Recognized Student Organization
Event Planning Guide

Event planning can be as simple or as complicated as the organization and its leaders choose to make it. The secret to a successful event is to have a flexible plan from conception to the birth of the idea that is followed through, applied, and reviewed. The key terms to remember in planning every event are the 6 Ws:

- **WHO?**
  - Who is invited to the event?
  - Who is the targeted audience?
  - Who is involved in the planning and execution of the event?
  - Who will execute each step/aspect of the event?
  - Who is the primary contact for event questions and concerns? Is there a secondary contact?
  - Who else needs to be involved or aware of this event? Who are potential stakeholders?

- **WHAT?**
  - What are the details of the event?
  - What will the event include? (for example, food, activities, games, rentals, music, speaker, performer, etc.)
  - What supplies and equipment are needed?
  - What costs will be associated with this event?
  - What will happen in the case of an emergency?
  - What will happen in the case of bad weather?

- **WHEN?**
  - When will the event take place? Start day/time? End day/time?
  - When will individuals need to arrive for setup? Teardown?
  - When will planning meetings occur?
  - When should participants register or RSVP (if applicable)?
  - When does each step of the planning process need to be completed?
  - When do contracts and agreements need to be initiated? Completed?
  - When will a follow up meeting occur to review the event?

- **WHERE?**
  - Where will the event take place? Is it reserved with a confirmation?
  - Where will the event be moved in the case of bad weather (if held outdoors)?
  - Where will participants register or RSVP (if applicable)?

- **WHY?**
  - Why is this event being held? (What is the purpose or goals of the event?)

- **HOW?**
  - How will the event be set up?
  - How does the event support the organization’s mission?
  - How will people be notified of the event?
  - How will the event be financed?
  - How will success of the event be measured? (for example, number of participants, feedback surveys, number of signups, etc.)
Planning an Event

The following steps are recommended for planning an event. The steps the organization takes will vary based on the type of event being held. Please contact the Student Government Council at 850-770-2194 for assistance or support in planning events.

1. Confirm the organization is a Recognized Student Organization with the Student Government Council. Only Recognized Student Organizations are permitted to reserve campus facilities and equipment.
2. Reserve space for the event. Make sure the reservation has been confirmed before the organization proceeds in specific event plans that rely on the date, time, and location to be established.
   a. A Facilities Use Request (FUR) form must be submitted to request campus space and equipment. This form should be submitted at least two (2) weeks prior to the event date, but it is encouraged that a FUR be submitted as early as possible to increase the likelihood the date, time, and location desired is available.
      i. A FUR is a request for space and does not guarantee the space is reserved until the organization receives a confirmation email for events.
3. Complete an Event Permit request with the Student Government Council. See the section titled “Event Permits” for more information.
   a. The organization will be notified when a submitted Event Permit is approved or if additional items are needed. A confirmation must be received before the event is permitted to occur.
   b. Notify the SGC of any and all changes to the Event Permit, including after the permit has been approved.
4. Complete the “Items Outlined” in the Event Permit once it has been processed or is listed as “Pending.”
   a. Comments on the Event Permit will list arrangements and contacts that must be made to ensure proper arrangements are made for the event. The organization will need to work with the campus partners listed in this section as they have been identified as stakeholders in the event.
   b. Contact offices and departments at least 15 business days in advance for any contracts that need to be signed and at least 10 business days in advance for all additional items needing to be completed (such as food permits, public safety, etc.).
5. Finalize plans. Utilize the “Event Timeline and Checklist” included in this resource as a guide, tailoring items to the specific event being planned.
6. Publicize the event. Publicity is important to making sure people attend the event. Plan publicity in advance to ensure there is time to get the message to the intended audience.
   a. A few methods for publicizing the event include, but is not limited to:
      i. Print publicity on FSU Panama City bulletin boards.
      ii. OSA Student Newsletter sent weekly by the Office of Student Affairs. Complete a Request for Submission at https://www.jotform.com/amoonFSU/osa-newsletter to be included.
      iii. Social media platforms
      iv. Announcements at other RSO meetings or in classrooms (with permission)
      v. Campus banners (complete a FUR)
      vi. Chalking

Event Timeline and Checklist

The following timeline and checklist was created to aid Recognized Student Organizations in their event planning process. The steps outlined below with associated timeframes are recommendations
only and will vary based on the type of the event being held. Contact the SGC at 850-770-2194 for assistance and support.

