



Tips for Planning an Event in Your Courthouse

Hosting an event – whether it be in-person, online, or hybrid – can be an exciting way to connect the community with your judges and courthouse staff.

Events can generate positive publicity about a program, achievement, or even an individual at your courthouse.

Here are some things to keep in mind when planning an event in your courthouse.

What's the purpose of the event?

- Identify the topic, or why you're hosting the event.
- After the topic is determined, make a list of goals for the event.
- Approach possible speakers. Once confirmed, provide them with goals for their presentation, a timeline, and ideal length (making sure they leave time at the end for questions).

Who should attend?

- Determine your target audience, i.e., who should attend the event from inside and outside the courthouse community.
- Develop a promotional plan for the event. Some ideas may include social media promotions, a pitch to local news media, email or direct mail, or a flyer or memo. In the promotion, include information on the focus of the event and the speakers; the date, time, and location; and registration and contact information.

What are the space and tech needs?

- Consider the space and technology available for the event, as this will drive the number of guests to invite. You may also consider a follow-up session if there is more interest than the space will allow.
- Make sure you reserve tables, chairs, catering items, and any other elements needed for the day of the event.
- Notify the appropriate security department of the date and time, if needed. At courthouse or justice facilities, you will typically need to notify the sheriff that a large number of patrons will be arriving and leaving at a specific time.
- Contact the appropriate IT department to schedule a time to set up the needed technology.
- If you plan to record the event, ensure you have the proper equipment and ask the speakers for their permission to record.

Are you prepared for the day of the event?

- Contact a photographer for photo opportunities, and assign a staff member to write a short piece about the event and post it on social media and in newsletters.



- Make sure you have all handouts and other materials needed for the event printed and ready to go before the event (additional materials are regularly added last minute!).
- Assign a host (or two) for the day of the event. If the event is happening remotely, the host will be responsible for starting the virtual platform, admitting attendees, and monitoring for issues. If the event is in-person, the host will be in charge of directing attendees to the meeting room, distributing handouts, and answering questions from attendees and the speakers, etc. No matter whether the event is remote or in-person, the host will be in charge of making sure the program runs smoothly and on time.
- Follow up with attendees via email a few days after the event, thanking them for their participation and asking for any questions.

Questions?

If you have questions, please contact the Illinois Supreme Court's Communications Department at Communications@IllinoisCourts.gov.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

[LOGO]



[Month, day, year]

PRESS RELEASE HEADLINE

Press release subhead

City, state – [Court name] announced today [news hook]. [Additional key points, including the who, what, where, when, and why in the first paragraphs].

[Quote from the Chief Judge, a member of the leadership team, or someone who has been impacted by the news.]

[Paragraphs including supporting details.]

[Paragraphs including supporting details.]

[Bulleted list of facts and figures, if relevant:

- Datapoint 1
- Datapoint 2
- Datapoint 3]

[Final summarizing information.]

(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: [Name], [Title] at [Phone] or [Email].)