Contract Spring Gala Event Planner

Natick Service Council

Reports to: Senior Director of Advancement
Position: Contract (6 months), part-time, $10,000-$12,000 flat fee commensurate with experience
Contract period: November 2026-May 2027
Location: Hybrid; office is located in Natick, MA
Event: Natick Service Council Annual Spring Gala

Position Summary

Natick Service Council (NSC) is seeking an experienced, highly organized Contract Event Planner to lead the planning and execution of its annual Spring Gala. The Gala, taking place on April 2, 2027, will host more than 300 guests and has a fundraising goal of $200,000. The event includes a cocktail reception, sit down dinner, speaking program, silent auction, live auction, and paddle raise. This role will manage the event from initial planning through post-event follow-up, working closely with NSC staff, leadership, Board members, committees, volunteers, vendors, sponsors, donors, and guests.

Time Commitment & Availability

- This is a part-time contract position running from November 2026 through May 2027, with the majority of work occurring between January and April 2027.
- The contractor should anticipate an average commitment of 8-12 hours per week during the planning period, increasing to 15-20 hours per week in the final 6-8 weeks leading up to the Gala and immediately after (NSC estimates these hours but based on individual skills and experience it could be less or more)
- The weeks immediately preceding the Gala will require a higher level of availability to finalize guests lists, auction items, event materials, vendor details, seating, scripts, staffing, and other event logistics.
- The week of the Gala will require substantial availability, possibly including evenings. The contractor is expected to be present as event lead at Gala on April 2, 2027, including event setup and breakdown.
- The contractor will work closely with the Senior Director of Advancement and NSC staff and should maintain regular communication and availability during standard business hours throughout the contract period.

- Following the Gala, approximately 5-10 hours per week may be needed in April and May to complete auction fulfillment, acknowledgements, data reconciliation, outstanding payments, follow-up, and the post-event debrief.
- Because event planning needs can fluctuate, the contractor must be able to adjust their schedule and respond to time-sensitive issues as the event approaches.

Key Responsibilities

Event Planning & Logistics

- Own the overall Gala planning timeline, calendar, budget, task management, and delegation.
- Manage all event logistics including all vendor communications: venue (catering and bartending), florist, signage, AV, auctioneer, printer, and more.
- Design (or work with designer on) event materials, including save the dates, invitations, fliers, and event day collateral (programs, signage).
- Develop the event program, speakers, scripts, program materials, slide shows, and event run-of-show/flow.
- Efficiently collect guest names and meal selections and ensure accurate database entry.
- Assign event day staffing and volunteer jobs; conduct registration table training in advance of event.
- Manage team of volunteers in event-day preparation, including organizing auction items, preparing name tags, and coordinating other event materials.
- Manage and track expenses to ensure purchases align with budget.
- Coordinate event-day setup, decor, staffing, vendor logistics, and breakdown.

Committees, Volunteers & Auctions

- Work closely with volunteer Event Co-Chairs, Host Committee, and Planning Committee.
- Conduct monthly meetings with Planning Committee to ensure tasks are on track and deadlines being met.
- Oversee auction procurement process, carried out by volunteers.
- Coordinate collection, tracking, descriptions, display, and fulfillment of silent and live auction items with assistance from Planning Committee volunteers.
- Delegate assignments and ensure committees and volunteers stay on track.

Sponsorships & Fundraising

- Support prospecting and outreach to new Gala sponsors.

- Coordinate sponsor benefits and recognition across communication channels.
- Work with NSC staff, Board, and committees to expand Gala attendance and fundraising.
- Oversee office assistant's transfer of donor and donation data from Auctria to Salesforce.

Communications

- Coordinate with Communications to ensure timely event promotion and event day coverage; social media, website, publications, media, municipal calendars, etc.
- Ensure fulfilled recognition of sponsors, donors, and in-kind donors.
- Expand awareness of the Gala to new audiences and community networks.
- Manage and update online event campaign and webpage.

Post-Event

- Produce donor, sponsor, and in-kind acknowledgement letters.
- Ensure auction fulfillment and outstanding event follow-up are completed.
- Verify that Gala-related information is accurately entered and updated in Salesforce.
- Lead a post-event debrief and document recommendations for future Galas.

Qualifications

- Experience planning and executing fundraising or other large-scale events.
- Exceptional organizational and project management skills.
- Experience with budget management, expense tracking, and maintaining event costs within established budgets.
- Strong communication, relationship-building, and delegation skills.
- Ability to manage multiple deadlines and details while remaining flexible and solutions-oriented.
- Experience with nonprofit fundraising, auctions, sponsorships, and/or volunteer management preferred.
- Experience with Salesforce or other CRM systems a plus.
- Availability for evening/weekend work surrounding the Gala.

To apply, please send your resume to Sarah Wong at swong@natickservicecouncil.org.