Semester Prior to the Event

☐ Develop an event concept and set goals for the event. What does the organization hope to achieve as a result of the event and how does the event support the organization’s mission?
☐ Schedule a meeting with the SGC for an event consultation.
☐ Develop an event outline including possible dates, times, and locations. Have alternate dates, times, and locations identified in case the desired date, time, and/or location is unavailable.
☐ Reserve the space and equipment through the completion of a Facilities Usage Request (FUR) form with the SGC.
☐ Prepare an event budget (see a sample in this resource).

Six or More Weeks Prior to the Event

☐ Identify and contact potential co-sponsors of the event.
☐ Identify the targeted audience of the event.
☐ Select the event chair and members of the planning committee.
☐ Contact the SGC and/or Student Activities Board Alliance (as part of the Seminole-Commodore Alliance) if the organization is interested in receiving funding for the event.
☐ Contact any speakers, performers, or agencies (including rental companies) to begin the contract process. Involve the SGC Advisor in all contract negotiations (see “Contracts” below for requirements).
  ☐ Book travel arrangements as needed.
☐ Select a menu or refreshments and obtain a Temporary Food Permit (see “Food Permit”).
  ☐ If an outside agency, including any catering, is being utilized, make those arrangements at this time.
☐ Establish a publicity plan for the event and purchase any professionally printed materials for the event (for example, flyers, shirts, posters, invitations, etc.).
Four or More Weeks Prior to the Event
- Submit an Event Permit request.
- Complete all signed contracts with the SGC Advisor. Contracts must be completed at least three weeks prior to the event date.
- Confirm attendance with all performers, speakers, vendors, etc.
- Obtain all vendors’ proof of insurance.

Two or More Weeks Prior to the Event
- Make sure all necessary forms are completed and turned in to the appropriate departments, including all “Items Outlined” in the Event Permit.
- Contact the reserved facility to ensure all equipment, supplies, furniture, etc. are arranged for the event.
- Submit a “Request for Submission” in the OSA Student Newsletter for publicity if interested in being featured.
- Begin outlining the “Day of Event” schedule including items to be completed, delivered, and volunteer responsibilities.
- Send a draft of the program and schedule to speakers or performers.
- Contact the FSU Panama City Police Department to discuss a security assessment if deemed necessary for the event.
- Execute the publicity plan.

One or More Weeks Prior to the Event
- Prepare materials to be distributed at the event.
- Meet with all event staff and volunteers to review logistics and responsibilities.
- Ensure the Event Permit has all correct information and reflects any changes that may have occurred since the approved permit was issued.

Day(s) Before the Event
- Send a reminder invite to participants or intended audience.
- Purchase supplies including food, drinks, decorations, etc. not supplied by a caterer or the facility.
- Host a dress rehearsal or sound check for any performers, speakers, etc.

Day of Event
- Arrive early to check the facility or space for cleanliness and necessary equipment and furniture.
- Post directional signs to the room or facility if the event is open to the public.
- Ensure food and beverage items are in place at least one hour prior to event start time.
- Place water and a glass at the podium for each speaker or ensure all artist rider requirements are met.
- If there are pre-event preparation or setup activities, have staff and/or volunteers arrive at least four hours prior to the event (more time if needed).
Within One Week After the Event

- Send speakers, artists, performers, sponsors, and other individuals who helped thank you notes.
- Submit any required paperwork to the SGC if the organization received funding.
- Host a follow-up meeting with the planning committee to review the event including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and recommendations for future events.

Event Permits

The Event Permit process was created to assist Recognized Student Organizations with event planning to ensure safe and successful events on campus. Once the permit is completed, it is sent to relevant campus departments for approval. The permitting process ensures that all stakeholders in the event are informed about the event and can provide the organization or department with adequate support to make the event both safe and successful. This does not apply to weekly business meetings.

RSOs can obtain and complete an Event Permit with the Student Government Council in the Barron Building, room 309. Call 850-770-2194 to schedule a meeting with a SGC representative to assist the organization.

Importance

Each event is different and has risks associated with it such as large crowds, the potential for food-borne illness, injury, financial risks, etc. The Event Permit process allows organizations to work with campus partners such as FSU Police, the Office of Student Affairs, the Finance and Administration Office, and others who can assist the organization in limiting risk involved with events. RSO officers and event coordinators can be held legally liable for what happens at an event. The Event Permit can help reduce the liability for the organization and FSU Panama City by partnering to help the event be safe and successful.

