

Benefit Event

These general steps apply to organizing many types of benefit events—silent auctions, game tournaments, concerts, dinner or beverage parties, and themed events.

Determine the type of benefit you will organize

Think about your interests, talents, contacts, and potential volunteers. Consider who will attend (ages, amount of money they typically spend), how many might come, and what their interests are.

A cost-benefit analysis should be thought out—some events require a tremendous amount of time, but don't raise much money. With your volunteer group, determine a goal for how much you would like to raise, and choose your event accordingly. Use the Budget Tracker sheet provided in FARF's fundraising toolkit to help you keep track of expenses and income.

Each type of event raises different logistical issues. The more complicated the event, the farther ahead you need to plan. Depending on the type of event, two to twelve months advance planning is typical.

Choose a venue

Public areas such as community centers, schools, churches, and parks may offer space free or for minimal cost. Some venues may waive or discount rental fees for a charitable event. They can also be a resource for volunteers or other items needed for your event. A private home or yard may work for some events. Think about factors that could affect attendance such as proximity to public transportation or city centers, and parking availability. Also, inform local police and/or officials of your event and check on any permit requirements, town rules, etc.

Get commitments from your chosen venue and any people necessary to the event—emcees, performers, volunteers, etc.

FARF asks those who hold events to make certain that the event is covered by liability insurance. This

insurance for a one-time event is often available through a family's homeowners insurance provider as relatively inexpensive "special event" insurance. Please contact FARF if you need assistance obtaining or paying for this required insurance.

Gather volunteers

About six months prior, consider how many volunteers are required. For example, a silent auction or raffle may only need a few people to help. Events like live auctions, elaborate dinners, and golf tournaments will require much more help. Recruit a committee of family, friends, coworkers, and acquaintances to handle different aspects of the event. Schedule weekly meetings to keep track of planning and prevent last-minute problems. If necessary, recruit additional volunteers to assist at the event. Local high school clubs can be a great source of volunteers, although underage volunteers will not work if alcohol is to be served.

Solicit sponsors

Solicit sponsors and/or donations to help absorb event costs for venue fees, prizes, food, PA systems, etc. Offer to publicize your sponsors and follow through. Be consistent; if you do something for one sponsor (or volunteer), you should do it for everyone.

Let FARF know who your sponsors are so they can be thanked; volunteers too can be thanked by FARF for their time.

Publicize your event

Build your advance publicity through press releases, flyers, announcements, emails, and/or invitations. Think about creating a website for a large event. Proofread all materials carefully before they go out. Check to be sure that everything you are saying is legally permissible (for example, in some states you cannot solicit for raffle sales by mail).

Run through event

Walk through each moment of the event with your volunteer committee well in advance. Consider

the smallest details—people will park here, enter here, sit here, etc. If applicable, be sure the layout of your event has “flow”; set it up so that people can and will move about, servers and/or volunteers can perform their duties, and any prizes can be easily seen. Ensure an adequate number of restrooms that are easily found. If you organize an outdoor event, plan for bad weather; you may need a tent, potentially with sides and heaters.

Event follow-up

After the event, follow through with any remaining work from the event—collecting money, distributing prizes, returning rental items, etc. Thank your sponsors and volunteers. Provide FARF with a list of everyone who should receive a tax receipt thank you letter. Check FARF’s fundraising toolkit for event follow-up requirements.

If you created an event website, post the final details on your site, including how much money was raised, how it helped FA patients, and—if it is an regular event—information for volunteers, sponsors, and potential attendees about the next event.

Wrap-up meeting

Plan a final meeting with your planning/volunteer committee soon after the event to go over what went well and what could be improved. Consider making this a party-style meeting to thank everyone for their time and effort and to celebrate the success they made happen. Even if you expect this was a one-time event, this meeting is a great final thank you for your volunteers and you will gain valuable information for possibly holding another event or assisting others with one.

Consult the FARF Fundraising Toolkit for more helpful tips & forms to make your planning easier and your event more successful!

Available at www.fanconi.org, by calling 541.687.4658 or by emailing info@fanconi.org