



Simple Tips for Throwing Public Events

Public events—from lectures to rallies to fundraisers—are a great way to introduce an idea to a group of people, let activists connect, and attract press attention. Events that are documented with video and photographs can be made available online, providing information and inspiration to people worldwide.

What Kind of Event Should You Have?

The type of event you organize has a lot to do with who you are and your objectives. Here are some ideas for local activism events and some ideas about choosing which is most appropriate for you.

Type of Event	Good for...	Considerations
Public rally	Big crowds, media attention, impressive photo ops	<i>Permits, bathroom facilities, weather, potential police interactions</i>
Vigil	Evening events, solemn occasions, smaller gatherings, photo ops	<i>Weather, permits</i>
Lecture, discussion, debate	Campus events, deconstructing complex issues, activating students. Great for recording and putting online	<i>Organizing a space and gathering appropriate speakers</i>
Party	Fundraising, connecting local activists	<i>Costs for party supplies, limitations of space</i>
Banner drop	Major press opportunity	<i>Extensive secret planning, potential legal issues, a banner with the perfect message</i>
Musical concert, art installations, book readings	Engaging artists and art-lovers, exploring complex issues, press coverage, photo opportunity	<i>Organizing space and often food, gathering artwork together</i>
Movie screening & discussion	Great for small to medium sized groups	<i>You need an appropriate movie, a projector, an adequate space</i>
Going to someone else's event and passing out materials	Great if you only have a few people. A big event (like a parade) where it would not be unusual to hand out materials.	<i>Certain events may prohibit flyers. Also, many of the participants may not know about your issue or may not agree with you.</i>

Publicize Your Event

The success of your event is tied to how well you promote it. Here are some ideas to do promotion around an event:

- Email local organizations you think might want to attend.
- Use social media.
- Local newspapers often have a community calendar that can list your event, and local coffee shops or other public spaces may have community bulletin boards where you can advertise.
- Post the event to online calendars, such as your city weekly paper.
- Contact community mailing lists, send a note to the list about your event, asking others to participate and help promote the event. Include an invitation that can be circulated.
- Flyers can be a great way to spread the word, especially if you are on a college campus or other small community.
- If it's a big rally, you might spend a few weeks visiting local organizations in person and asking them to get involved.
- A big-name speaker can bring in lots of attendees.

Prepare Handouts

Make one or two-page handouts you can give to attendees that provide an overview of the issue, a clear statement of your position, and information about how people can join the fight. Use pictures or other visual elements to make the handouts graphically compelling. These handouts should also be available online, if possible.

Stickers are also great to hand out at events. A simple sticker with a powerful statement and a website URL are easy to make and look great on lampposts, laptop cases, and coat lapels.

Documenting the Event

One of the most important things you can do is document your event.

- Take lots of photos and try to promote the best ones online — Reporters can turn to publicly-available photos when writing news stories about your issue, activist groups can use the photos to promote future events, and participants can post the photos to social media to help spread the word.
 - Photos provide physical evidence of public support for your campaign.
- If you hold a rally, be sure to get all of the participants together with their signs for a group photo.
- Videos are also powerful ways to document events, and are especially good for speeches and discussions.
- For speeches or lectures, a live stream of the event can bring in viewers from around the world.