

BACKWARD TIMELINE

Create a planning timeline by working *backwards* from the date of the event to plan when each task needs to be completed. Set a date by which each task must be completed. Here is a sample of a backward timeline:

Weeks

Before Event Task to Be Completed

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| asap | Assess the interests of your organization & community It's a new year! Poll members of your community. What are their interests? What are the goals of your organization? What kind of program would help move towards those goals? |
| asap | Brainstorm & choose Open it up to your members. Ask for all possible ideas. Discuss each one and find out what sparks interest. The Test: if members aren't motivated to work on the event, you'll most likely lack volunteers <u>and</u> an audience. |
| asap | Meet with your Staff Adviser Meet with your advisor early and often. S/he can let you know the resources and the red-tape that can make an event run smoothly or hit a brick wall. |
| asap | Research Check the calendar for other events, holidays, mid-terms, etc. Make a list of everything to be done. Figure out when each task needs to be done by and who will do each task. Note hard deadlines that can't be missed. |
| See Funding Deadlines | Create a budget & fundraise or request funds Make a list of all the expenses involved in the event. Research the costs. Fundraise or research fund sources and their deadlines. Turn in proposals on time. |
| 6 Weeks | Secure the funds Hear back from fund sources or complete fundraising. Assess if you need to adjust your event expenses. |
| 6 Weeks | Reserve a space Look for a facility as soon as possible. Popular spaces may get booked early so have a couple of back-ups choices. Make sure to confirm your reservation in writing. |
| 4-6 Weeks | Request payments for food & performers/speakers Performers or speakers need contracts done in advance in order to be paid. Large purchases or food can also take time. Meet with your advisor to make sure you know the deadlines. |
| 4 Weeks | Request all services Meet with your advisor 4 weeks in advance to request any needed services: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sound/media equipment• Parking/signage• Trash/recycling containers |
| 3 Weeks | Design publicity & publicize You've worked hard on the event. Make sure people knows it's happening! Design advertisement and distribute, at least 2 weeks before the event. |
| 1 Week | Confirm volunteers, performers, & speakers Don't assume everyone will remember! Make reminder calls 1 week before the event. |
| 1 Week | Request Purchase Orders for all other purchases Arrange for any remaining purchases. Check in with members to make sure they are completing tasks. |
| The Date | Hold the event! Set up, <i>have a great time</i> , clean up, & celebrate! |
| 1 Week After | Evaluate how it went Each event offers valuable lessons. Ask members for honest feedback and record it so it's not forgotten. Thank everybody for their contributions. |

This Activity Sheet was written by staff and student leaders of SOMeCA. The concepts and tips have been developed through application and reflection.