



Recipient Event Planning Guide

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CREATE YOUR TIMELINE

4-6 months prior to event

- ☐ Establish group roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Brainstorm any additional sponsorships
- ☐ Select and secure venue

3-4 months prior to event

- ☐ Contact and third-party vendors and reserve activities and logistical services
- ☐ Reach out to potential bands or entertainment
- ☐ Complete and submit permit applications, event, and liquor liability insurances to the City Clerk
- ☐ Obtain sponsors

2-3 months prior to event

- ☐ Create and proof event poster and/or handouts send to printing company
- ☐ Confirm bands or other entertainment with signed contract
- ☐ Begin outreach and confirm potential volunteer groups or other staffing
- ☐ Create social media event page

1 month prior to event

- ☐ Check with City to confirm approval of permits
- ☐ Begin selling and promoting ticket sales
- ☐ Email press release to local media
- ☐ Begin distributing event posters to local businesses
- ☐ Begin posting event to online event calendars with funding/sponsor logos

1-2 weeks prior to the event

- ☐ Check RSVP or ticket sales and send final attendee numbers to your caterer
- ☐ Reconfirm event dates and times with performers, caterers, sponsors, and staff
- ☐ Hold pre-event meetings with third-party vendors, managers of the venue, and volunteers.
- ☐ Create a detailed hour-by-hour event timeline for key volunteers and vendors based on meeting conversations and distribute to them
- ☐ Create an "event day survival kit" full of needed items: pens, sharpies, highlighters, tape, scissors, etc.
- ☐ Make nametags or lanyards to designate staff and volunteers
- ☐ Send final information to attendees including directions, maps, and last-minute details if a ticketed event
- ☐ Discuss severe weather coordination with planning team if hosting an outdoor event

1-2 days prior to the event

- ☐ Create a final to-do list to ensure all your tasks are completed
- ☐ Make sure you have important contact numbers for venue managers, third-party vendors, volunteers, or non-emergency police in one place and easily accessible on the event day. It is helpful to laminate these and put on your staff lanyards
- ☐ Deliver materials/equipment to the venue site (if possible)

THIRD PARTY VENDOR BOOKING TIMELINES

The importance of securing and coordinating with third-party vendors at an event cannot be understated because vendors act as the infrastructure to hosting a successful event.

- **Audio/visual production 6 weeks prior:** The more time you can provide, the better.
- **Music/entertainment 4-6 weeks prior:** Research your prospects before this timeframe as it can sometimes be a lengthy process to seek out performers.
- **Catering/bartending 4-6 weeks prior:** This amount of time will also give you and the caterer enough time to obtain and submit liquor liability insurance or licenses to the city of Rochester.
- **Tables, chairs, and tents asap:** It's a good idea to reserve these items as soon as possible during the peak wedding season (May through August). In the off-season or for very small events, reservations at least two to three weeks in advance is a good decision.
- **Portable restrooms and wash stations 2-4 week prior:** Standard portable restroom units should be reserved at least two weeks in advance. Luxury restroom trailers should be reserved as soon as possible because some weekends can book eight months in advance.
- **Waste collection 4 weeks prior:** For events under 50,000 people, you will want to secure trash containers at least 30 days in advance.
- **Event staffing services 1 month prior:** Larger events (500+ attendees) should reserve staff at least one month prior to event. Smaller events should reserve staff at least two weeks before event.

SAMPLE CONTACT LIST OF THIRD-PARTY VENDORS

Audio/Visual Production	Catering/Bartending	Tables/Chairs/Tents
Northern Sun Production	Bleu Duck Kitchen	Majestic Events
Big BANG Companies	Chester's Kitchen & Bar	Rentex
Majestic Events	The Tap House	
	The Kahler Hospitality Group	
	Victoria's Ristorante & Wine Bar	
Portable Restrooms/Wash Stations	Waste Collection	Event Staffing Services
On-Site Companies	Waste Management	Big BANG Companies
	Hometown Haulers	

Resources for additional third-party vendor contacts:

Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce: (507) 288-1122 or chamber@rochestermnchamber.com
 Experience Rochester: (507) 288-4331 or info@minnesotasrochester.com

