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Planning your National Space Day event is a fantastic way to bring people together to celebrate the wonders of space! Whether you're hosting a classroom activity, library story time, community event, or family science night, this section will help you get started. You'll find simple tips, helpful checklists, and creative ideas to make your event fun, educational, and inspiring for everyone involved. No matter the size of your gathering, every event helps spark curiosity and connects your community to the excitement of space exploration.

1. DEFINING YOUR EVENT & AUDIENCE

Before diving into logistics, take a moment to shape your event's vision. A clear understanding of your goals, audience, and resources will guide every step of planning — from picking the right activities to choosing your venue.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

What do you want your event to achieve? Do you want to inspire curiosity, teach STEM concepts, celebrate space achievements, build community partnerships, or connect students with careers? For example, a library may focus on sparking early curiosity through reading and art, while a high school might aim to introduce students to aerospace career pathways. Defining your goals helps align your message and measure your success.



TARGET AUDIENCE

Who do you want to reach — and what kind of experience will engage them? For younger students, consider hands-on activities like building straw rockets or modeling lunar habitats with clay. Middle and high school students might enjoy design challenges, guest speakers, or a mini career fair. Families could be drawn to a “Space Night” with stargazing or live science demos. Space professionals or enthusiasts might prefer technical talks or networking events. Tailor your content, tone, and timing to your audience.



SCALE AND FORMAT

Events can be as small as a single classroom activity or as large as a community-wide space festival! Small-scale events might include classroom experiments, story times, or after-school clubs, while larger events could be school-wide STEM days, museum festivals, or virtual live streams. Consider whether your event will be in-person or virtual. A school might host a “Space Spirit Week,” while a planetarium could run a full-day expo with local exhibitors. Virtual events could include live-streamed experiments, online challenges, or Q&A sessions with space professionals. You can also host a hybrid event — for example, streaming a speaker session online while local attendees participate in interactive activities.



BUDGET

Whether your resources are big or small, creativity goes a long way. Many impactful events cost little or nothing — like hosting a trivia night, screening a space documentary, or partnering with a local astronomy club. If you have access to funding or community partners, consider materials for STEM kits, guest speaker honorariums, or themed giveaways. Think creatively about in-kind contributions — like volunteers, venue space, or equipment loans.



LOCATION(S) AND VENUE(S)

The right location sets the stage for your event's success. Classrooms, auditoriums, libraries, gymnasiums, parks, and community centers can all work — just be sure your space is safe, accessible, and appropriate for your audience size and activities. Think about how people will move through the space — where to greet guests, where hands-on activities will take place, and how to make sure everyone can see, hear, and

participate. For outdoor events, plan for weather contingencies. For indoor events, consider displays, seating, and flow.



DATE AND TIME

National Space Day is officially celebrated on the **first Friday in May**, but you can plan your event any time during that week. Choose a date and time that best fits your audience – morning assemblies work well for schools, while evening or weekend programs might be ideal for families and community groups. Check local calendars to avoid scheduling conflicts and maximize attendance.

2. CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES

Now that you've defined your audience and goals, it's time to plan the heart of your event - the experiences that will spark curiosity, inspire learning, and make National Space Day unforgettable! The ideas below can be mixed, matched, and scaled for any audience or venue.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Share knowledge that inspires discovery!

- Choose age-appropriate learning materials about space exploration, astronomy, planetary science, and related STEM topics.
- Incorporate fact sheets, infographics, short videos, and interactive simulations to make complex ideas simple and engaging.
- Use credible content from organizations such as NASA, NOAA, and USGS, or other reputable education partners. Explore the vast resources available from NASA, including educational materials, speakers' bureaus, and event support.
- Explore and integrate Space Foundation Partner Organization resources outlined in the Education Toolkit for ready-to-use activities, classroom lessons, and visuals.
- Tip: Display QR codes linking to digital resources or NASA videos - they're perfect for self-guided learning stations!

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Get hands-on and make learning fun!

- STEM Challenges: Build and launch paper rockets, create craters using flour and cocoa powder, or design model satellites.
- Interactive Demonstrations: Host robotics or 3D printing demos, show how telescopes work, or demonstrate zero-gravity concepts.
- Stargazing Nights: Partner with a local astronomy club for telescope viewing and constellation tours (a perfect family activity!).
- Games and Competitions: Host space trivia, scavenger hunts, or Kahoot! quizzes tied to event content.



- Art and Design Projects: Encourage creativity through poster contests, model-building, or “Design Your Lunar Base” challenges.
- Certificates of Participation: Provide a fun takeaway that recognizes involvement - especially meaningful for students.
- Example Highlight: See our Community Partner Scavenger Hunt from the 2025 National Space Day at Space Foundation Discovery Center for inspiration!

SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Inspire your audience with real stories and expertise.

- Invite astronauts, scientists, engineers, educators, or industry professionals to share their experiences.
- Organize panel discussions on topics like “Life Beyond Earth,” “Women in Space,” or “The Future of Human Spaceflight.”
- Feature local authors or educators for readings and storytelling - a great way to connect with families and young learners.
- Consider student-led presentations to empower youth voices and highlight classroom projects related to space.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Bring your event to life with interactive tech experiences!

- Offer VR or AR experiences that let participants explore the International Space Station or walk on the Moon.
- Stream live space events (rocket launches, spacewalks, ISS missions) during your program.
- Use interactive apps or websites for scavenger hunts, digital maps, or gamified activities.
- Include a photo booth or selfie station with augmented reality backdrops like “Standing on Mars.”



SWAG AND GIVEAWAYS

Everyone loves a souvenir!

- Hand out space-themed items such as stickers, bookmarks, activity sheets, posters, pencils, or small toys.
- Provide informational brochures or flyers about your organization, community partners, or STEM programs.
- Offer registration bags with educational materials and keepsakes to extend the learning at home.

EXHIBITS AND DISPLAYS

Create a visual experience that captivates curiosity.

- Feature models of rockets, rovers, satellites, or lunar habitats.
- Set up career booths highlighting jobs in aerospace, astronomy, or engineering.

- Invite local companies, universities, or organizations to host exhibits that showcase how your community contributes to space and STEM.
- Include student projects or artwork to celebrate local creativity.

ELEVATED ENHANCEMENTS

Add that extra “wow” factor for guests of all ages!

- Fun touches like face painting, caricature artists, or crafts keep younger visitors engaged.
- Bring in space characters or cosplay groups like the 501st Legion for photo ops (they have local chapters across the U.S.).
- Include live music, a local radio broadcast, or a themed silent disco to build energy and atmosphere.
- Set up photo mosaics or photo booths to create memorable keepsakes and social media buzz.
- Don’t forget the details - space-themed decorations and lighting can transform any space into a cosmic celebration!



EXAMPLE IDEAS BY ORGANIZATION TYPE

Organization Type	Example Event Ideas
Schools (K–12)	“Space STEM Day” with hands-on stations; classroom rocket-building challenge; science fair with a “Moon Base” theme; student-led planetarium show.
Libraries	Space-themed story time; astronaut costume contest; “Build a Planet” art activity; evening talk with a local astronomer or space engineer.
Museums or Science Centers	Public “Space Discovery Weekend”; interactive exhibits; live science demos; panel discussion featuring local aerospace industry representatives.
Community Groups or Non-Profits	Family stargazing night; outdoor screening of a space documentary; “Space Fest” with booths from local organizations and student projects.
Industry Partners	Open house or virtual facility tour; career Q&A with engineers and scientists; mentorship session connecting students with professionals.

3. LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONS

Bringing your National Space Day event to life requires careful planning behind the scenes. While activities and content capture the attention of your audience, smooth logistics ensure the event runs safely, efficiently, and successfully. This section walks you through the key operational considerations – from staffing and equipment to safety and legal agreements – and explains why each is essential.



STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERS

Determine the number of staff and volunteers needed for setup, registration, activity facilitation, and cleanup. Adequate staffing ensures your event runs smoothly, and that attendees receive guidance and support at every station. Train volunteers in advance, and consider using shirts, lanyards, or buttons to clearly identify team members. Knowing your staffing needs ahead of time also helps prevent last-minute scrambling and ensures each activity is supervised, safe, and engaging.

- Create a shift schedule to avoid volunteer fatigue.
- Prepare a roles and responsibilities sheet so every volunteer knows their tasks.
- Host a brief training or orientation session before the event.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Create a detailed list of everything you'll need – from tables, chairs, and tents to activity materials, signage, and audio-visual equipment. Planning these details early helps avoid missing items on the day of the event and ensures each activity can operate as intended. Factor in extras like extension cords, power strips, or protective coverings for outdoor events.

- Check your venue for what's already available before renting or buying.
- Keep a backup kit with tape, scissors, markers, and extra batteries.
- Label boxes or bins for easy setup and teardown.

SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

A well-prepared safety plan is critical, especially for hands-on activities or outdoor events. Ensure first aid supplies and trained personnel are on hand. Reach out to local fire departments or emergency services – they may volunteer assistance with proper notice. Make accessibility a priority, providing ramps, clear signage, and accommodations for attendees with disabilities. Considering safety and risk ahead of time helps prevent accidents and ensures everyone has a positive experience.

