

You Got This: Neighborhood Event Planning Guide

Compiled by the
Neighborhood Services Program
at the City of Salem

For more information contact
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If you are reading this, you probably already understand how important it is to get your neighbors together. It builds a sense of community, helps everyone stay informed about what's going on, and make's your neighborhood a fun place to live.

This booklet will help you design your very own neighborhood events. Whether it's a block party or a park clean up, there's plenty you can do to live in a better neighborhood without moving!

Types of Events

Not sure what kind of event you'd like to host? Here are some ideas that explore the level of commitment required. There is something for everyone.

Level One: Easy Breezy Events

These events only require a flyer, a couple phone calls, and snacks to get off the ground. Nothing fancy, just good old fashioned fun. Check out our flyer resources for help marketing your event.

- Board Games Galore
- Workout Party
- Movie Night
- Take a Walking Cruise



Level Two: Now We're Talking Events

In addition to marketing and snacks, level 2 events may require folks to gather things ahead of time. You can totally handle that!

- BBQ
- Park Clean Up
- Neighborhood Book Club
- Fall Leaf Haul

Level Three: Epic Awesomeness Events

You look like you are into really cool events. Level 3 is where you get to show off your awesome collaboration skills. Make calls, pass out flyers, your name will go down in history as the hostess with the most-ess! "Most what," you ask? You already know.

- Trunk or Treat
- Host a Swap!
- Bike Rodeo
- Neighborhood Parade
- Block Party

These ideas are just to get you started. You can add a little more to a level one idea, or take a level three event down a notch depending on the resources you have available. Think of all the ways you can positively engage your neighbors and friends.



Planning Tips

While you get your juices flowing on what kind of event to throw, here are some general tips that may come in handy for producing your event big or small.

Size matters

Consider how many people you will be hosting at your event. Closing off your street to host 20 people is more challenging than joining two back yards for four families. If you are planning to do a larger event, be sure to recruit help to manage your event.

Timeline

Once you have figured out the size and scope of your event, plan out a timeline of to-dos and when they will need to be completed. This is important for the next tip especially.

Policies & Permits

If you are closing a street or using a city park, you may need a permit. Check our list of city resources to contact the proper people to help. Be timely, most permits must be applied for within a certain amount of time prior to the event.

RSVPs

For smaller events, it may be wise to ask for RSVPs. This will aid in knowing how many to plan for. Be sure to have a deadline, so that you are sure well ahead of your event what you will need. This will also help you to know if more publicity is needed, if you haven't heard back from anyone.

Partner with Professionals

Including local businesses in your plan is always a good idea. They could cover the cost of some rental item or provide small items for door prizes. Be sure to sell it to them as a great way to show their positive involvement in the community.

Enlist Volunteer Help

While you may decide to be a planning committee of one, consider asking neighbors to pitch in for setup or clean up help. Or maybe you'd like a group of folks to bring a dish to help with food costs. Most of the time, there are plenty of people around to help, you just have to ask. Reach out to your neighborhood association to get them involved if they aren't already. Attend a meeting and tell them your plans.

Get the Young Folks Involved

Youth are a sometimes untapped resource in our neighborhoods. They can be asked to babysit while parents meet, assist with putting up signs around the neighborhood, or with putting information on social media. Other ideas include enlisting artsy teens for face painting, or playing music whether from their electronic device or with instruments. Who doesn't love live music?!

Schedule your Volunteers

Regardless of the age of your volunteers, be sure you have a good schedule of who is helping when. If you take good care of your volunteers by being mindful of their time, you are more likely to get their help again next year. Be punctual and clear about what it is you need so that they can get in, help, and get back to their lives.

Rental Incidentals

Before renting tents, tables, and chairs, check with nearby schools and churches to see what can be borrowed. If you do rent equipment, be sure to check the quality of the items when they are delivered. You wouldn't want to be responsible for any existing damage to the items.

Sanitation

If you are hosting a large event, decide whether or not portable toilets will be required. You may ask that close by

neighbors use their homes, or have a neighbor volunteer theirs. If so, be sure security measures are in place to protect that homeowner.

Plan B

It is always good to have a contingency plan. Whether that means a backup source for chairs and tables, or a covered area to party in case of rain.