MANAGING YOUR TEAM

Role	Pre-Event	Event Day	Post-Event
Event Management	Coordinates third-party vendors Reserves Venue Create site plan for event Develops Timeline Creates emergency contact list	Oversight for event Ensures event site is properly cleaned after event ends	Creates even recap with KPIs Gathers feedback from participants/vendors/team Holds event debrief meeting with team members
Finance Management	Creates budget Tracks spending Creates invoices for vendors		Creates final report of event revenue/expenditures
Legal Management	Works with event manager to obtain accurate permitting. Creates or signs any third-party vendor contracts for event		
Marketing & Communications	Creates promotional and advertising plan Develops marketing budget with finance manager Updates webpage and social media channels Press release Submit online event calendars Works with sponsorship to ensure logos are included	Day of posts/promotions throughout the event Takes photos and videos	Gathers recap photos and videos Recap posts on social media Gather social media marketing KPIs
Sponsorship Management	Create sponsorship plan and research potential sponsors Outreach and sponsor confirmation Ensure sponsorship expectations are met	Check in with sponsors at event	Send recap to sponsors Gather feedback
Volunteer Management	Create volunteer plan Confirm volunteer staffing Create volunteer checklists	Manages volunteers at event	Thanks volunteers post event Include volunteer experience in recap

TRACKING YOUR BUDGET

Make sure you are tracking your spending throughout the process. Creating a spreadsheet that is shared with all team members with purchasing privileges may be useful.

Expenses

Category	Details	Estimated	Actual
Rental Equipment	Audio/Visual Equipment	\$2500	\$3000
Rental Equipment	Stage/Tent rental	\$Free in kind	\$0
Marketing	Event Posters	\$150	\$100
Marketing	Facebook boosted post	\$50	\$50
Permit	Special Event Permit Fee	\$100	\$100
Supplies	Water and on-site supplies	\$200	\$250
Total Expenses			\$3500

Revenue

Category	Details	Estimated	Actual
Admission	\$5 per person	\$1500	\$1345
Sponsorships	Restaurant	\$1000	\$1000
Grant	Start up Event Grant	\$1000	\$1000
Vendor Fees	\$75 per vendor	\$1500	\$1425
Total Revenue			\$4770

CITY PERMITS

[Take this survey to figure out which permits your event will need and what departments to contact.](#)

There are three permits to consider for events:

City of Rochester Special Event Permit: Needed for events exceeding 300 participants or that plan to have amplified sound

- City department: [City Clerk](#)
- Cost: \$100

Right of Way Permit: Needed for street closures or bagged meters

- City department: [Public Works](#)
- Cost:
 - \$11: Under 10-hour meter bag per day
 - \$3: 10-hour meter bag per day

- \$3: per meter on Saturday and Sunday

Temporary Membrane Structure Permit: Needed for outdoor tents or structures measuring over 10'x20" or 200 square ft

- City department: [Rochester Fire Department](#)
- Cost: \$75 for application, an additional \$75 for a tent

SPONSORSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Pre-event: Look over the terms in your sponsorship agreement. Make sure you are following through on any commitments to the sponsor. This could include logo inclusion on marketing materials or social media mentions. Stay in touch with your sponsor to ensure everything is running smoothly and to prepare them for any day-of activity.

On-site presence: Not all sponsors choose to be present during the event. If they would like to be, here are some options:

- Provide a tent area for the sponsor's guests to gather.
- Hang signage (typically provided by the sponsor) somewhere visible on the event site.
- Allow opportunity for the sponsor to handout free branded materials.

Post-event: [Event recap packets](#) are a great way to show a sponsor the value of their dollars. Important information to include in this packet would be:

- Event attendance and photos
- Advertising exposure
 - How many advertisements was their logo included on?
 - What was the reach of those advertisements?
- Social media engagement

MARKETING

LOGO BRAND USAGE



[Rochester Downtown Alliance logo usage guidelines and downloadable files](#)

The Downtown Rochester MN logo, the brand identity of the Rochester Downtown Alliance, must be incorporated in any print (signage, flyers) or digital promotions of your Start-Up Event Grant awarded project.

