

Service Unit Event Planning Guide

1. WHEN YOU START PLANNING:

Decide on the event to be planned. What will be the purpose? When you fill out the Service Unit Program and Event Planning Form, it will ask you how the girls will Discover, Connect and/or Take Action at the event. The form is online and can be filled out online and then printed. Check for any standards and guidelines recommended by Council for your type of event.

Form committees if needed to carry out the event. Decide the responsibilities of each person. IF someone isn't sure they can do their job, don't depend on them to do it alone. You may regret it. Give them a buddy or a mentor.

Choose a date that does not conflict with any big Council programs, religious holidays or major school events, but remember you can never get a date that will make every single person happy. Do not take it personally if your choice hacks someone off. Do what you have to do to make it easy for you, as you are the person who has to run it.

Look for and secure a site. It must meet all criteria for the event, such as capacity, fire extinguishers, exits with doors that open out, accessible to those with disabilities, etc. If a contract is needed, a member of the service team must sign it, and the treasurer must give you any necessary deposits. Create a budget for your event. See what it will cost, how much it will take to break even. Try to decide about how much it will cost per girl and adult.

Obtain a certificate of liability insurance for the site if necessary, naming the Council as additionally insured. Provide a certificate of liability if requested.

Fill out paperwork, SU program event form, money earning application, or whatever is needed. Give to Eva Williams to check over.

Look for an invite a speaker, DJ, square dance caller, or whoever else you need. Have a backup in case your first choice is not available!

Plan publicity. Jayne Kranc and Karla Lutz can both make flyers. Jayne and the Council office can print them.

Develop a crisis management plan. What first aid coverage is needed? Who can check in, and check out, stand guard and keep the girls from goofing off in the bathrooms, etc.

If selling food find out from Council if the Board of Health if there are food handler regulations. If you need a one time vendor's license, you get that from the Government Building in Crown Point.

To contract buses if needed, make sure the letter of liability for the bus company is on file at Council. Complete the bus contract form and get Council to approve it.

Check with police and fire departments if the town where the event is being held requires a uniformed person at events with over a specific number of people.

2. WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT

Make sure all paperwork has been submitted for approval that needs to go to Council. Check with your helpers to see if anyone is being lax or freaking out. If they are, get them some help. If you have not met your numbers, keep publicizing especially if it is a money earning activity. Purchase your extra insurance at Council if it is a family event.

Finalize all plans for the event, food programs, decorations, etc. Decide on how to set up- seats, tables, decorations, food, parking, safety, etc. Make sure your caterer or food source is on the ball and that everything you need will be there on time.

Obtain any information needed by your speakers, or other resource people, for a biography or anything else necessary.

Begin to compile program materials program copy, door prizes, favors, etc. If you are doing a badge workshop, make sure the Council shop will have the badges available for you. If you are giving out a patch, order them.

Snappy Logos, Design-It or Advantage Emblem often have the best prices. Check out their clearance sections. With their drop and swap program, Snappy Logos will let you take a stock patch and swap out your wording for what they originally had embroidered on it for a small fee.

Check on any special guests, speakers, etc. Confirm date, time, place with them. Replace anyone who bails on you with your backups. Confirm all food orders. Things you think any logical person should know can be forgotten.

If going somewhere by bus, assign participants to specific buses based on capacities. Be sure there is a list of participants for each bus! You don't want to lose anyone. A bus captain is always good. Give this job to someone dependable. Explain what they need to do.

Prepare evaluation forms so you can have them there if you want written feedback.

If you have a caterer, give them a rough count. Ask them when the last time you can change it or add to the menu is.

3. WEEK BEFORE EVENT

Arrange for checks so you can pay off any balances on any bills the day of the event.

If you are giving out certificates get them printed. Jayne can print for the SU. It is sometimes helpful to staple the patches/badges to them. The kids seem to lose them less when we do that.

Confirm number attending with caterer or supplier.

Check again with any resource people and confirm they are coming and know when and where to go.

Make sure any equipment you need is ready to go. You don't want to get there and find there is not microphone, equipment does not work or that you've forgotten thank you gifts, programs, decorations, or other items.

Make sure your committee people are caught up. If you are using buses, confirm time and place with Bus Company.

4. LAST THREE DAYS & DAY OF EVENT

Finalize details.

Review crisis management for hopefully the last time.

Contact caterer with final head count even though you and they both probably know that will not wind up being your final number.

Set up for event. Get as many people to help as possible.

If press is coming give them a person who will stay with them throughout the event so that only the story and picture you want to get out to the public gets out. These people are amused by the weirdest things you can imagine.

If you are using evaluation forms, have pens or pencils with them so people have something to fill them out with.

DO NOT FREAK OUT when something does not go according to plan. You can have your event approved by Council, okayed by the health department, cleared by the police, passed into law by congress and blessed by every church in the tri-town area and something will still go wrong. Just smile at the nearest Girl Scout and say, "See, Sweetie? That's how you're NOT supposed to do it!" The kids will probably love it if you have a problem, at least the older ones do. They have to learn that things don't always go the way you had planned, and you have to pick yourself up, and keep going. If any adult seems amused by your plight, but unhelpful, offer to put them down to run the event next year. They will usually decamp hastily.

5. AFTER THE EVENT

Pay all outstanding bills. Meet with committees if you need to evaluate the event. Make sure all appropriate people are thanked! Write notes if necessary.

Keep any records or reports that you have for future reference. Otherwise someone is going to have to try and reinvent the wheel every darned year.