

PLANNING TIMELINE

Planning a memorable event doesn't need to take a lot of time or energy. Whether you're putting things together a week beforehand or starting to plan months in advance, our interactive timeline gives you a checklist to get organized & keep your planning on track.

- Register

[Register your *Lights On Afterschool* event!](#)

- Get Started

Ideal planning period: 6 to 10 weeks ahead of your event

Logistics

- Consider: [Who, what, when & where.](#)
- Set a budget. Reach out to potential partners who may be willing to [sponsor](#) your event.
- Finalize the time and location of your event. Remember to pick a backup date for outdoor events in case of inclement weather.
Recommended deadline: 2 months before your event.
- If your event is off-site in a public venue, find out if you need any permits. If it's a park, call the parks department. If you're planning a rally at a local government building, contact the building's maintenance office or city manager's office. If you're asked for proof of insurance against property damage or personal injury, ask to apply for a waiver.
Timing of these processes can vary. Be sure to look into permits and other venue needs as soon as you've made a plan.
- Ask partner organizations or other local providers about working together on a joint event to maximize resources. Set a meeting or conference call schedule. Draw up a list of responsibilities and deadlines.
- Determine and reach out to vendors and staff/volunteers that you may need for your event. Some vendors may have schedules that fill up quickly, so be sure to reach out to them as early as you can in your planning process.
Recommended deadline: 2 months before your event.
Some vendors you may need:
 - Catering
 - Photographer
 - Audio/visual equipment
 - Seating
 - Greeters or ushers
 - Restrooms
 - First aid
 - Supplies

- Decorations (flowers, signage, etc.)
 - Entertainment
- Form your event team. If you have the capacity, assign leads for:
 - Event Chair
 - Logistics
 - Media and Public Relations
 - VIPs and RSVPs

[Media & Promotion](#)

[Invitations](#)

[Materials](#)

Resources

• Next Steps

Ideal planning period: 3 to 5 weeks ahead of your event

[Logistics](#)

- Reconfirm with vendors (catering, photographer, greeters/ushers, entertainment, etc.) and staff/volunteers that you need for your event.
Recommended deadline: 3 weeks before your event.
- Arrange transportation for dignitaries and guest speakers, if necessary.

[Media & Promotion](#)

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Resources

• Home Stretch

Ideal planning period: 3 weeks ahead of your event until the day before

[Logistics](#)

- Get a weather report if your event is outdoors. Make the call as to whether or not you're going to enact your rain backup plan.
Recommended deadline: 2 to 4 days before your event.
- Be prepared to set up a press sign-in table where you'll give reporters a news release and media kit as they arrive at the event.

[Media & Promotion](#)

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Resources

• Lights On Afterschool!

Tips for the day of your event

[Logistics](#)

- Be sure to have guests sign in. Think about having guests sign in using the [afterschool petition](#).

- Have an event program or agenda available at sign-in, along with informational materials and [fact sheets](#) about your program as well as afterschool in general.
- Set up a separate press sign-in table where you'll give reporters a news release and media kit.

[Media & Promotion](#) [Invitations](#)

Resources

- **After Your Event**

[Materials](#)

- Gather your light bulb art to deliver to Congressional district offices. Send the artwork along with a [personal note](#) and information on your program, or arrange to hand deliver it. Consider making it a field trip for students.

[Media & Promotion](#) [Congratulations!](#)

Resources