To ensure accuracy of its usage, please send all designs to Elia Banuelos, RDA marketing and design project manager, at ebanuelos@downtownrochestermn.com at least two weeks prior to your production deadline to ensure a timely review.



[Destination Medical Center logo usage \(for events hosted in Peace Plaza\)](#)

Any Start-Up Event Grant that is hosted in Peace Plaza should include the Destination Medical Center logo on any print and/or digital collateral, in addition to the Downtown Rochester MN logo.

For files and how to use the DMC logo, please contact Geno Palazzari, DMC communications manager, at genopalazzari@dmceda.org or 307-696-9088.

MENTIONS IN MEDIA AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

When promoting the event/program on social media and in press releases, the phrase, **“Funded in part by a Start-Up Event Grant from the Rochester Downtown Alliance”** must be included.

Whenever possible, please mention the above phrase when being interviewed by media.

Tag Downtown Rochester, MN on social media

- Facebook: @DowntownRochesterMN
- Instagram: @DowntownRochesterMN
- Twitter: @DowntownRochMN

PROMOTION

Listed below are three main areas within the realm of marketing to focus on: Print, media, and digital. Within each of these areas are examples of avenues and channels you can utilize to market your event and tips to consider while doing it.

PRINT

Press release

- Prepare an official press release that is no longer than one page in length (using no less than 11-point font or no more than 12-point font).
- Include a point of contact (for media or general purposes), your organization’s name, and contact information (phone and email).
- Include “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” and the date of which the press release is published/distributed.
- Be sure to include the five W’s: Who, What, When, Where, Why
- Distribute your press release to local media about one month before the event. You can find general contact information on their website.
- Be sure to keep the email containing the press release as short as possible.
- Also, as a courtesy, refrain from sending your press release to individual reporters unless you have already built rapport with a particular person.

View a sample/previous RDA press release at DowntownRochesterMN.com/PressReleases

Event posters

- Design an event poster and distribute them at key strategic locations that relate to your target audience. Be sure to obtain permission before posting.

Newspaper and other print publications

- You may choose to publish advertisements with the local newspaper or other printed publication. If this is something within your budget, you can find contact information within each newspaper or printed publication. The largest newspaper in the Rochester area is the Post Bulletin. In general, check on or ask about the lead-time for a specific publication date.

MEDIA

After drafting and finalizing your press release, it is worth reaching out to local news media to earn pre-event coverage. News media channels include organizations like:

- KTTC (NBC)/FOX 47
- KAAL (ABC)
- KIMT (CBS)
- Post Bulletin
- Townsquare Media (radio, KROC FM, KROC AM, Y105 FM, etc.)
- You can find a complete list with a Google search

When pitching your event to local media, it is important to keep your message short and concise and include highlights about your event to make it stand out from similar past, present, or future events.

DIGITAL

Online calendars

- There are many free online calendars to publish your event on. To begin, publish your event on the downtown Rochester online calendar at DowntownRochesterMN.com/Submit.
- Other recommended free community event calendars
 - ABC 6 News—KAAL TV
 - ExperienceRochesterMN.com
 - KIMT News 3
 - KTTC TV
 - Post Bulletin and 507 Magazine
 - Rochester Local
 - Townsquare Media

Social media

- Create a Facebook event. Use this social media tool to publish updates and information about the event and engage with other users on social media about your event. Be genuine in your communications.
- Utilize other social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, Google+, etc.

Website

- Create a website if it is in your budget. There are free options; however, be sure to do your research before opting for a free website or investing in a paid option.

EVENT DAY

The day of your event will go by quickly, and no matter how much you plan, unexpected things will arise. If something comes up, be sure to utilize the resources you have on hand like your event team, volunteers, and list of important contact numbers.

Throughout the day be sure to:

- Take photos and videos

- Track important data like attendance and feedback
- Post on social media
- Check in with your sponsors, vendors, and volunteers

It will also be important to arrive to the venue early and stay until the end of your event. Doing so will ensure you can do a final walk through before and after the event and monitor your third-party vendors to oversee their set-up and tear down and to make sure they are adhering to venue policies.

