

The logo features a green line-art illustration of a town skyline with various buildings and trees. A central signpost holds a circular sign with the word "Ely" and "MN" below it. Below the illustration, the text "Ely for Ely Event Planning Guide" is written in a bold, green, sans-serif font.

Ely for Ely Event Planning Guide

Ely residents and organizations are well-versed in the art of gathering – we do it all the time!

This Ely for Ely Event Planning Guide is a tool for individuals and organizations to be as successful as possible in the event planning process, specifically as it relates to events taking place in Ely, Minnesota. It is also a living document that is subject to ongoing edits as we learn.

While details about venues, marketing channels, and points of contact are subject to change, the general progression of event planning presented is considered best practice. Regardless of the size and caliber of your event, folks who aspire to hosting a gathering are encouraged to tap into the bigger picture prior to digging into the details. And, don't forget: event planning can never start too early, but it can start too late!

According to Priya Parker, the author of *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters*, the way a group is gathered determines the success of the gathering – small design and execution choices can help your event soar. Parker goes on to suggest that when you host a gathering, you are proposing to consume people's most precious resource: their time. "Making the effort to consider how you want your guests, and yourself, to be altered by the experience is what you owe people as a good steward of that resource."

What is motivating you to host an event? When you visualize your event, how does it *feel*? How can you design your event to successfully translate that feeling from your visualization into a reality full of guests who help you achieve the goals you define for your event?

This event planning guide was created by Boundary Waters Connect as part of the Ely for Ely professional development and networking program. Contact Lacey with feedback and questions via email at lacey@boundarywatersconnect.org.



Stage One: Conceptualization

- Define the goal of your event. For example: Is the goal of your event to raise money, to connect with like-minded people, to compel folks who are new to your organization to become more deeply involved with it, or something else?
- Identify the target audience for the event.
- Define attendance goals, including the maximum number you can handle, and the minimum number of attendees you would need to feel comfortable to proceed with planning and execution.
- Brainstorm event elements and activities, including food and beverage, entertainment, facilitation, and more. Dream big!
- Determine the event budget, including allocating funds for marketing.
- Decide on event elements and activities (striving for alignment between the big dream and the real budget).
- Identify a few possible event dates and times.
- Check various area event calendars for potential scheduling conflicts. Consider consulting this incomplete list of resources:
 - Ely.org events page
 - Ely Summer/Winter Times events calendar
 - What's Up Ely Facebook group
 - Facebook Events
- Consider potential event venues. Take into consideration your attendance goal, budget, and the activities you hope to conduct during your event. (See appendix A for a list of Ely-area event venues).
- Consider whether or not your event will include food and/or beverages. (See appendix B for a list of Ely-area caterers).
- Consider whether or not your event concept will involve coordinating with performers, speakers, or other special guests. This also includes the coordination of auxiliary services (porta-potty, anyone!?).
- Other:

Stage Two: Securing the Fundamentals

- Reserve a venue.
- Confirm food and beverage providers.
- Negotiate contracts with entertainment.
- Book service providers (porta-potty, anyone!?)
- If you plan to sell or offer alcoholic beverages, you'll need to apply for a temporary liquor license through the City of Ely. You can find the application form on the City of Ely website. Contact Deputy Clerk Casey Velcheff with questions and to submit your application. (Note: City distributed temporary liquor licenses require your organization to add the City of Ely as an additional insured. Contact your insurance agent to secure the necessary paperwork.)
- Identify how registration or payment will be handled.
- Consider audio/visual needs. Work with your venue contact to confirm what they offer.
- Reserve portable speakers and microphones via Boundary Waters Connect as needed.
- Consider event volunteer needs, including but not limited to:
 - Set up
 - Reception
 - Tear down / clean up
- Develop a plan for how you will communicate volunteer needs, track volunteer placements, and train volunteers in how to execute their roles.
- Consider whether or not you want to contract a designer to make a poster and/or digital graphics for your event.
- Other:

Stage Three: Marketing

- Develop an event aesthetic – identify the key images, colors, fonts, and logos you want associated with your event’s promotional materials. Consider creating a mood board to inform graphic designs, posters, and decor.
- Create a graphic for the event, consider including it in all event-related communications.
- Update your organization’s website to include event details, including ticketing information and process.
- Submit your event to the Ely.org event calendar.
- Submit details of your event to the Ely Summer/Winter Times. Note that winter events are due in early October, and summer events are due in early April.
- Send an email invitation to your organization's audience. Bonus points for sending personalized emails to individuals, as well as more general email blasts, so to speak.
- Include your event details in all regularly scheduled email newsletters between when details are defined and the event takes place.
- Partner with another organization & ask if they can promote your event via their regular email newsletters as well.
- Let the Ely Echo and The Timberjay know about your event. This could involve:
 - Working with the newspaper(s) to place an ad.
 - Submitting a press release with all event information for them to potentially cover.
 - Submit details to the community announcement sections of the papers.
- Print posters via the Ely Echo, and distribute posters to a variety of local businesses.
- Create a Facebook event and invite your target audience. Consider a paid promotion.
- Post engaging content in the Facebook event discussion area.
- Share the Facebook event to the What’s Up Ely Facebook group with a personalized message in the body of the post.
- Working with Ely’s Historic State Theater to book a marquee message.
- Submit an ad to be shown prior to films at Ely’s Historic State Theater.
- Make a community announcement about your event at the start of a Tuesday Group program (at the Grand Ely Lodge at noon on Tuesdays, excluding December).
- Contact Lacey to indicate an interest in having your event featured via an episode of the What’s Up Ely Podcast (in the event round up or event host as a featured podcast guest).
- Print business cards promoting your event and give them out to people around town.
- Print or make yard signs promoting your event and invite people to display them.
- Create table tents and ask local restaurants if you can display them on their tables.
- Develop an idea for a piece of performance art that captures people’s attention.
- Other:

Stage Four: Cross t's, Dot i's

- Share volunteer needs and tracking system with a targeted group of prospective volunteers.
- Arrange and finalize details related to the menu if your event includes food and/or beverages.
- Consider venue way-finding. Is your venue easy to find? Do attendees know where to park? Once they arrive on site, will it be clear to them where to go or what to do? Create and display signage accordingly.
- Visualize how you plan the event going from set up to tear down. How will the space be set up? What is the timeline? Who will introduce the event?
- Gather supplies, decorations, and other materials needed for the event. Confirm whether or not you have sufficient supplies, and make a plan to purchase more as needed.
- Contact special guests, performers, volunteers and other collaborators to confirm the details of their participation and the event timeline.
- Prepare digital card readers, cash boxes, and/or money bags.
- Initiate checks or other payment processes.
- Confirm the pick up date and time for the A/V equipment.
- Other:

Event Day: Time to Party

- Bring all necessary supplies to the venue prior to set up start time.
- Greet volunteers and direct them as to where to go and what to do.
- Execute set up, getting the venue to the correct configuration with all necessarily audio/visual equipment, chairs, and/or tables in the correct spot.
- Greet event attendees warmly – consider the event venue your home for the time being. Welcome people as you would welcome guests into your home!
- Execute your event.
- Distribute payment to artists/collaborators as applicable.
- Finalize event & clean up.
- Other:

Following the Event:

- Write and send thank you notes to the appropriate people.
- Ensure funds have been deposited or transferred to the appropriate accounts or people.
- Submit receipts to the appropriate people for reimbursement or tracking.
- Update budget documents and other relevant financial records.
- Remove publicity/signs.
- Evaluate the success of the event for future reference. Did you achieve the goals of the event? Did you meet your attendance goals? What worked well? What did not work well? Would you plan this event again? What would you change about the event next time?
- The best time to start planning next year's event is immediately following this year's!
- Other:

Appendix A: List of Ely-Area Event Venues

Boathouse Brew Pub (Lookout Lounge)
BrainStorm Bakery
Chapman Street Commons Pocket Park
Ely Arts & Heritage Center (Miners Dry House)
Ely Folk School
Ely Memorial High School
Ely Public Library
Ely Recreation Center
Ely Senior Center
Ely Steam Sauna
Ely's Historic State Theater
Functional Fitness
Grand Ely Lodge
Hidden Valley Chalet
Mealey's Tiki Deck
Northern Grounds
Piragis Bookstore
Semers Park Beach
Sheridan Street Deli
Society Hall (above Northern Grounds)
Studio North
The Hub (Ely Area Community Foundation Building)
Trezona Trail
USFS Kawishiwi District building
Vermilion Fine Arts Theater
Whiteside Park
Winton Community Center
YMCA Camps

Appendix B: Incomplete List of Ely-Area Caterers

Brainstorm Bakery
Chris Glazer Catering
Gator's Grilled Cheese Emporium
Joshua Brang Catering
Northern Grounds
Rosa Oesterreich Catering
Sheridan Street Deli
Wilderness Woodfire Pizza (May-Oct)
Zup's Deli

Appendix C: Arrowhead Poster Distribution Locations

Ely		Tower	Babbitt
Zups	Laundromats x2	Sulu's	Hideaway
Merhars	Library	Ricks Relics	Zups
KJ's	Ely Folk School	Zups	Library
Northern Grounds	Friends of BWCA	Fortune Bay	
Brainstorm	Piragis		
Grand Ely Lodge	MN NorthVermilion		
Frisky Otter	Mike's Liquor		
NE MNs for Wilderness	Dorothy Molter		
Insula	BW Care Center		
Boathouse	Mitska's market		
Wolf Center	Ely Liquor		
Aurora	Hoyt Lakes	Biwabik	Gilbert
The Hive	Haven B&G	Vi's Pizza	
Rudy's	Lucky 7	Super One	Whistling Bird
Copper Nickel	Country Inn	Giants Ridge	Ore House
Megan's	Vaughn's		Fitz's Wandering Pines
Lucky 7	Library		Holiday Station
Virginia	Chisholm	Hibbing	Grand Rapids
Kunnaris	MN Discovery Center	Sunrise Bakery	MN North College
Co-op	Chisholm Inn&Stes.	Sammy's Pizza	Rapids Brewing
Sawmill	Valentini's	The Rhythm Deli	Klockow Brewing
MN No. Colleges	Lucky 7	MN North College	Boulder Tap House
Boomtown		Super One	Library

	Duluth		Two Harbors
Dewitt Seitz	Dovetail Cafe (Duluth Folk School)		Castle Danger
Amity Coffee	Whole Foods Co-ops x2		Vanilla Bean
Pizza Luce	Earth Rider Brewery	Wussow's Concert Cafe	Cedar Coffee/SpokenGear
Duluth Grill	Wild State Cider		
Zeitgeist*	Bent paddle		
Finland	Tofte	Lutsen	Grand Marais
General Store	Coho Cafe and Bakery	Eagle Ridge Resort	Co-op
Finland Community Center	Bluefin Bay	Lockport Deli	Angry Trout
Wolf Ridge ELC	Tofte General Store	Liquor Store	Gunflint Tavern
		Fika Coffee	Voyageur Brewing
		Cascade Restaurant	Blue water Cafe
			Hungry Hippy Tacos
			North House Folk School
			Java Moose