Clean Up

Build clean up into your initial plan by making sure there are designated people to keep an eye on trash throughout the event and stay for clean up afterwards. Don't forget to recycle after your event.

Ice Breakers

A major goal of your event is community connection. Be sure to provide name tags and have activities that allow your guests to mingle. Check our list of fun games and extras to get your neighbors playing together.



Safety First

It never hurts to have a safety strategy. Designate an adult or two to help out kids who are playing games, running, and jumping. Be prepared by having a first aid kit and emergency numbers on hand.

Evaluate

Have a pow-wow with your organizers, or a couple attendees shortly after your event to discuss how it all went. What things went well? What could be improved for next year? Were there things people wanted that you didn't have available? A good event is one that is fine-tuned from year to year. Never stop improving.

Say Thank You!

After the smoke clears be sure to send out a Thank You to all of the volunteers, businesses, and community partners that helped make your event a success. Of course this can be done via email, but you've got class, send cards instead.

Marketing Your Event

You have probably heard the old adage, “If you make it they will come.” This only works if you tell “them” about “it” in the first place. For our purposes we suggest you advertise your event through three main ways: Flyers, Local Networks, and of course, Social Media.

Flyers and yard signs

Most great marketing plans do start with a flyer. Check out the samples at the end of this section if you need ideas! Enlist the help of a friends and go door to door passing them out to your neighbors. Place yard signs in your yard and yards of neighbors who you have checked with first. You don't have to spend a lot of money on your signs. Be creative! Many neighborhood parks also have a message board. Stick one there if your park has one.

Local Networks

Think of other places you can share your event. Are there local businesses in your area that would let you post a sign? Take advantage of free community calendars and websites. Neighborhood churches and schools are another great place to share your events. Even if you have asked them in the past, people move around jobs change. Maybe the people you used to ask aren't coming because they aren't there anymore. It's always good to check in with new folks in the same old places. Events can be shared on the Statesman Journals website for free at events.statesmanjournal.com

Social Media

If you planned an event and the internet didn't know about it, did it really happen? You could ponder this, or just cover all your bases by posting it on your Neighborhood Association's Facebook page. Ask an admin to post it so that everyone

can see it. Also ask neighboring businesses to share it on their page. Be sure to contact Neighborhood Services about your event, so that we can share it as well. Tweet about it. Take cool pics of your preparations to share on Instagram. Create a #hashtag for the event and put it on everything that goes on the web. If you don't know what any of this means, find the nearest teenager or contact someone in Neighborhood Services to help you with online outreach strategies. We are here to help!



Sample flyers & social media posts

The following pages contain sample flyers and posts that you can use for print and social media. Create your own, or download any of these from the neighborhood resources page on our website.

Remember online posts that are accompanied with pictures go a lot farther than those made of just text.

You're invited to our

Block Party

Tuesday, August 1

Street Name

(Optional specific directions)

6:00 to 8:00 pm

Insert your
own place
& time here

Insert your
own details
here

It's a potluck. Please bring some **Food** to share. There will be a barbeque available for use. We'll have **Music**. Feel free to bring a lawn chair or two. We may play some games. Bubbles and **Sidewalk Chalk** will be on hand for all ages. We hope to see you there!

For more information, please call

Contact #1 Name [503-555-5555] or

Contact #2 Name [503-555-5555]



PARK CLEAN UP

When:

Where:

What to Bring:





NEIGHBORHOOD CRAFT NIGHT

Come get crafty with
your neighbors!

When:

Where:

What to bring:





Games and Extras

Now that you have everyone together, keep the party going with these fun games and extras. There are tons more on www.Pinterest.com. You can search things like Yard Games, Minute to Win It, or DIY Party Games. You are so fun!

The Classics

- Red Rover
- Three Legged Race
- Egg Relay Race
- Sack Races
- Twister
- Hopscotch
- Four Square
- Bingo
- Giant Tic Tac Toe
- Red Light Green Light
- Capture the Flag

Try Something New

- Yard Scrabble
Using cardboard, cut out large squares. Paint a letter on the front of each one. Use them to play a great big game of scrabble. Check your home game to figure out how many you need of each letter.
- Junk in the Trunk
For this game you need to attach an empty tissue box to a belt and fill it with ping pong sized balls. The player wears the belt around their waist with the box behind them. Turn up the music and see how fast they can empty the box. Make two have players go head to head!

