

Backwards Planning

What is Backwards Planning?

Backwards planning is an effective time management tool that will help you create a set of instructions and a production timeline for your student organization event. By planning an event backwards, it is easier to confirm that every component, down to the smallest detail, has been accomplished.

How Do I Start Backwards Planning for my Event?

With backwards planning, you begin by **defining the end result** of a complex task (e.g., holding a BBQ). Then, working backwards to the beginning, you **record every simple task required to achieve the end result** on the [Event Planning Calendar](#) or a calendar of your own. Consequently, you develop a realistic timeline and a set of detailed instructions for producing a successful student organization event.

Steps to Successful Backwards Planning:

- 1. Make a list of everything that needs to be completed prior to the program.** The list should include:
 - **Programs**
 - **Publicity Materials**
 - **Refreshments**
 - **Facility Reservations**
 - **Equipment Rentals**
 - **Permits**
- 2. Assign due dates to these tasks.** For example, if a fundraising form requires **5** working days for approval, and must be completed and approved **1** working day before your event, you will need to assign a due date that is at least **6** working days before your event.
- 3. Using the [Event Planning Calendar](#), start with the last task on your list to be completed before the event.** Enter it under the appropriate date on the calendar and consider any smaller components of the task that need to be completed as well.
- 4. If there are components of this task, work backwards with them and plot them on the calendar.** For example, if your task is handing out flyers to promote your event, you will first need to make enough copies of the flyer for distribution. So, “Take Flyer to Copy Center” would be a prior task that you need to record on your planning calendar. To accomplish that task, you would first need to determine the design and text of the flyer, and so on.
- 5. Proceed with the next task to be completed until all tasks are listed on the [Event Planning Calendar](#).**