

# ACTIVITY SHEET 5: BACKWARD TIMELINE

Create a planning timeline by working *backward* from the date of the event to plan when each task needs to be completed. Set a date by which each task must be completed. Here is a sample of a backward timeline:

## WEEKS BEFORE EVENT

## TASKS TO BE COMPLETED

As soon as possible

**Assess the interests of your organization and community.**

It's a new year! Poll members of your community. What are their interests? What are the goals of your organization? What kind of program would help move toward those goals?

As soon as possible

**Brainstorm and choose.**

Open it up to your members. Ask for all possible ideas. Discuss each one and find out what sparks interest. The test: if members aren't motivated to work on the event, you'll most likely lack volunteers *and* an audience.

As soon as possible

**Meet with your staff adviser.**

Meet with your adviser early and often. They can let you know the resources and the red-tape that can make an event run smoothly or hit a brick wall.

As soon as possible

**Research.**

Check the calendar for other events, holidays, mid-terms, etc. Make a list of everything to be done. Figure out when each task needs to be done by and who will do each task. Note hard deadlines that can't be missed.

See funding deadlines

**Create a budget and fundraise or request funds.**

Make a list of all the expenses involved in the event. Research the costs. Fundraise or research fund sources and their deadlines. Turn in proposals on time.

6 weeks

**Secure the funds.**

Hear back from fund sources or complete fundraising. Assess if you need to adjust your event expenses.

6 weeks

**Reserve a space.**

Look for a facility as soon as possible. Popular spaces may get booked early, so have a couple back-up choices. Make sure to confirm your reservation in writing.

4-6 weeks

**Request payments for food and performers/speakers.**

Performers or speakers need contracts done in advance in order to be paid. Large purchases or food can also take time. Meet with your adviser to make sure you know the deadlines.

4 weeks

**Request all services.**

Meet with your adviser *4 weeks* in advance to request any needed services.

- Sound/media equipment
- Parking/signage
- Trash/recycling containers

## WEEKS BEFORE EVENT

## TASKS TO BE COMPLETED

**3 weeks**

### **Design publicity and publicize.**

You've worked hard on the event. Make sure people know it's happening! Design advertisement and distribute at least *2 weeks* before the event.

**1 week**

### **Confirm volunteers, performers and speakers.**

Don't assume everyone will remember! Make reminder calls *1 week* before the event.

**1 week**

### **Request "Purchase Orders" for all other purchases.**

Arrange for any remaining purchases. Check in with members to make sure they are completing tasks.

**Date of event**

### **Hold the event!**

Set up, *have a great time*, clean up, and celebrate!

**1 week after event**

### **Evaluate how the event went.**

Each event offers valuable lessons. Ask members for honest feedback and record it so it's not forgotten. Thank everybody for their contributions.

This Activity Sheet was written by staff and student leaders of SOMECA. The concepts and tips have been developed through application and reflection.