- Conduct a walkthrough of the venue to identify hazards.
- Post emergency contact numbers and station volunteers near exits.
- Keep a first-aid kit checklist and assign someone to monitor it.

PERMITS AND PERMISSIONS

Check whether your venue or planned activities require permits, such as:

- Selling items at gift shops or vendor booths.
- Using public spaces or adding temporary structures like tents or port-o-potties.

Obtaining permits in advance avoids legal complications and ensures your event complies with local regulations.

- Contact your local city or county office early – permit approval can take weeks.
- Keep a folder of all permits and approvals for easy reference on the event day.

REGISTRATION AND TICKETING (IF APPLICABLE)

Decide on your registration process – will you accept online sign-ups, in-person registration, or both? A clear system helps you anticipate attendance, plan staffing and materials, and streamline check-in. Even free events benefit from tracking attendance for reporting impact and post-event evaluation.

- Use simple online registration platforms like Eventbrite or Google Forms.
- Send reminder emails to registered attendees.
- Track attendance to measure event impact.

VENDOR MANAGEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

If your event includes food vendors, exhibitors, or community partners, set clear contracts and guidelines. Define responsibilities, setup times, safety expectations, and contact information. Examples of potential community partners include aerospace companies, astronomical societies, school or university robotics teams, science centers, local museums, STEM clubs, and cybersecurity companies. Clear agreements reduce confusion and help everyone understand expectations.

- Share a vendor handbook with all rules, setup maps, and schedules.
- Assign a vendor liaison to answer questions on event day.



WASTE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Plan for proper waste disposal, including recycling and composting if available. Consider eco-friendly practices such as reusable signage, digital handouts instead of paper, or refillable water stations. Thoughtful waste management demonstrates care for the environment and can reinforce sustainability messaging tied to STEM and space exploration.

- Label recycling and trash bins clearly with pictures for younger audiences.
- Encourage volunteers to help monitor waste stations.
- Consider donating leftover materials to schools or community groups.

AGREEMENTS AND CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE (COI)

Formal agreements help protect your organization and partners. Two common types are:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** A document that outlines roles, responsibilities, and expectations between your organization and partners or vendors. An MOU ensures everyone is on the same page and helps prevent misunderstandings.

- **Certificate of Insurance (COI):** Proof that your organization (or a vendor/partner) has liability insurance coverage. A COI protects both parties in case of accidents, property damage, or injuries during the event.

Requesting these agreements in advance ensures compliance, risk management, and accountability, particularly when working with external partners, contractors, or public venues.

- Request MOUs and COIs well before the event – at least 4–6 weeks prior.
- Keep digital and printed copies readily accessible on event day.
- Include MOU/COI requirements in your vendor or partner communications to avoid last-minute issues.

4. POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP

The work doesn't end when the last attendee leaves! Post-event follow-up is essential to celebrate successes, gather insights, strengthen relationships, and lay the groundwork for future events. Taking time to reflect, collect data, and express gratitude ensures your National Space Day event has a lasting impact on your community and partners.



EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Gather input from attendees, volunteers, speakers, and partners to understand what worked well and what could be improved.

Feedback is crucial for refining future events and making them more engaging and effective.

- Use short surveys or digital forms for attendees and volunteers.
- Ask targeted questions like: “What was your favorite activity?” or “How could we improve next time?”
- Hold a post-event debrief meeting with your team to discuss lessons learned.

THANK YOU NOTES

Expressing gratitude strengthens relationships with everyone who contributed to your event. Sending thoughtful thank you notes demonstrates professionalism and encourages ongoing engagement.

- Personalize notes for speakers, sponsors, and volunteers, mentioning specific contributions.
- Consider email, handwritten notes, or social media shout-outs depending on your relationship.
- Include photos or highlights from the event to make the note memorable.

DATA COLLECTION (IF APPLICABLE)

Collect data on attendance, engagement, or other relevant metrics to evaluate your event's impact. Accurate data helps measure success, inform future planning, and demonstrate your event's value to partners and stakeholders.

- Track attendance by age group, school, or community segment if relevant.
- Record engagement with activities, booths, or presentations using simple tally sheets or observation.
- Consider digital metrics for virtual or hybrid events, such as video views or online quiz participation.

REPORTING

Compile a summary report highlighting your event's successes, challenges, and outcomes. Reporting not only documents your efforts but also provides a tool for accountability, future planning, and sharing your impact with partners.

- Include quantitative data (attendance, volunteer hours, number of activities) and qualitative data (feedback, testimonials, photos).
- Highlight key successes and stories that demonstrate the event's impact on participants.
- Share the report with internal leadership, sponsors, partners, and National Space Day organizers if applicable.

