THE CHEAT SHEET: A CHECKLIST AND SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR ORGANIZING FILM SCREENING EVENTS

Whether you are planning the film screening event months in advance, or only have a few weeks to prepare, you have the power to organize a strong event that run smoothly. To assist you in your preparation and execution, we’ve developed a “cheat sheet” with a checklist and sample timeline. This resource will help you keep track of all the details important to the event planning process.

Remember, Alliance for Justice staff members are available to help you! If you have any questions or concerns regarding your event. Whether it is securing a speaker, finding a venue, or building a crowd, please feel free to contact Terra Allgaier at Terra@AFJ.org or call 1-866-347-7866.

+++++++++++++ ONE TO TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT ++++++++++++++

Goal Setting
✓ Show the film and pitch the idea of a film screening event to key members of your organization. Be sure to share sample copies of the complementary handouts, flyers and other materials available on www.RoeAtRisk.org
✓ Taking into account your organization’s resources, the time period you have to organize events this fall and in the spring, and past events you’ve organized, think about what a successful event would look like for your group.
✓ Think about the whole of the event, not just showing the film: are you able to organize a moderated discussion, debate, or panel with political science, law, sociology or women’s and gender studies professors, staff from local organizations, community members, or prominent student voices at your school?

Coalition Building
✓ Invite progressive campus organizations, academic departments, your alumni chapter and/or community organizations to cosponsor the event, to provide contributions, or a financial donation. Even if a group cannot actively participate in planning the event, they may be able to help identify possible speakers, provide funding and/or volunteers, or encourage their members to participate in your event.
✓ Recruit other individuals from like-minded organizations to get involved and help plan your event. Assign individuals to be charge of the following tasks: fundraising; organizing the program and recruiting speakers; selecting the event venue; creating promotional materials to publicize the event.

Event Logistics
✓ Research potential sites for your event. Look for rooms that are centrally located and easily accessible.
✓ If possible, do a walk-through of the venue to check that its lay-out is suited to your needs. Here are a few questions to ask during your initial site visit:
Inquire about the types of audio visual services that are available on site and a price list of renting equipment.

Ask if you are able to serve refreshments inside—or outside—the room. Request catering menus.

Find out if you are able to hang a sign on the podium and banners or other materials on the walls.

Determine how many seats can fit in the room and the best way to arrange them. **Hint:** Oftentimes, theater or classroom style seating works well for film screening events.

Learn what types of amenities are available (free or discounted parking, free Wi-Fi, coat room, etc.)

Check to see what types of events are scheduled to take place at the same time and next to your event. Will noise through the wall be an issue?

Make sure to read the fine print of any contract you sign. Make sure your payment schedule for the venue expenses is in line with the time line you expect to receive donations and funding for the event.

If your event takes place in the evening, ask if your group is responsible for providing security personnel or service staff for your event.

 Reserve tables for your sign-in process, handouts and other materials you’d like to display, and for refreshments.

Most classrooms and event spaces at college and universities come equipped with audio visual equipment. If your space does not, be sure to request AV equipment well in advance. Make sure someone is responsible for AV to help on site at your event.

**You may need:**

- A television and DVD player
- Projector and screen
- Speakers
- Internet access
- Microphones
- Access to light switches

**Budget**

- Prepare an anticipated event budget that will cover refreshments, meeting space and audio visual equipment, publicity, and payments or travel costs for speakers. **Remember:** Refreshments and food attract busy people to events!

- Make sure your initial budget includes all the items you’d ideally like to have at your event. You can cut or reduce items later in the planning process if enough resources don’t materialize.

- Request funding from your Dean’s office, academic departments, student government, alumni contacts, or the national affiliate of your organization.

**Sample Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food/Drinks</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying Handouts and Flyers</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Reservation and Equipment Rental</td>
<td>$75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Fees</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Speakers/Panel**

- Send invitations to the individuals you would like to participate in your event. Consider sending invitations to your top 2-3 choices in case the first person you ask cannot attend.

**Materials**
✓ Begin to prepare flyers, pamphlets, posters, etc to promote your event. **Note:** AFJ may have contacts on your campus or in your community. Contact Terra Allgaier at Terra@AFJ.org if you would like AFJ to forward an invitation to our contacts.

✓ Send a “Save the Date” and reminder message to all of your contacts via email or social media

**THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT**

**Coalition Building**

✓ Check in with everyone on your organizing committee to make sure progress is being made on assigned tasks. If you are unable to meet as a group in person, ask each organizing committee member to share updates with other members of the committee via email.

✓ Make sure to keep your co-sponsors up to date on how you are progressing with the planning process.

✓ Follow up with groups you’ve invited to co-sponsor the event and continue to reach out to new organizations to be co-sponsors.

**Budget**

✓ Make sure you will have access to the funds necessary to host your event.

✓ Follow up with individuals and organizations that you have requested donations from. Update each potential contributor with information on who will speak at your event, your event co-sponsors, and news of any support you have received from other organizations.

✓ If an organization is unable to provide you with monetary support, request other donations like note pads, pens, posters, and borrowing equipment for the event. Campus offices and resource centers, local organizations and law firms often have these types of items available.

**Speakers/Panel**

✓ Send a confirmation letter or email to individuals who have agreed to speak at your event. Send your speakers a copy of the background materials, handouts and discussion questions provided on the www.RoeAtRisk.org website. Ask each speaker for a short bio that you can use to introduce them to the audience. Make sure to follow up with each person directly for confirmation that they have received your correspondence. **Note:** Let your speakers know that you are the main contact for the event and provide them with your email address and phone number, in case they need to contact you with any last minute changes or details.

