Best Practices Checklist for Virtual Programs

1. Get Organized

- ☐ **Determine the purposes of your program and what you need to do to accomplish them**
  - ☐ Revisit the outcomes for the program as a starting point for planning and consideration
  - ☐ Try to avoid planning "the same thing but online" – inherently virtual programs will look, feel and operate differently
    - For example, if you regularly host an awards ceremony in-person, consider splitting it up over multiple days utilizing prepared videos and encouraging social media engagement as opposed to just hosting it via a Zoom call
  - ☐ Set your program apart by offering something unique and specific to CU Boulder students
  - ☐ Prior to implementing the program, ensure a similar program is not already in existence. When possible, look to collaborate vs. duplicate.
  - ☐ Create a detailed agenda and ensure attendees understand the agenda and various outcomes at the beginning of the program
  - ☐ Pre-determine how to accurately track the number of attendees or individuals who engage with the program and prepare to share that information with the Division
- ☐ **Consider various delivery methods**
  - A live, remote event scheduled for a specific time (opt for a live event over a pre-recorded one so that participants have an opportunity to engage)
  - A "grab and go" event where participants pick up items and then tune in for further instruction/engagement
  - An interactive, perhaps multi-day campaign where participants are encouraged to post items and engage with others throughout the given timeframe
- ☐ **Encourage engagement**
  - ☐ The host should be upbeat and enthusiastic to pull attendees in from the beginning
  - ☐ Find creative ways to incentivize attendance and participation throughout the duration of the program
  - ☐ Have a [virtual icebreaker](#) or pre-prepared questions to facilitate conversation
  - ☐ Encourage attendees to turn on their video and remind them to mute themselves when not speaking
  - ☐ At the conclusion, clearly lay out any deliverables and next steps

2. Determine the best platform for your needs

- [Zoom](#)
- [Google Hangouts](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Twitch](#)
- Social Media (e.g., [Facebook Live](#), [Instagram Live](#))

3. Ensure platform accessibility

- ☐ Distribute any pertinent materials to attendees in advance
- ☐ When needed, create pauses during and between activities to ensure all attendees are caught up
- ☐ If demo-ing something on a shared screen, be sure to specifically identify what you are clicking on
- ☐ Ensure captioning is enabled for attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing
- ☐ For additional information, guidance and consultation, review Disability Services [Accommodation Resources for Remote Learning](#)

4. Market the program to your targeted audience

- ☐ **Student Affairs departments should work with their SA Communication liaison to market and promote events**
- ☐ **Make sure to share all pertinent information for marketing materials**
  - ☐ How to access program
  - ☐ Day of week
  - ☐ Start and end time with time zone included
  - ☐ RSVP details (if applicable)
  - ☐ Contact information for questions
- ☐ **Determine ways to have direct outreach to your desired audience**
  - ☐ Directly invite students or groups of students with personalized messages or invitations
  - ☐ Offer incentives for attending or bringing a friend (e.g., extra points in the trivia game if you bring two virtual team members; discount code to local take out option if you are the first 10 to RSVP)
  - ☐ Work with student organizations and departments across campus to share the program at least two weeks prior to the program date
- ☐ **Utilize key student influencers**, as students are more likely to participate or attend something if they know someone else who will also be attending
- ☐ **Your marketing campaign should begin at least two weeks before the program**; consider a plan to remind interested parties two days prior to the date
- ☐ **For units within Student Affairs, submit the event using the Division's [Fall 2020 Student Engagement Opportunities form](#)**

5. Maximize technology the day of the program

- ☐ Log in 30 minutes prior to the start of the program
- ☐ Do a test run prior to going live
- ☐ Have a co-facilitator assist with running the program (e.g., monitoring the raising of hands, responding to participant chat, etc.)
  - Student staff can be great for this role and add a peer-to-peer aspect to make attendees feel more comfortable
- ☐ Consider a virtual waiting room or event password to avoid interruptions
- ☐ Make the program interactive by utilizing the platform's various chat features to create poll questions or have a Q&A
- ☐ Make attendees aware of any meeting tools that will be used during the program and demonstrate how to use them
- ☐ Have clear plans and methods for tracking attendance and engagement numbers, as well as assessing and evaluating the program based on outcomes
  - Student Affairs units should contact the Office of Assessment & Planning for additional resources

Resources

- Center for Student Involvement Virtual Meetings and Programs Resources for Student Organizations
- The Do's and Don'ts of Video Meetings
- Virtual Events Logistics: The Complete Checklist