POST EVENT

In the following week, evaluate, acknowledge, and recap the event. Each of these follow-up areas are important and expected by those in the community who participated in and helped with your event.

EVALUATION

Make sure a follow-up discussion is conducted with your team soon after the event while the information is still easily recalled. Gather your attendance and feedback. Discuss what worked and what didn't.

Suggested questions might include:

- Was communication with third-party vendors, entertainment, and volunteers effective?
- How did your third-party vendors, volunteers, and entertainment perform?
- Was the venue a good choice for your event?
- If your sponsors were onsite, what was their opinion of the event when you spoke with them?
- How many attendees were there?
- How did attendees engage with your activities or respond to your programming?
- Did the media show up to cover event? If so, what type of coverage did you receive?
- Were you able to adhere to your budget?
- Did you achieve your goal or objective with the event?
- Do you think the event had an impact on the community? If so, what was that impact?
- Would you hold this event again?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Saying thank you to everyone who assisted with your event is not just a nice thing to do; it ensures the relationships you created end on a positive note. Make sure to give thanks and acknowledge the contributions of:

- Sponsors
- Volunteers
- Speakers, presenters, entertainers
- Third-party vendors
- Any media outlets who provided coverage

In your thank you notes, be sure to remind the recipients of the event's success and how they contributed to it (e.g., impact on the community, dollars raised, number of attendees, etc.). You can send these thank you notes via a personally crafted email or in the mail with a physical note.

EVENT RECAP PACKET EXAMPLE



About Thursdays Downtown

2022 goals:

- Welcome a new audience—young families—to the event.
- Test out new ways to utilize the newly renovated Peace Plaza
- Incorporate a new staffing model to make event more sustainable for RDA team
- Drive more foot traffic downtown and attract remote workers to spend the day downtown.
- Raise the profile of downtown Rochester as a desirable place to visit

Key learnings:

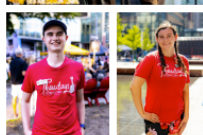
- We experienced new demands to utilize the 3rd Street area of the event for employee appreciation parties.
- The family area was highly successful and helped clarify the best times for families to enjoy Thursdays Downtown and balanced the impacts on brick and mortar businesses not participating in the event.
- A 10-week season was an appropriate amount of time to be beneficial to participating vendors. Be more intentional about how to incorporate downtown retailers into the event.



"Thank you so much for having a sensory break space available for Thursdays! It made it possible for myself and kids to stay downtown an extra few hours! Having a private space available to do feedings and diaper changes is a complete game changer, so thank you for making it available!"
-Survey respondent

Event analytics

- Website and blog analytics
 - 75,442 web page views
 - Event web page saw 12% increase over 2021
 - 63,950 unique pageviews
 - 9,322 blog views (52% percent increase over 2021)
- Marketing and social media
 - Facebook pages and Facebook events
 - 271,466 reach (16% increase over 2021)
 - 2,715 responses
 - 14,344 total post engagements
 - 83,913 story views (143% increase over 2021)
 - Instagram
 - 32,555 post reach and views (271% increase over 2021)
 - 3,129 post likes (37% increase over 2021)
 - 157,683 stories views (22% increase over 2021)
 - 80,517 impressions (19% increase over 2021)
 - Twitter
 - 60,619 impressions
 - 1,652 engagements
 - 10,546 views
- Communications and media relations
 - Event generated media: 16.7 million estimated reach
 - Public social media mentions: 11.6 million estimated reach (10% increase over 2021)
- Estimated seasonal attendance: 192,672 people
- Estimated economic impact: \$6.45 million



Event generated media:
16.7 million
estimated reach

Event web page and blog views:
75,442
(Jan. 1 through Aug. 18)

It's not too late to participate!

Upcoming partnership opportunities in 2022



Roller Disco:

October 7-8, 2022



Here Comes Santa Claus:

November 26, 2022

DOWNTOWN
Rochester, MinnesotaRochester Downtown Alliance
311 South Broadway South Suite A2
Rochester, MN 55904

Have questions/interested in partnering with us?

Contact Kanika Couchene, director of events & strategic partnerships,
at 507-216-9884 or kcouchene@downtowndowntownmn.com