- **Balloon Ping Pong**
Simply glue a fat Popsicle stick to a paper plate and you have a ping pong paddle. Repeat and blow up a balloon. Now you are ready to play. Bonus if you have a table to play it on!
- **Selfie Station**
Instead of a photo booth, try a selfie station. Have fun photo props your guests can use to take fun pictures of themselves and each other. Create a hashtag and have everyone share their photos on social media during the event. This is a great way to brag on your event and make way for next time. Those who weren't there will wish they had been!
- **Water Balloon Games**
There are tons of fun games to be played with just water balloons. Balloon Toss, Squat Relay, Hot Potato, Ring Toss, Duck Duck Splash. Just google it, trust me.
- **Sardines in a Can**
This game is a fun spin on Hide and Seek. There is only 1 hider, and everyone else is "It". When one of the "It" players finds the hidden sardine, he quietly hides with him. This goes on until only one person has not found all the "sardines" packed into the same hiding place.

Want to up the ante on your games? Ask a neighborhood business to donate something small to give away as prizes. For example, free ice cream cone cards from McDonalds. Some businesses may want you to be an official organization before they will donate. If this happens, check with your Neighborhood Association. There is strength in numbers and many times we have worked with businesses who are happy to support our NAs!

Building Your Budget

In event planning its true, you've got to pay to play, but we have some tips to help you keep costs down. Before we can manage those costs, however, we need to list out what they are. Generally, when you are planning any event you have to consider four main areas: Food, Venue/Rentals, Entertainment, and Marketing. Depending on the type of event you plan to throw, you may have some of these costs covered. For example, your Front Yard Luau Party has a venue already, your front yard. No cost there. Tables and chairs can be borrowed from neighbors, friends, or local churches if you are partnering with larger groups. Either way, it's best to outline what your costs are, even if they are small to assure you stay on budget, and plan realistically.

Start by setting an overall budget amount. Next create a list of items you'd like to spend this amount on. Then, assign an estimated amount to each line item. You can use our Budget Sheet to get organized. Once you have moved all the numbers around so you are spending the right amount, you can move forward. Is your amount realistic? Do you need more money than you originally budgeted for? This is good to know. Don't panic. Now you can start looking around for folks to help out. This might be just passing a hat around your committee, or going to local businesses asking for goods at a free or discounted rate. Maybe there is some bartering that can be done with another neighborhood group. Don't let a little thing like resources (or lack thereof) stand in your way!

If you are planning a larger event, you may want to find a way to create income to offset the costs. This might mean selling t-shirts or charging a small admission if the event

calls for it. For example, if you have a craft night, it might be helpful to charge participants \$5 each to offset the costs.

Make copies of the Budget Sheet so you can use it multiple times. You know, because you are becoming a community event mogul.

Budget Sheet

Event Title: _____

Budgeted Amount: _____

INCOME	Estimated	Actual
Income: Include any donations, money from sold items, or admission.		
TOTAL INCOME =		
EXPENSES	Estimated	Actual
Venue/Rentals: This includes any space rental, permits, tables, chairs, tents, etc.		

EXPENSES (continued)	Estimated	Actual
Food: Include paper products, and any food or drink expenses.		
Marketing: Include any printing costs associated with advertising, yard signs, Facebook ads, etc.		
Entertainment & Supplies: Include costs for games, music, decorations, anything that adds fun!		
TOTAL EXPENSES =		
INCOME – EXPENSES =		

Planning List

Now that you know what you want to do, let's get a list together and get it done. Don't fill in the original. Make copies of the lists so you can use them again and again! When planning, make sure you are including others to help out. You also want to make sure you have a deadline for each task on the list so that you are taking care of things well ahead of your event. For larger events, you can complete the list with a committee and then make copies so that everyone is on the same page about what needs to be done. For smaller events, just use it as your handy dandy checklist to keep your ducks in a row.

