



Planning a fun event that just happens to be a fundraiser too is easy with good organization. With the right approach you are sure to reach your goal and have a great time doing it! Here are several steps that will help you budget your time and money and keep an organized schedule while planning your event.

Step 1: Set Goals

It is important to begin your fundraising plan by establishing your goals for the fundraiser. Make decisions about who your audience will be, what kind of fundraiser you want to have and what you wish to accomplish (how much money you wish to raise or whether you primarily want to teach friends about The Arc of Dallas). Communicate and discuss your goals with all those who will be involved and keep written records of any changes or updates to your goals.

Part of your goal could be to support one particular program of The Arc. There are so many to choose from! Here is a quick summary, but please feel free to call your One Great Day coordinator for advice, especially to learn more about what your net proceeds of \$100, \$500 or \$1,000 can do to help a child or adult with a developmental disability.

Arc Programs Your Event Can Support

- ★ **Advocacy and Intervention** for individuals and families to make sure they are treated fairly.
- ★ **Adventure Camp** for school age kids on summer and spring breaks.
- ★ **Community Living Skills**, year round Arc L.I.F.E. training for youth and adults.
- ★ **Guardianship** for people with developmental disabilities between 18 and 49 years old.
- ★ **Information and Referral** connecting families and individuals to community services.
- ★ **Leadership Institute**, citizenship and self-advocacy training for young adults
- ★ **Parent/Sibling Education**, helping families adapt and thrive when a loved one has a disability.
- ★ **Hispanic Outreach**, eliminating culture and language barriers to connect families to services.

Step 2: Draw up a Budget

Even if it is on the back of an envelope, write down what you think you will spend. This is for you to use while planning your event. Try to be as specific as possible even if you are having a small fundraiser. A budget for a large fundraiser would include income, such as sponsorship, ticket sales, concession stands and donations, as well as expenses such as entertainment, advertising, invitations and supplies to set up the event. Make sure to indicate which items you will need to buy and which items can be donated or made by volunteers.

Step 3: Set the Date and Time

Build in enough time to do it properly without stressing yourself and your volunteers. When choosing a date, make sure it does not conflict with national holidays or major events in your community (unless you are coordinating your fundraiser to coincide with those!).

Step 4: Create a Timeline and Make a Checklist

After you have set the date of your event, create a schedule of how you want to organize your event and the steps you will need to take to get everything completed. A checklist of necessary actions or decisions and when they should be completed is key to keeping yourself organized and on track. Try working back from the date of the fundraiser to get a better idea of timing: for example, invitations or flyers to promote the event can be distributed 2 to 4 weeks before the event (depending on formality).

Step 5: Choose a Location

Pick a location where you want the event to be held (if there is a cost to renting a location, remember to include it in your budget). Schools, community buildings and locally-owned businesses are all cost-efficient options. Depending on the type of event you are throwing, your home can serve as a great location and will also save you money.

Step 6: Choose Your Entertainment

Entertainment at an event is not always necessary, though something as simple as music can make a fundraiser more fun and spirited. A DJ or a guest speaker needs to be booked early, especially during the holiday season! Be sure to consider the space and "feel" of the event when choosing your entertainment.

Step 7: Publicize the Event

Spreading the word about your event can be done in many ways depending on the type of event you are creating. If it is a community event, post and send out flyers around the neighborhood. Places like coffee shops, book stores, grocery stores, town bulletin boards and community centers are great places to post information about your event (get a group of volunteers together to hang flyers). Additionally, many local newspapers have event listings through which you can usually promote your event for free.

If you are hosting a private event, you'll need to create an invitation and a list of those you are inviting. For a larger or more formal event, a stationery store can help you design and print your invitation. For your invitation list, ask your volunteers/friends for their input or extra names and addresses. Designate a person to be in charge of the invitation list—to check for duplicates, confirm addresses and names, etc.

Step 8: Get Food, Drinks and Decorations

Depending on the type of event, refreshments and decorations may be very important or not important at all. If your event is casual, you can save money by asking vendors or friends to donate food and drinks. For a more formal event, you might want to price catering options. If you're having a themed event, decorations can set the mood—be creative!

Step 9: Enjoy!

Recruit enough volunteers and delegate duties on the day of the event to lessen stress and enjoy the big day or night. The more help you have the more likely your One Great Day will be enjoyed by you as well! The whole event will run more smoothly if you coordinate things instead of trying to do it all yourself.

Step 10: Send Your Donation and Your Thank Yous.

Take some time to savor your accomplishments and thank all of those people who made it happen—volunteers, vendors, donors, etc. When you send in your donation, you can also coordinate thank yous through The Arc of Dallas. And don't forget, we want to give you and your team a very public THANK YOU from The Arc on behalf of the thousands of clients we serve. Let's be sure to get together after your One Great Day.

Good luck!