Community Programming and Special Event Planning Guide

THE CITY OF
Edmonton

Contents

Introduction

This guide was designed to help walk you through the steps of planning and running a program or special event in your community. It contains four sections: Getting Started, Community Programming, Special Event Planning and Wrap Up.

In the appendices of this manual you will find a disc that contains forms and worksheets that you may find useful. Please remember that these are samples to help you get started and should be edited to suit your particular needs. In addition the City of Edmonton is pleased to provide you with Community Building Staff (see attached business card) and/or for some events, access to the Civic Events Office for help planning your event. Call 311 for more information on these services.

Community programs and special events create opportunities for neighbours to meet, visit, have fun and work together on a common activity.

Top 10 Reasons to Have Programs and Special Events

- To have fun.
- To provide an opportunity to get to know your neighbours.
- To establish friendships.
- To create a sense of belonging to your community.
- To promote community pride.
- To help with safety/crime prevention by knowing your neighbours.
- To support each other.
- To learn a new skill.
- To share your gifts and talents.
- To explore your community history.

Getting Started

Consider

- What do you want to achieve with a program/special event?
- What are your organization's overall goals?
- What opportunities will this event create for your organization?
- What are the needs and assets in your community?
- What are the board's expectations: to make money, lose money, break even or subsidize the program/special event?
- Create an Organizing Committee
- Depending on the size of the event/program, the program director may be the chair of this committee
- Find members with talent, time, commitment and creativity in the following areas:
    - ☐ Finance
    - ☐ Marketing & Communications
    - ☐ Site/Facility Prep
    - ☐ Volunteer/Staff Coordination
    - ☐ Contingency Planning

Identify what Program or Special Event you are Planning

- Create/update your annual plan
- Find out what has been done in the past
- Ask what neighbouring communities are doing
- Look for potential partnerships
- Determine what activities are popular
- Consider your demographics – age, marital status, cultural diversity

Community Programming

Program Planning Overview

The role of a program planner is to:

- ☐ Book appropriate facilities for your program
- ☐ Hire an instructor for your program
- ☐ Coordinate program registration and the collection of fees
- ☐ Advertise your programs
- ☐ Keep statistics for evaluation purposes
- ☐ Evaluate program and present final report to the Board of Directors

Program Details

Date and Time

- Is this a one time program or will there be multiple sessions?
- Who are your participants?
- What is the best day of the week and time of the day for the program?

Location

- What amenities are required to run the program (i.e., washrooms, kitchen, size of facility, material storage)?
- Do you have access to a facility that can accommodate these requirements?
- Is the facility accessible for people with disabilities?
- Does the facility have a first aid kit and incident/accident forms?
- Consider using a local school and contact 311 for more information on the school joint use program information

Budget (Does this need to be approved by the board?)

- Expenses: what are your costs to run this program/event?
    - ☐ Instructor
    - ☐ Special equipment
    - ☐ Rental fees
    - ☐ Insurance, licenses or permits
    - ☐ Advertising
    - ☐ Food

- Income: who is paying?
    - ☐ Participants
    - ☐ Community group (community league)
    - ☐ Sponsors
    - ☐ Grants
    - ☐ A combination of the above

- Create your Budget
    - ☐ Compile your list of expenses and income into one document
    - ☐ Include a contingency amount that is 10 – 15% of your total budget
    - ☐ Ensure that this financial outcome corresponds to the Board's goal for the event
    - ☐ Don't overestimate your income
    - ☐ Secure board approval for your budget, if required

- Managing your Budget
  - ☐ Track your actual expenses and income for comparison with your budget
  - ☐ Make adjustments, as necessary (for example determine if you need to make more money, reduce your expenses or spend more money to achieve the board approved goal for the program)

Hiring Your Instructor
- Confirm your instructor is qualified and meets the required certification for the program
- Obtain a completed Edmonton Police Service Information Check and Child Welfare Information Systems check
- If you are contracting or hiring an instructor's services, a written instructor contract is recommended
- Please contact the Worker's Compensation Board, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, and your insurance provider to determine how to best deal with each scenario

Fee and Registration Procedure
- Determine the board's expectations: to make money, lose money, break even or subsidize the program
- Determine the program cost based on the board's expectations
- Create a cancellation policy, collect contact information and ensure adequate notice is given to cancel a program
- Determine the best method for registration (e.g., phone or mail in, hosting a registration day, online ticket sales)
- Determine who will sell tickets and/or collect registration information
- Collect participant information including any medical considerations, behaviour issues and information on who can pick the participant up

Advertising
- Determine the best way to reach your potential participants (e.g., posters, newsletters, website, changeable copy signs, schools, flyer drop offs etc.).
- Build in enough time for the promotion of the program. Remember to try to find at least 3 ways to reach each person that you want to invite.
- Posters should include:
  - ☐ Program details (e.g., title and description of the program, date, time, location, fees, age of participants, any equipment requirements)
  - ☐ Contact information
  - ☐ Registration information
  - ☐ Cancellation policy

The Program
- Bring supplies, program registration/attendance forms, receipts
- Set up for the program based on program needs
- Ensure volunteer/staff knows their duties/roles
- Let the program happen!
- Clean Up
- Ensure all outstanding invoices have been paid

Special Event Planning

Program Details

Date and Time
- Is this a one time event or will there be multiple sessions?
- Who are your participants?
- What is the best day of the week and time of the day for the event?

