

Event Planner

Months of spreadsheets and contracts, then three days where everything happens at once.

TYPICAL PAY

\$61,160

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$37k to \$102k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Hotels, convention centers,
companies, agencies, self-emplo...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Run something: a fundraiser, a prom committee, a tournament, a school show. That is a portfolio, and it is what interviewers ask about.
- 2 Hospitality or event program** 2 to 4 years
A two-year certificate or associate degree, or a four-year hospitality degree. Austin Community College in Texas runs a hospitality and meeting and event planning program; the University of Nevada, Las Vegas runs a four-year hospitality degree with an event design conce...
- 3 Work events while you study** During school
Catering, banquets, venue staff, festival crew. Bad shifts, but it teaches you how a room actually gets turned over in 20 minutes.
- 4 Coordinator job** 2 to 4 years
Your first title will be coordinator or assistant. You will chase contracts, count chairs and build spreadsheets.
- 5 Certification** After 3 or more years
Once you have the experience, the Certified Meeting Professional credential is what employers look for on a promotion.

Pros and cons

- + Fast growing field with jobs in every city
- + You can start with a two-year certificate or no degree at all
- + Something finished and visible at the end of every project
- Starting pay is low for the hours you work
- Nights, weekends and travel are the job, not overtime
- One supplier failure and the whole thing is publicly your fault

Optional boosts

Corporate meetings. Associations and conferences. Trade shows. Weddings and social events.

Good to know

The industry credential is older than most planners

The Certified Meeting Professional credential launched in 1985 and is still the main qualification employers ask for. You cannot take it fresh out of school: it requires documented professional experience first.

The scary clause is called attrition

Hotel contracts usually promise a block of rooms. If your guests do not book enough of them, the client pays for the empty ones anyway. Negotiating that number is one of the most valuable things an experi...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners (13-1121.00)
Events Industry Council: the Certified Meeting Professional credential
University of Nevada, Las Vegas: hospitality management degree
Austin Community College: hospitality, meeting and event planning programs

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/event-planner>



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