

Block parties are a fun way to get to know your neighbors, improve the sense of community, and have a great time!

Planning Process:

1. Get a group of neighbors who are interested in helping in the planning of your block party. You can delegate responsibility to each person on the committee. Put someone in charge of publicity, setup, decorations, food, organizing activities, clean up, etc.
2. Decide on the date, time, theme, size and type of block party you want (barbeque, potluck, catered, etc.)
3. Determine if you want to block off the street for the party. You must get blockades that are approved by the City of Medford, which are available from most private construction companies.
4. Find the Special Event Permit online at www.ci.medford.or.us or contact the City Manager's Office at (541) 774-2000 and they can fax or mail you a copy. You may also stop by their office at the City Hall located at 411 West 8th Street, Room 310.
5. Get signatures and info from all residents directly affected by street closure and all surrounding residents affected by noise and rerouted traffic.
6. Take the Special Event Permit and the list of signatures to the City Managers Office at least 2 weeks, 3 months, or 6 months in advance, depending on the size of your event (refer to the Special Event Permit for size guidelines). Once the permit is approved, you must come into the City Managers office for final signatures.
7. Check with local businesses to see if they would be willing to donate food or prizes in trade for advertising at your block party and call Lynette O'Neal at (541) 774-2089 for Neighborhood Improvement Grant opportunities.
8. Send out invitations to your neighbors 2-3 weeks in advance and ask for an RSVP by a certain date.
9. When people call to RSVP, assign them to bring an item.
10. Plan your activities and schedule. Remember to plan things for both kids and adults and don't get too strict on an activity schedule.
11. Put flyers out in the neighborhood 1-2 weeks in advance. However, please do not post the notices on public property.
12. Send reminders or hang door tags a few days before the event with the location, time, and item they agreed to bring. Also give general reminders to those who have not responded to the invitation.

Helpful hints:

- Plan your block party in a communal and comfortable area. Remember to find shady areas or get canopies if you are planning the party during the spring or summer.
- Invitations can be mailed or hand delivered. Postcards are an easy and less expensive way to mail information.
- Don't forget that English is not everyone's main language. Circulate invitations, flyers, and reminders in the other languages used in your area.
- Have people wear nametags. It makes it much easier to remember names and get to know each other.
- Circulate a sign up sheet so you know who came and can be prepared for your next block party or neighborhood event.
- Fire fighters and police officers are great visitors for your block party. Kids love to climb on the fire trucks and you can open up communication between the officers and the community members. Contact them a month or more in advance.
- Allow several activities to go on at once and be willing to quit things that aren't working.
- Make plans for bathrooms: will you rent porta-potties or have everyone use their own?
- Make a plan in case of rain or bad weather. Set up a cover, make arrangements to move into garages, or change it to another day.
- Plan lighting if you plan to have your block party last after dark.
- Be sure to be aware of all required permits and regulations, including noise regulations, 20' emergency access requirements, and alcohol laws. The City of Medford usually limits noise to 50 feet and length until 10PM but there can be additional conditions and exemptions by the City departments. You can be asked to be quiet or end the party if there are complaints. The City of Medford encourages there to be no alcohol at community events but you are allowed to have alcohol in your own home.
- Remember drinks, plates, cups, utensils, chairs and tables need to be planned. Each person can bring their own or these can be part of the RSVP assignments or the block party committee setup.
- Keep all food at the safe temperatures and use proper food handling techniques. Get more information at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/foodsafety/docs/tempres2.pdf>

- Remember that not everyone is required to participate and be sure respect the people who are not involved.
- Decrease trash by having people bring their own reusable utensils and have both garbage and recycling bins readily available.
- Plan a cleanup crew and make sure to plan what to do with the trash and recycling after the party is over.

Activity Ideas:

- Watermelon, pudding, or jello eating contest (try it with no hands!)
- Water activities: sprinklers, water balloons, or a Slip-N-Slide, for example
- Visits from firefighters or police, with tours of the fire truck or police car
- Brief telling of the neighborhood history – (this works best in older, more established neighborhoods) – include pictures of different time periods
- Neighborhood trivia game
- Music or talent show (make sure to request amplification on the Special Event Permit Request, if needed)
- Hula-hoop, jump rope or limbo contests
- Relay racing – egg on a spoon, burlap sack race or three legged race
- Games such as horseshoes or beanbag toss
- Face painting or temporary tattoos
- Sidewalk chalk
- Cake walk
- Card games, dominos, or bingo
- Piñatas
- “Lawn sports” such as badminton, whiffle ball, volleyball, croquet, or Frisbee
- Bicycle decorating and parade
- Party hat decorating
- Cookie decorating
- Pet show
- Paper airplane contest
- Guess the number of skittles or pennies in a jar, winner wins the jar
- Bubble blowing
- Tie-dye shirts
- People bingo
- Raffle prizes
- Jump house