# Front matter: Event Timeline

## Why It's Important

The event timeline is the simple calendar companion to the master checklist. Where the checklist lists every task, the timeline shows the year at a glance, month by month, with a lead volunteer named for each stage. It helps a committee see the shape of the work, recruit help early, and spread the effort so no single month becomes a crisis. For a volunteer team, this one-page view is often the easiest way to keep everyone pointed in the same direction.

## How to Use

1. Set your event date, then work backward to fill each row.
2. Name a lead volunteer for each stage. This is who keeps that stage moving, not who does all the work.
3. Post the timeline where the whole committee can see it, in your shared folder or on a wall at meetings.
4. Use the blank template that matches your lead time, either the 12-month or the 6-month version.
5. Update the status column so progress is visible at a glance.
6. Keep planning meetings to sixty to ninety minutes, as the tips suggest.

## What You Need

- A confirmed or target event date.
- A list of your main working areas and a willing lead for each.
- The master checklist nearby, since the timeline summarizes it.
- A regular meeting rhythm, ideally monthly.

# Event Ready Event Timeline template

A simple annual timeline helps volunteer-run organizations spread the workload, recruit volunteers early, and avoid last-minute stress. Here's an example for a single major event held in **Month 12**.

> **How this relates to the Master Checklist.** This timeline is the calendar summary: the year at a glance, with a lead volunteer for each stage. The Master Event Planning Checklist is the detailed task list. Use them together.

| Timeline | Key Activities | Lead Volunteers |
|---|---|---|
| **12 Months Before** | Set event date, establish organizing committee, define goals and budget | Board/Event Chair |
| **10–11 Months Before** | Book venue, develop project plan, identify sponsors and grant opportunities | Venue, Finance, Sponsorship Teams |
| **8–9 Months Before** | Confirm major vendors, recruit committee members, launch sponsorship campaign | Operations, Volunteer Coordinator |
| **6–7 Months Before** | Begin marketing, open vendor/exhibitor registrations (if applicable), recruit volunteers | Marketing, Volunteer Team |
| **4–5 Months Before** | Confirm entertainment/speakers, order supplies, review budget, secure permits and insurance | Program Lead, Logistics |
| **3 Months Before** | Increase marketing efforts, confirm sponsors, schedule volunteers, finalize event layout | Marketing, Volunteer Coordinator |
| **2 Months Before** | Conduct planning meetings, order final materials, confirm vendors, create event schedule | All Team Leads |
| **1 Month Before** | Train volunteers, confirm logistics, prepare signage and registration materials, contingency planning | Operations Team |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Event Week** | Final walkthrough, vendor check-in, volunteer briefing, event setup | Entire Organizing Committee |
| **Event Day** | Execute event, manage volunteers, troubleshoot issues, celebrate success | All Volunteers |
| **1–2 Weeks After** | Thank volunteers and sponsors, pay invoices, collect feedback, debrief meeting | Board & Committee |
| **1 Month After** | Review outcomes, document lessons learned, archive files, begin planning for next year | Organizing Committee |

## Tips for Volunteer Organizations

- Keep monthly planning meetings to **60–90 minutes**.
- Assign one volunteer lead for each major area (Finance, Marketing, Volunteers, Logistics, Sponsorship).
- Use a shared project management tool or spreadsheet to track tasks.
- Document procedures each year so new volunteers can easily take over roles.

## Blank template (12-month runway)

| Timeline | Key Activities | Lead Volunteers | Status (Done / In progress / Not started) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 months before | | | |
| 10-11 months before | | | |
| 8-9 months before | | | |
| 6-7 months before | | | |
| 4-5 months before | | | |
| 3 months before | | | |
| 2 months before | | | |
| 1 month before | | | |
| Event Week | | | |
| Event Day | | | |
| 1-2 weeks after | | | |
| 1 month after | | | |

## Blank template (shorter 6-month runway)

For a smaller or faster event, use this compressed version and start at the row that matches your lead time.

| Timeline | Key Activities | Lead Volunteers | Status (Done / In progress / Not started) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **6 months before** | | | |
| **4 months before** | | | |
| **3 months before** | | | |
| **2 months before** | | | |
| **1 month before** | | | |
| **Event Week** | | | |
| **Event Day** | | | |
| **1-2 weeks after** | | | |
| **1 month after** | | | |