**Community Programming Checklist**

**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

**Special Event Planning Overview**

**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
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**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