Managing Your Event

A well run RLI event requires that all the pieces work well, from food to venue to the classes you offer the participants. This will require you to review the costs and enrollments diligently before the date of the event to ensure everything is working the way you anticipate. Catching, or preventing a problem early is the easiest way to ensure success.

What should I spend on food for my event?

The goal is to spend less than $50 per registered person on food for your event. Use the Event Planning Form to calculate your costs. Food includes breakfast, lunch, snacks at break and the Friday night session. Keep in mind that you will have people eating who have not paid - discussion leaders, registrar, District directors and perhaps others.

Some of the items to review when planning food for your event:

- Are you being charged per person or a flat fee?
- If it is per person, is there a minimum?
- What is the latest date you can change the head count?
- Will the caterer provide plates, silverware, linens and everything else needed to serve the food?
- Will the cater set up and break down for each meal?
- Is there a charge for the servers?
- Are you expected to tip the servers or is it included?
- Will the caterer clean the venue and remove trash? Is there an additional fee?

There are a lot of things to consider when providing food for a group of people. Take a minute to ensure that all your participants have food choices:

- For a continental breakfast, ensure there are food options without sugar (toast in addition to donuts)
- Provide gluten free options (wheat free)
- Provide sugar free / no carb choices for diabetics
- Provide vegan options
- Always have water as a beverage choice
- Always have caffeine as a beverage choice
- Some of the most common allergens are nuts (especially peanuts), shellfish, milk, eggs, soy and fish
- Some religious practices prohibit foods like pork and shellfish

And now you know why chicken is served so often!!

How do I cancel a class?

Because RLI classes are discussion based and very interactive, there is a minimum class size of 10. A class with less than 10 participants doesn't create a dynamic learning environment. If enrollments are low for a particular class, begin promoting that class immediately. The few students that have enrolled will be upset if their session is canceled, so do your best to fill the class (see promoting events) If it becomes clear that a class is not going to get enough participants to reach this minimum, you should cancel it.

Be sure to cancel sessions early! Participants may be making travel arrangements, taking time off work or away from their family to attend your event. Respect their time by letting them know early enough so they can change plans. Online registration will close 10 days before the date of your event. This is a good time to decide if a class needs to be canceled or if you can get it filled in time. Even though an event is closed online, you have the ability to register participants yourself.

There are rare occasions the RLI Chairman will ask you not to cancel the class. That decision will be based on the number of times the class has been canceled in your area in the past and other factors.

Here are the steps to cancel a class:

- Send an email to both the RLI Chairman and the Division Registrar requesting the class be canceled.
- The Division Registrar will close the registrations for the class so no one else can enroll
- Send an email to each participant in the canceled session letting them know it has been canceled. Include the location and date for the next time this session will be offered!
- The Division Registrar will cancel the enrollments for the class

How do I add another session?

All RLI sessions have a limit on how many participants can enroll in a single session. For most classes the capacity is 20, for a few classes (like the Public Speaking Grad class) the number may be lower due to time demands of the curriculum. Once the capacity is reached, the system will not allow anyone else to register for that class. It will show as "Not Available" on the registration screen.

You will have to decide if your facility can support an additional session. If the answer is yes, contact the RLI Chair for approval. Be sure to copy the Division Registrar and Division Faculty Chair. If the RLI Chair approves, the Division Registrar will add additional capacity to your class so folks can register.

If you don't feel the facility can accommodate an additional session or if you don't think you can get enough folks to fill an additional session, you may want to simply add some extra seats to a session. Most sessions can take an extra 3 or 4 people without causing a problem. To add just a few more seats, contact the Division Registrar and ask them to add capacity to your class.

Getting your Discussion Leaders fired up!

Your Friday night event for the Discussion Leaders is all about making sure they have everything they need to be successful during your event (including a great attitude!). Be sure to let your DLs know in advance if their partner may attend this event with them and if there is a dress code for your Friday night venue. Your event could be held in a private home, restaurant or even your class venue!

Friday night should include several elements to ensure this happens:

- Prepare a folder for each DL containing the schedule, student listing, room assignments plus any other information that could be important at this location
- Prepare a presentation of best practices. This presentation should ideally be a facilitated discussion allowing the DLs to share their experiences and how they successfully handled issues
- Be prepared to share information about this event and/or locations that DLs should know
- Talk with each DL to ensure they each have the materials necessary for their sessions
- Provide a meal or heavy appetizers to provide a chance for DLs to get to know each other. (Costs for the Friday night session should be carefully controlled and within your event budget. Be creative - this could be a cookout, restaurant or even a picnic)
- If possible, give DLs the opportunity to walk through the venue, find their rooms and set up for the first session of the day
- If needed, ask for help placing signage or other set up functions
- End on a positive note!! Thank each of the DLs and staff for attending your event - remember they are volunteers and your thanks is their "paycheck".

