

PART 1: Event Planning Timeline

We tried to draft a timeline that would be relevant to not only the Spirit & Place Festival, but other events you might be working on. Use it as a general guideline to think about how far in advance you need to plan for a successful event.

6 weeks to 6 months prior to the event

Initial planning is largely determined by your capacity and the event in which you are coordinating. For the Spirit & Place Festival, initial event planning should begin at least 1—2 months prior to the application deadline so that you have time to line up partners and craft a strong application.

- Determine size and scope of your event, including who is responsible for what.
- Determine your audience—design your event with them in mind.
- Reserve a venue.
- Contact speakers to determine availability and to clearly and precisely articulate your needs and goals for the event. (Remember to discuss details such as the time, date, and venue as well as any AV requirements or other related fees.)
- Determine the event budget.
- Identify a collaborating partner (i.e., a group with shared values/complementary interests) who can assist with event design, content development, promotions, and/or some other need.)
- Establish a publicity plan for the event. (What will you do, who will do it, and when?)
- Send “save the date” announcements to engage people early.

2—4 weeks prior to the event

On top of any promotional activities planned by Spirit & Place, it is CRUCIAL you begin heavily promoting your event no later than this point. In the time between initial planning and heavy promoting, you should still be looking for ways to promote your event through blog posts, social media, and other means.

- Update your web site & ask your partners to do the same.
- Increase social media messaging.
- Create/make use of an RSVP system.
- Distribute printed promotional materials. (Take fliers or other collateral to coffee shops, post on congregational bulletin boards, ask to leave materials at your public library, etc.)
- Send a reminder email to people and encourage them to bring a friend.
- Send out a press release. (Long lead publications such as *Indianapolis Monthly* require a 3 month lead.)
- Populate online community calendars with event information.
- Meet with all involved event staff to confirm logistics.
- Finalize catering arrangements, if necessary.
- Begin recruiting volunteers.

3—5 days prior to the event

- Finalize/confirm number of attendees with the venue and review room set-up and AV plans.

- Finalize/confirm any catering needs.
- Finalize/confirm any and all housekeeping requests.
- Finalize your volunteer plan. (i.e., prepare instructions and assign someone to greet the volunteers.)
- Finalize welcome/introductory remarks. Remember to acknowledge Spirit & Place and other partners.
- Purchase food, drinks, ice, tablecloths, and utensils, etc. if needed
- Create name badges, if needed.
- Print any needed handouts and don't forget to print a sign-in sheet!
- Send a final email confirmation, with any special event instructions, to attendees who have RSVP'd. (If not sold out, encourage attendees to bring a friend.)
- Send final confirmation email to the guest speaker reviewing arrival time, parking, room number, etc.

Day of the event

Spirit & Place volunteers will arrive 45 to 60 minutes early and are there to greet guests, hand out Event Guides, and distribute and collect of event evaluations.

- Arrive early to check room to make sure it is clean and set-up properly.
- Test the AV.
- Meet caterer or setup refreshments.
- Prepare water for your speakers.
- Greet your volunteers and explain their role.
- Greet Spirit & Place volunteers and show to their greeter table.
- Setup name tags, sign-in area, and/or distribute programs.
- Welcome attendees and guest speakers.

Post-event

**Spirit & Place will summarize all the festival event evaluation and will supply a report at the first of the year at the latest.*

- Thank speakers, collaborative partners, and volunteers.
- Summarize evaluations.*
- Discuss and document possible improvements related to the event design, format, content, and process with your collaborators (and/or Spirit & Place staff).
- Compile a list of all expenses incurred for the event, including estimates on staff time.