider the status of the coronavirus pandemic in your community. We strongly recommend that you abide by the guidelines laid out by your local health authority. Consider how you might move your event online or practice physical distancing. If you're hosting an online event, check out our [online facilitation guide](#).

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## 1. Purpose

- To raise awareness for and recruit people to help with your cause
- To raise funds for your cause
- To empower and uplift others to contribute to the event
- To gather your community to celebrate your achievements
- To provide opportunities for action that people can get involved in
- To build community
- To have fun!

## 2. Planning your event

To help you decide what kind of event will work best for you, we've come up with a few recommended formats. That said, if you have a great idea that is not on this list, go for it!

| Number of participants                                 | 2-15   | 15-50  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Activity ideas</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potluck</li> <li>• Picnic</li> <li>• Nature walk</li> <li>• Tea time</li> <li>• Table/tent at a larger community event</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community art project</li> <li>• Picnic/barbecue</li> <li>• Nature walk</li> <li>• Scavenger hunt</li> <li>• Flash mob</li> <li>• Park or beach cleanup</li> <li>• Floating parade (in kayaks or canoes)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Ideal venue</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An organizer's home</li> <li>• Park</li> <li>• Local café</li> <li>• Farmers market or community fair</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park</li> <li>• Laneway</li> <li>• Beach</li> <li>• Forest, ravine or nature reserve</li> <li>• Public square</li> <li>• River or lake</li> <li>• Community garden</li> </ul>                                       |
| <b>Number of organizers/size of planning committee</b> | <b>1-3</b>   | <b>2-5</b>   |
| <b>Factors to consider</b>                             | Weather, timing, accessibility, transit options, insurance if necessary  | Weather, timing, accessibility, transit options, permits for using public space, community partners, insurance if necessary  |

**For even more inspiration,** check out some of these creative links:

- Hold an “art space” — a place where people can express through words and images what matters to them.
  - Create a [kindness board](#) or [group art installation](#).
- Coordinate a photo booth with a whiteboard. Ask people to speak to, “What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean to you?” Share the images on social media.
- Put on a [talent show for your cause](#).
- [Hold a bake sale with a twist](#).
- [Have a lemonade stand to raise awareness \(not money\)](#).
- Lead a nature walk ‘n’ learn or [themed Jane’s Walk](#).
- [Wear a costume](#) or face paint for your cause.
- Have a water balloon fight or giant bubble party.
- Check out [100in1Day](#) for more ideas.

### Step 1: Form a planning committee and come up with an idea

1. Connect with people and students in your community who may be interested in participating, ask them to help you host a small event and form an event-planning committee.
2. Host a planning session to decide on an event that is feasible for you to organize together.
3. Reach out to local organizations that may want to collaborate with you on your event.

### Step 2: Break your event down to a set of clear deliverables

Once you’ve decided on an event, you will want to break down your event into a series of clear, manageable and properly delegated tasks. Some questions to think about are:

- Location
  - Where will your event take place? Is it accessible? [Check out this “access audit” template](#) from Radical Access Mapping Project for a full list of considerations.

- Materials
  - It's a good idea to have some method for people to sign in (i.e., clipboard with sign-up sheets for name, phone number, email address, etc.) so you can follow up with them.
  - It's helpful to have something to hand out with basic information about your cause.
  - What other materials will you need to host the event (table, arts and crafts materials, etc.)?
  - Who can source/print, secure and transport these materials?
- Partnership
  - Who will contact other organizations to see if/how they want to be involved?
  - Can they help with things like venues, materials, speakers and promotion?
- Communications
  - Who will be your team spokesperson/people at the event?
- Cleanup
  - Who will clean up after the event is finished?
- Cost
  - Are there any costs associated with your event?
  - How will you cover these costs?

Planning committee members should check in with each other regularly to make sure all tasks are properly completed on time. There are various ways to do this: project management tools, face-to-face meetings, email and over the phone.

### 3. Promoting your event

Some ideas:

- Use “Events” in the Action Network platform to create your invitation.
- Create a poster, print it out and post it around your community.
- Use social media to get the word out.
- Invite friends and family in your networks.
- Ask your partner organizations to help recruit people to attend.

### 4. Hosting your event

When beginning your event, consider doing an acknowledgement of the Indigenous territory you are on. To help, see our guide on [How to acknowledge Indigenous territory](#).

Thank everyone for coming. Explain your event’s purpose and talk about why the cause matters to you.

Make sure to always have a hard ask for your participants. Asking them to sign up to join your cause is a great place to start. You can then enter their details into your Action Network for future correspondence (you can use [this how-to guide](#)).

Have fun! Take lots of pictures to post on social media.

### 5. Following up

Make sure to update your email list with the contact information collected at your event so you can contact people in your community who are keen to be involved.

Now that you have a list of excited volunteers in your area, you can come up with a plan to continue raising awareness in your community. It’s a good idea to hold a meeting one to two weeks after a big event so you can invite new volunteers and keep up the momentum!