Budget

Generally, with 60 paid attendees it is advisable to keep these costs within $30-$35 per person. Dinner the preceding evening should be $35 or less per person. If the contracts allow terms of payment other than at time of service, the Sunshine Division will promptly pay all invoices to the vendors after proper submission by the District Director. If however, deposits need to be paid in advance and invoices need to be paid the day of the events, it is a best practice to ask the host District to pay the invoices and then the Sunshine Division will promptly reimburse the District after proper submission of all reports following the event.

TIMELINE AND CHECK LISTS

<u>6-12 Months</u>

Consult RLI Training Calendar, District Calendar, RLI District Chair, Faculty Chair and District Governor/DGE to choose a date/venue to hold an RLI event. Try not to have events on the same date as other districts that are in close geographic proximity. Check with the facility of choice to be sure they have available space. Once date is confirmed with all parties, submit to the Sunshine Division on the appropriate form.

<u>6 Months</u>

Finalize contract with facility, including all costs, rooms and meals. If using an outside hotel be sure to have a negotiated price and an estimated number of rooms blocked for facilitators and traveling participants. Promotion of the upcoming RLI event should commence by the appropriate leaders.

<u>3 Months</u>

Check with Faculty Coordinator to be sure Discussion Leaders/facilitators have been solicited and chosen for the event. Communicate as soon as possible with facilitators with information about the hotel, training facility and any meal choices that may need to be made. Meet with RLI District Director to discuss any procedures or changes needed.

<u>2 Months</u>

Check with facility/hotel contacts that all rooms and other requests are still available. If registration has been strong, meet with District Director and Faculty Coordinator to decide if additional classes should be offered and if more rooms can be added as well as additional facilitators.

<u>1 Month</u>

Stay in contact with District Director and District Registrar to be sure everything is still on target. Make any adjustments as needed. Meet with District Director to verify that all laptops, projectors, screens, flipcharts and any other equipment has been gathered and assigned for the day.

<u>10 Days Prior</u>

After registration closes, confirm final counts with venue and vendors. An onsite visit at the venue is recommended to confirm who will be the venue liaison onsite during the event. It is an important best practice that wherever the venue is, someone affiliated with the venue is onsite during the event (typically a weekend) should there be issues the day of, such as air conditioning, tech support and even opening the doors early in the morning.

One Week

Check with the hotel that all facilitators have registered and release any unused blocked rooms. Make signs for classroom doors for each class.

The day before

Try to have the venue available early for equipment set up and testing. Make final prep for Faculty Dinner that night and make sure there is equipment setup for a presentation

The Big Day!

Have access to classrooms available by 7:00am for final checks and setup by Discussion Leaders who are working the first session. Coffee/Tea should be ready at this time as well.

- If the venue is a large facility, make sure there are visible Rotary/RLI signs directing attendees where to park in the lot.
- Have greeters by the building entrance (this can be Discussion Leaders).
- Registration table of two 6-8 foot tables set up at right angles should be ready by 7:00am in a very visible location, either in the lobby or in front of the breakfast meeting room.
- Be sure all breakout rooms are set up into U-shape, and if using AV, with a laptop loaded with latest version of RLI PowerPoint, projector, screen or clear wall, and flipchart.
- Room should have ice water and glasses available.
- Check the breakfast food table by 7:15am to be sure everything is satisfactory. Be sure the microphone is working so whoever is designated as the emcee (Director or you) will be able to start the event at 8:00am. Have greeters available by 7:30am to welcome participants and direct them to the meal room. If possible, ask the District Governor to be a greeter in the meal room and be acknowledged in the welcoming address (always follow Rotary protocol). Allow the Governor to speak and welcome the attendees.
- Upon leaving the meal room, greeters should make sure all participants find their proper classroom.
- Throughout the day, make sure the water is refreshed in each classroom and the restroom facilities are accessible. Be sure the faculty lounge is kept stocked with food and drink.
- Discreetly, via a bell or some other method, let Discussion Leaders know when 5 minutes are left in their session.
- Check meal room 20 minutes before lunch to be sure all is ready and prepared according to specifications.
- At lunch, publicly acknowledge and thank the venue and meal providers

End of the Event

No job is complete until the paperwork is done, an RLI event is no exception. Your record keeping and reporting is crucial to ensuring all participants get proper credit for attendance and that the Sunshine Division books are correct.

- Registrar completes the Session Recap form including all walk-in registration forms and onsite payment forms and signs
- District Director reviews the Session Recap and attached forms and signs
- The Session Recap form, walk-in registration forms, onsite payment forms are put in an envelope and mailed to the Division Registrar. This should be complete within 72 hours maximum!
- All invoice and receipts are put in an envelope and mailed to the Division Treasurer
- The front side of all evaluations and observation forms are scanned and emailed to both the Division Faculty Chair and Curriculum Chair
- The hard copies of all evaluations are given to the District Director and Facility Chair for review