✓ If necessary, make travel arrangements (air, train, hotel, parking, etc.) for your speaker(s).

**Media Outreach and Publicity**

✓ Draft a press release for local and campus media outlets. Contact Terra Allgaier (Terra@afj.org) at AFJ headquarters for help with encouraging local media to cover your event.

✓ Submit a blurb to weekly bulletins, calendars, and websites that students, campus faculty and staff read.

✓ Post an announcement about your event on social media sites relevant to your community, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Change.org, or Idealist.org.

**Materials**

✓ Finalize event materials such as flyers and hand-outs. Begin to post and distribute flyers promoting your event on campus. You may download promotional flyers from www.RoeAtRisk.org. **Tip:** Knowing how many people plan to attend your event will help you finalize your food and beverage order and determine how to set up your meeting space. Provide a way for people to RSVP or register for the event so that you can better gauge how many people to expect at your event.
Create directional signs to help direct guests to the meeting space.
Create signs with the speaker’s name or placards to help event participants identify speakers on stage or seated at the table during your event.

**TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT**

**Event Logistics**

✓ Finalize your program. Determine who will open the event by welcoming guests and introducing speakers. Make sure that the person who opens the event has an up to date list of individuals and organizations to thank for providing support. **Tip:** Serve refreshments at the beginning of your event so that the majority of your guests arrive before the program begins.
✓ Delegate tasks that need to be handled on site on the day of the event, such as hanging signs before your event, picking up refreshments, choosing and staffing speakers, and handling the audio visual equipment. **Hint:** Don’t forget to assign someone to turn the lights off when the film begins and back on when the film ends.

**Publicity**

✓ Post flyers in classrooms, bulletin boards and public spaces throughout campus
✓ Make announcements about your event at the beginning or end of classes and during any organizational meetings you attend.
✓ Use email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc to promote your event.
✓ Encourage your professors to invite their students to your event. If a professor who teaches on campus agrees to serve as one of your speakers, ask them to offer extra credit to students who attend the event.
✓ Contact campus radio stations and newspapers for announcements and/or advertisements.

**Materials**

✓ Make copies of any handouts you plan to distribute during your program. Handouts and sign in sheets are available on [www.RoeAtRisk.org](http://www.RoeAtRisk.org),
✓ Pick up any supplies donated from supporting organizations.

**Sample Program**

Refreshments and Networking
15-30 Minutes
Welcome and Introduction
3-5 Minutes
Film Presentation
12 Minutes
Guest Speaker’s Presentation(s)
7-10 Minutes
Discussion or Q&A Session
20-30 Minutes
Closing Comments
3 Minutes

**Maximum Length of Film Screening**
1 Hour – 1 Hour 30 Minutes

**ONE WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT**

**Event Logistics**

✓ If you have not done so already, verify that all arrangements for location, AV equipment, and refreshments are settled.
✓ Ensure that all members of your group and organizing committee are aware of their responsibilities.
Speakers
✓ Inform speakers of the program schedule, the topic background, and your goals for discussion. Remind them of the time and date of the event, and ask whether they have any questions or concerns.

Publicity
✓ Repost flyers on campus, circulate reminder emails, resend messages via social networking sites and continue to talk about the event, film and issue with everyone you know and meet.

**DAY OF THE EVENT**
✓ **Be flexible!** Some parts of the program may take more or less time than anticipated, or your speaker may not arrive on time. Your AV may not work properly -- and some volunteers may not even show up! Just stay calm, stick to your program and don’t be afraid to make changes when necessary or to ask for help.

Publicity
✓ Send a reminder message to everyone who has registered for your event on the day before, or the morning of, your event.

Set Up
✓ **Have members of your organization go to the event venue at least 30 minutes before the event starts.** Be sure your volunteers know their tasks.
✓ Instruct your speaker(s) to arrive 10-15 minutes before the event begins so they have time to prepare (and so the event can still start on time if they arrive late).

Room Logistics
✓ Test the equipment at your event. Make sure the volume on microphones is set to an appropriate level. **Remember:** What sounds loud in an empty room may not be loud enough when a room is filled with guests.
✓ Have the **film cued** up so that the event can begin on time and know how to change the lighting.
✓ Set up chairs for your audience and speakers. Reserve seats for important guests, if appropriate.
✓ Learn where the bathrooms are located so that you can direct your guests.
✓ Set up a sign-in table so that you can keep track of who attends the event for follow-up. If possible, have a greeter to stand by the table who welcomes your attendees and ensures that they sign in.
✓ Make sure to provide your speakers with a bottle or glass of water on the podium or head table.
✓ Place the sign-in sheet near the door. Place handouts in a place where guests can easily pick them up. Have one or two members of your organizing committee stand in a high traffic area near your event site to help direct traffic to the event and welcome your speakers.

**AFTER THE EVENT**
✓ Send thank-you letters to speakers and special guests.
✓ Follow up with participants via email to thank them for attending your event. You may wish to use this email as an opportunity to invite your guests to join your organization, to remind them about the action steps they can take on this issue, and/or to advise them about any related upcoming events or activities you are planning.
✓ Email copies of your sign-in sheets to [Terra@AFJ.org](mailto:Terra@AFJ.org) so that attendees can be added to AFJ mailing lists and invited to future activities and workshops, and so we know the size range of the film screenings.
Please send AFJ copies of all articles mentioning your event, including letters to the editor, op-eds, and news articles or television clips so that we can post them on www.RoeAtRisk.org.

Please contact Terra Allgaier at Terra@AFJ.org or call 1-866-347-7866 if you need additional tips or help organizing your event.