Here are some things you might want to consider when creating your to do list:

- Do I need to reserve a Park?
- Should I apply for a sound permit?
- Do we need to notify neighbors in the area about the event?
- Can I block off my street for this party?
- Can I get Fire or Police to visit my event with stickers and promos?

If you have questions like these, be sure to consult the City Resources at the end of this guide for contact information. We have people to help you get your event up and running!



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Park Events

The City of Salem Neighborhood Associations are allowed to reserve parks throughout the city of Salem. Here are the guidelines for doing so. **A minimum of 4 weeks is needed to plan and get approval for an event in a City Park. The specific procedures and timeline are below.**

Neighborhood Association Park Event Procedures

1) **Facility Use Permit** - Scheduled events in a City of Salem park require completion of a Facility Use Permit. The permit form can be found on the City of Salem website (<http://www.cityofsalem.net/CityDocuments/parks-facility-use-permit.pdf>), by calling the Public Works Office at 503-588-6261, or by stopping by Room 325 of City Hall. Approval of the forms will be done through Becky George, Recreation Supervisor. Please feel free to contact Becky directly at 503-588-6261 or bgeorge@cityofsalem.net if you have any questions.

2) **Fees** - If the event is sponsored by a City of Salem-recognized Neighborhood Association, and the permit is completed by them, rental fees can be waived. Other fees, such as alcohol permits (\$50) and noise permits (usually \$30) are not able to be waived and must be paid at the time of application.

3) **Certificate of Insurance** - If the event is sponsored by and coordinated through, a City of Salem-recognized Neighborhood Association, a certificate of insurance may not be necessary. Please contact Becky for more information.

Neighborhood Association Park Event Timeline

Minimum of 4 Weeks Before Event - Contact Becky George about your event at 503-588-6211. Then, contact the Parks Operations Supervisor for the Park at 503-588-6336 to discuss needed garbage cans, picnic tables, electricity (if available) water (if available), and identifying of sprinklers or pulling posts. Additionally, you need to discuss anything you are planning to provide such as: bar-be-ques, tents/canopies, game equipment or inflatable play structures, port-a-potty, dumpster, directional signs/markers, etc.

Minimum of 3 Weeks Before Event - Turn in Facility Use Permit and fill in all the details in the Other Special Request box in the middle of the form - needed garbage cans, picnic tables, electricity (if available) water (if available), identifying of sprinklers or pulling posts; along with the items you are bringing - bar-be-ques, tents/canopies, game equipment or inflatable play structures, port-a-potty, dumpster, directional signs/markers, etc. And, pay the \$30 Noise Permit Fee and/or the \$50 Alcohol Permits/Fee at Public Works - in Room 325 of City Hall (555 Liberty Street SE.)

Minimum of 1 Week Before Event - Review Approved Facility Use Permit, ask any final questions and call 503-588-6336 for the phone number of the Parks Operations contact person for the day of your event.

City Resources

National Night Out – registering your Block Party, blocking off streets, reserving an officer visit, etc.

Salem Police Crime Prevention Unit

CrimePrevention@cityofsalem.net

503-588-6175

Neighborhood Associations

www.cityofsalem.net/neighbor

neighborhoodservices@cityofsalem.net

503-588-6207

Park Clean Ups

Parks Volunteer Coordinator

503-589-2197

Park Reservations and Sound Permits

Recreation Services

parksandrecreation@cityofsalem.net

503-588-6261

Salem Fire Department – to request a Public Education with engine tour, stickers for kids, etc.

salemfire@cityofsalem.net

503-588-6245

Street Closures - Not National Night Out Related

Public Works

503-588-6211

More Resources

Online Resources

- Canva – Create awesome graphics and flyers to use online and in print. www.canva.com
- Pinterest – Organize creative ideas and check out what other folks have tried. www.pinterest.com

References

Tips for Quick & Easy Events

<https://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/463-16-ideas-for-quick-and-easy-events>

Old Fashioned Kid Games

<http://kaseytrenum.com/great-old-games-to-teach-your-kids-4-square-kick-the-can-capture-the-flag-more/>

Event Budget Tips

<https://blog.planningpod.com/2014/01/14/how-to-build-event-budget-infographic/>

Block Party Tips

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/sc-fam-0623-neighbors-block-party-20150616-story.html>