

Debate Preparation Check-List

- Determine Budget
 - Production costs (airtime, television production)
 - Promotion
 - Security
 - Rental of a debate hall
 - Sponsors to finance the event
- Select a Debate Hall
 - University auditoriums, hotels, movie theaters, television production studio
 - Size of the audience
 - Lighting
 - acoustics
 - Carpeting to reduce audience noise
 - Politically neutral location
 - Adequate electrical power
 - Workspace for staff, moderator/panelists, and campaigns
 - Candidate holding rooms
 - Parking facilities
 - Open nearby space to park truck for network media
 - Blueprints for facilities to plan use of spaces
- Media Center
 - Space near the debate hall for a separate media center
 - Multiple televisions for journalists to watch debates in media center
 - Rooms for post-debate media interviews with candidates or advisors and media commentary
 - Tables and chairs
 - Telephones, electrical outlets, and internet capabilities
 - Copier/fax/other office equipment
- Food and Catering
 - Staff catering area
 - Media catering area
 - Catering for moderator/panelists
 - Catering for campaigns/candidates
- Furniture/Stage
 - Raised platform
 - Podiums/desks for candidates
 - Water, glasses, pens, notepads for candidates
 - Desks and tables for the moderator/panelists
 - Carpeting for better acoustics
 - Chairs for the audience
- Electrical
 - Microphones
 - Additional lights
 - Extra power sources/backup power sources

- Broadcast equipment
- Additional air conditioning for candidates on stage and large audience
- Hotels
 - Lodging for candidates, moderators, panelists
- Nearby major transportation services
 - Debate venue accessible to airports, vehicle, public transportation
- City Services
 - Police, fire, bomb disposal, rescue personnel, hospitals
- Printed Materials
 - Programs
 - Posters
 - Security Credentials
 - Audience tickets
- Labor
 - Professional help to handle equipment, particularly specialized broadcasting or electrical items
 - Volunteers to help before, during, and after the debate.
- Security
 - Secure debate-related equipment
 - Credentials for debate staff, candidate staff and media
 - Audience tickets (with security parameters)
 - Guards at entrance points (without and within facilities)
 - Ticket checkers
 - Law enforcement liaison
- Recordings/Transcripts
 - Videotapes/DVDs
 - Audio cassettes
 - Written transcripts of the debate (immediately available post-debate)
 - Availability of debate streaming, video and transcripts on sponsor's website
 - Professional service to transcribe the debate as it happens for public distribution
- Internet
 - Promote the date, time, and location of debate
 - Solicit volunteers
 - Solicit donors
 - Profile candidates
 - Order tickets
 - Acknowledge sponsors
 - Receive post-debate feedback
 - Provide/promote educational/civic activities
 - Webcast the debate
- Broadcasting
 - Industry expert to approve debate facilities for technical needs

- Audience Size
 - Audience size will be affected by a stage for the candidates, broadcasting equipment, and room for journalists/photographers
- Traffic Management
 - Site should allow for increased traffic related to audience and candidates
 - Assistance from local police department to direct traffic
 - Alternate parking area with bus transportation to the debate site for large audiences
 - Secure, unobstructed travel route for candidates and moderator/panelists (police escorts, if necessary)
- Donor recognition
 - Provide sponsors with debate tickets,
 - Acknowledge their assistance in printed materials and website
- Negotiating with Candidates
 - Identify a representative that can represent and make final decisions on behalf of candidates.
 - Obtain contact and emergency contact information
 - Issues potentially subject to negotiation or a coin toss:
 - Format (town hall meeting, single moderator, panel of questioners)
 - Selection of Moderator/Questioners
 - Topics
 - Length
 - Opening and Closing Statements
 - Time limits for questions and answers
 - Order of Speaking
 - Personal title to be used when introducing the candidate
 - Makeup and size of audience
 - Allowed responses from audience
 - Security procedures for handling noise or disruptions from audience.
- Community Interest
 - If tickets will be given to the community, decide on audience size and a method for ticket distribution
 - Increase community/student involvement with volunteers to serve as ushers or ticket-takers
 - Host a community-wide debate viewing at a separate location
- Cameras
 - Notify ticket-holders if cameras and other electronic equipment is prohibited
 - Establish a coat check for items not permitted in debate hall
- Safety
 - Ensure the size of the audience and the seating plan are consistent with safe use of the hall, and that all relevant fire and building codes are met.

- Media
 - Establish a credentialing process for journalists and other production technicians to identify and control the number of journalists who have access to the debate hall and other areas, and to fairly allocate space.
 - Obtain the assistance of a TV producer who can assist with issues such as camera placement, lighting, and power sources
 - Designate policy for access of still photographers to the debate (at beginning and after). Determine where photographers will stand, and make sure their equipment is not distracting either because of noise or flashes if allowed during the debate
 - Make arrangements for providing closed-captioning or sign language interpreting, if desired
 - Establish a post-debate commentary location where it does not interfere with the process of cleaning up the hall
- Post-Debate
 - Establish a method of distribution for transcripts (to media)
 - Solicit feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the debate.
- Staff
 - Stage manager
 - Make-up
 - Set design
 - Lighting
 - Audio
 - Electrician
 - Media coordinator
 - Security coordinator
 - Internet manager
 - Ticket Distribution
 - Stage Rigging (to set up lights, camera, audio)
 - Teleprompter (script for moderator to read)
 - Stage hands
 - Executive Producer
 - Supervising Producer
 - Timekeeper
 - Attorney
 - Telecommunications/Technical Director
 - Production manager
 - Individual to track time used in questions and answers
 - Campaign negotiator/liaison
 - Donor liaison
 - Still photography manager
 - Official Photographer
 - Logistics Director
 - Liaison with debate site
 - Liaison with candidates and political parties