Types of Events

An Event Permit is required for any event on campus which involves one or more of the following:

- Held outdoors
- Food is served to the general public
- Large crowds are anticipated
- Involves physical activity, including a 5K run
- Requires a waiver
- Involves amplified sound (such as a DJ or band)
- Involves performers, speakers, or other acts
- Involves one or more contracts or rentals
- Fundraisers or events where money will be exchanged
- Involves minors on campus (individuals under the age of 18)
- Controversial and/or emotional charged content may be involved
- National, state, or local appointed or elected officials or candidates will be present (not including the SGC or RSO officers)
- Media will be on campus (even unscheduled)
- Rallies or demonstrations
A motion picture is being shown

Timeline

Most events can be approved within 10 business days; however, more complex events may take longer to approve. Please keep this timeframe in mind when planning events. Plan in advance and be sure to incorporate approval processing time.

Food Permit

A Temporary Food Permit is required for on-campus events in which one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The event is open to non-members of the hosting organization (for example, the general public),
- Food is not pre-packaged by a manufacturer, or
- Baked goods will be served or sold.

Examples of these events include a bake sale, information sessions, open meetings, or community events even when popular food choices (such as pizza delivery or pot-luck meetings) are served. Food Permit requests collect specific information about the food that will be served as well as vendor and serving information. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) at FSU Tallahassee review each Food Permit request and provides guidance in order to ensure that the event is both safe and successful.

EH&S requires Food Permits for events in order to meet the standards set forth by Florida Administrative Code Chapter 64E-11 regarding food hygiene, specifically referencing “temporary food service events.” In addition to the requirements of 64E-11.009, temporary food service events must abide by the specific policies found in the Food Service and Safety Manual (https://www.safety.fsu.edu/safety_manual/Food%20Service%20and%20Safety.pdf).

Why is food such a big deal? Though rare, food borne illness can happen and FSU Panama City wants to make sure everyone enjoys a safe environment on campus. If someone does get sick from food at a campus event, EH&S has a record of what was serviced and how it was prepared to track down the source of illness and reach others who might have shared the food.

Note that events restricted to an individual RSO can prepare and supply food without providing any information on where and how food was prepared. However, access to leftover food from the event cannot be shared with other students, faculty, staff, or the general public.
Contracts

Any event hosted by a RSO that brings any non-FSU person, group, or organization to campus must be officially contracted by the university. This includes, but is not limited to, DJs, speakers, bands, vendors, entertainment, and conferences. Regardless of cost, including free services, a contract must be signed by the FSU Panama City Dean or the SGC Advisor (when appropriate). Contracts must be signed at least 15 business days in advance of the event and should be submitted to the FSU Panama City Dean or the SGC Advisor (when appropriate) at least 20 business days in advance of the event.

Contracts are legal documents on behalf of FSU Panama City and must always be signed by the Dean or the SGC Advisor. Never sign a contract yourself as you or your organization could be responsible for paying fees or fulfilling legal requirements on your own.

Verbal commitments are legally binding in the state of Florida. When inquiring about a non-FSU entity coming to campus, never verbally or in written documentation (for example, emails, messaging, etc.) commit a date, price, or services. Instead, language that can be used include:

- Can you give me a price quote for this service?
- Is the individual available on a certain date if the organization is also available?
- This information will be passed on to the planning committee and the organization will respond back shortly.
- Please send a contract with the quoted fees and the organization will seek the necessary approvals.
- Please send an artist rider with the quoted fees and the organization will seek the necessary approvals.

Contact the SGC Advisor at 850-770-2194 for more information and for assistance in working with non-FSU entities.

Budgets

Often, there are costs associated with hosting an event, including but not limited to refreshments, marketing, decorations, and contracts with outside vendors, agents, etc. Registered Student Organizations can apply for funding through the SGC or utilize off-campus private funding to pay for event costs. For more information about funding and RSO accounts, see the FSU Panama City Student Organization Handbook.
# Sample Event Budget

**Event Name:** ________________________________

**Date and Time:** ________________________________

**Location:** ________________________________

**Sponsor(s):** ________________________________

**Revenue:**

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<th>Source</th>
<th>Payment (Estimate)</th>
<th>Payment (Actual)</th>
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**Expenses:**

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