Location
- Will the event be held inside or outside?
- Is there access to washrooms?
- What is the facility size and how accessible is it?
- What are the costs?
- Are licenses, insurances and/or permits required? Contact your Community Recreation Coordinator or City Representative to discuss.
- Have you ensured that you are following all public health guidelines? Create a site map which may include table placement, stage location, displays etc.

Budget (Does this need to be approved by the board?)
- Expenses: what are your costs to run this event?
    - ☐ Special equipment
    - ☐ Rental fees
    - ☐ Insurance, licenses or permits
    - ☐ Advertising
    - ☐ Food

- Income: who is paying?
    - ☐ Participants
    - ☐ Community group (community league)
    - ☐ Sponsors
    - ☐ Grants
    - ☐ A combination of the above

- Create your Budget
  - ☐ Compile your list of expenses and income into one document
  - ☐ Include a contingency amount that is 10 – 15% of your total budget
  - ☐ Ensure that this financial outcome corresponds to the Board's goal for the event
  - ☐ Don't overestimate your income
  - ☐ Secure board approval for your budget, if required
- Managing your Budget
  - ☐ Track your actual expenses and income for comparison with your budget
  - ☐ Make adjustments as necessary (e.g., determine if more profit is needed, if you need to reduce expenses, or if you need to spend more money to achieve the board approved goal for the program)

Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

- Determine what jobs and duties you need to have filled (don't forget to include set up and clean up of the event)
- Determine how many staff or volunteers are required
- Determine whether you will have paid staff and/or volunteers
- Create job descriptions
- Ensure one person on the organizing committee is available to coordinate the staff and volunteers both leading up to the event and on the day of the event
- Put the call out and match the volunteer skills with the job/duties that are required
- For a large event have manageable shifts for people to work/volunteer
- Two to three days before the event, call the volunteers to remind them of their role, the time that they are required and provide them with a point person for the days events
- Ensure that the volunteers are taken care of (e.g., have a volunteer area, if possible and ensure that they are given breaks, and refreshments throughout their shift)
- Consider requesting Edmonton Police Service Police Information Checks and Child Welfare Information Systems checks if the volunteer will be working with children, vulnerable persons or finances

Registration Procedure

- Determine if registration is required for your event.
- Determine the best method for registration (e.g., phone or mail in, hosting a registration day, online ticket sales).
- Determine who will sell tickets or collect registration information
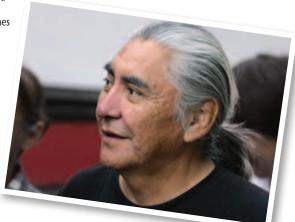
Contingency Plan (Back Up Planning)

- What if the weather doesn't cooperate, can you plan for both an indoor and outdoor option?
- What if you have more/less people than you expect? Can you move to a larger or smaller space?
- What will you do if you don't have enough volunteers?
- What will you do if you have too much or too little food?
- What if the advertising goes out and is incorrect?
- Plan for technical issues (e.g., sound system doesn't work)
- Plan for an alternate day. How does this impact your budget (in terms of deposits)?

Advertising

- Who do you want to invite?
- Make a special effort to invite people who are new to your neighbourhood
  - ☐ Reach neighbours in town homes, apartments and condominiums, it is best to approach the manager. They will let you know how to get in touch with the residents
  - ☐ What is the best way to reach them? (e.g., posters; website; community event calendars through media outlets such as newspapers, television and radio; flyer drops; invitations distributed through the schools; changeable copy signs etc)
- There are 2 basic types of advertising:
  - ☐ Geographically based (e.g., neighbourhood, surrounding area, city-wide) and
  - ☐ Interest based (e.g., sports groups, arts groups, youth, multicultural groups etc)
- Look for at least 3 ways to reach each person that you want to invite
- Posters should include:
  - ☐ Event details (e.g., date, time, location, costs)
  - ☐ Contact information
  - ☐ Registration information, if applicable, and Contingency plan, if applicable
  - ☐ Timing the advertising is very important
  - ☐ When thinking about when to send out the advertising consider: the method of advertising and deadlines associated with it; the size of the event; and other factors

The Event

- Bring copies of booking agreements, permits, and/or licenses
- Bring supplies, registration/ attendance forms, decorations, and receipts
- Bring volunteer schedule and volunteer contact list

Wrap-up

Volunteer Celebration

- Consider the best way to recognize your volunteers after the event (e.g., host a small celebration at the very end, showcase/thank your volunteers in your community newsletter, invite volunteers to an annual volunteer gala etc.)

Evaluation

- How do you plan to use the evaluation information? This will help you in determining both who you want to collect information from (participants, committee, and/or volunteers) and how you want to collect it
- Do you feel it is worthwhile to run this program/event again, what went well, what could be improved upon, what did you learn?
- Consider how you will present the information to the board (verbal report, written report, statistical report)
- Record finalized budget
- Create an information/learning package so that future planning committees can do the same and then give it to the community league board to keep for future reference

Notes

Notes

Notes

For paper copies, please contact your city representative.