

Fundraising Gala Planning Checklist

From the first budget to the last thank-you note. Tick as you go.

9 TO 12 MONTHS OUT

- ☐ Set the net goal: what you need to keep after costs
- ☐ Pick the date, check it against local galas and holidays
- ☐ Book the venue and caterer; get a per-guest food and drink price
- ☐ Form a committee: chair, sponsors, auction, program, guests

3 TO 4 MONTHS OUT

- ☐ Open ticket and table sales online; send the save-the-date
- ☐ Ask sponsors and table hosts first, then your full list
- ☐ Collect auction items and write their descriptions and values
- ☐ Put the deductible amount on the ticket page and in the confirmation email

THE WEEK OF

- ☐ Final headcount to the caterer and venue
- ☐ Print table cards with the fund-a-need QR code
- ☐ Test check-in on phones; add check-in assistants
- ☐ Brief the speaker who makes the ask, and the person who opens it

6 TO 8 MONTHS OUT

- ☐ Set ticket and table prices from cost per guest plus the giving amount
- ☐ Work out the fair market value per seat and the deductible amount
- ☐ Write sponsor levels and what each includes (seats, logo, mention)
- ☐ Choose the cause for the fund-a-need and a dollar figure per impact

4 TO 6 WEEKS OUT

- ☐ Close meal choices; send dietary needs to the caterer
- ☐ Collect table guest names from hosts; draft the seating chart
- ☐ Book volunteers: check-in, auction, runners, paddle raise spotters
- ☐ Write the run of show, minute by minute, with the ask at its center

AFTER THE GALA

- ☐ Thank every guest within 48 hours, with the impact you funded
- ☐ Send written acknowledgments for single gifts of \$250 or more
- ☐ Reconcile tickets, donations and auction payments
- ☐ Write down what to change next year while it's fresh

Ticket math for this gala

Ticket price

Fair market value per seat

Deductible per ticket
