

gratefull™

REPLICATION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

Gratefull is a free, city-wide Thanksgiving potluck that takes place at one long table in the middle of a public street. The event, formerly known as One Table, was started by Causeway in 2014 because we believe that in order to build a city that is an honest reflection of its residents, everyone should be invited to the table. Gratefull is now an annual event in Chattanooga, and has been replicated in six cities across the southeast.

Do you want to host Gratefull in your city?

You can do it! Gratefull has been hosted by nonprofits, businesses, volunteer committees, city governments, and individuals. If you are inspired to bring this event to your community, we are here to help you make it happen.

THE TEAM

Gratefull has been hosted by nonprofits, businesses, volunteer committees, city governments, and individuals. No matter what your starting point is, the team you need falls into two categories: a planning committee and day-of volunteers.

Planning Committee

The planning committee should meet several times in the months leading up to the event, and have clearly defined roles. We've included a list of our committee roles in our online guide. If you want to have a diverse group of people at your event, your committee should reflect that. Be sure that you invite people to be on it who can help you reach different communities.

Day-Of Volunteers

You will need a lot of extra hands on the day of the event. You should loosely plan to have one volunteer for every 10-20 people you expect to attend. Invite people to sign up to volunteer online through a platform like Signup. When they sign up they should choose one of three shifts: Setup (3 hours before the event), Serving (during the event), or Cleanup (up to two hours after the event). You can see a thorough list of volunteer roles in our online guide. Before the event, you should email your volunteers with a designated spot to meet at the beginning of their shift. The volunteer coordinator will greet them, and they can choose their role from a printed slip of paper.

Everything you need to know about recruiting and managing volunteers is in our Volunteer Management Guide online. We have never done a Gratefull without a volunteer coordinator to manage volunteers on the day of the event. Make sure to find your point person for this role.

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FUNDRAISING

The spirit of Gratefull requires that it is free and open to everyone. Any fundraising should be done through corporate sponsors, community partners, and optional individual donations, rather than mandatory ticket sales.

Gratefull can certainly be done with a few community partners and volunteers, but having some additional money definitely makes things easier. In our experience, the community is eager to help in any way they can. With a little work, Gratefull can not only cover costs but can be turned into a fundraiser to support an organization in your community that is doing good work year-round. In 2014, we hosted the event for \$2500 with the help of lots of volunteers and donations. Since then, our audience, our costs, and our fundraising efforts have all grown. Gratefull can scale with the needs of your event.

Note: Causeway is a 501c3 nonprofit, which impacts the way we communicate with donors. You do not have to be a nonprofit to host Gratefull, though it can be helpful to get a nonprofit partner on board if you want to be able to give people and businesses tax receipts for their donations.

Step 1: Gather Your List

Start by making a list of people in your community that you can ask to sponsor Gratefull. There is an example of our Sponsorship Management Sheet in the online guide. Make a copy of the document to use for yourself, and be sure to share it with your team so they can add their network and help you make your list as big as possible.

Restaurant Sponsors

If there is one thing you need, it's food. Reach out to local restaurants asking them to bring a large catering dish to share in exchange for a sponsorship recognition. Local churches, schools, or community centers with large kitchens could also sponsor food dishes.

In-Kind Sponsors

You can get the vast majority of the supplies or services you need donated in exchange for sponsorship. Tables and chairs, photographers, music, decorations? Ask for donations and highlight them as event sponsors.

Corporate Sponsors

Having some cash on hand is really helpful to cover some of the unforeseen costs. Get some local businesses on board as cash sponsors to help you throw the best event possible. We usually end up spending money on things like

vinyl banners, plates and utensils, breakfast for volunteers, extra food, tape, trash bags, etc.

Individual Donors

You will notice that especially after a successful first year, individual community members will want to donate to the event. In the weeks leading up to Gratefull, we launch a crowdfunding campaign to raise additional funds. You can see our past campaign as an example in our online guide.

Step 2: Make the Ask

- We use a Sponsorship Packet to make the ask to our potential sponsors. There is one in our online guide that you can print or email to your list, or make your own.
- Want to send an ask via email? We've got a template for that. Choose from the custom fundraising email templates in our online guide for whichever audience you're looking to reach. Copy and paste directly, or personalize and make them your own.

General & Cash Sponsorship Ask
 Restaurant or In-Kind Sponsorship Ask
 Local Merchants Invite & Ask

- Every year we launch a Gratefull Chattanooga Crowdfunding Campaign using the platform Classy. We encourage people to make a donation for what they would normally spend on lunch that day, or they can choose to sponsor a chair or table in memory or honor of someone. Crowdfunding is a great way to spread the word about the event while also raising money from individual donors. Check out Causeway's campaign as an example and also our great resource guide on How to Launch a Successful Crowdfunding Campaign.

Crowdfunding Language & Sponsorship Levels
 SM Crowdfunding Promotional Graphics
 Personal Network Invitation & Ask

Step 3: Keep Track of Sponsors

1. Remember to stay organized with the Sponsorship Management Sheet you started in the beginning so that

nothing falls through the cracks. As you hear back from people, mark their status on the spreadsheet.

2. When you get a YES from a sponsor – be sure to properly follow through with them. Use the templates online for following up every step of the way.

Sponsorship Invoice

After you receive a “yes” from your sponsor – immediately send them a pledge receipt, or invoice, for the donation amount.

***In-Kind Sponsorship Tax Receipt**

Make sure to ask your in-kind sponsors for the estimated value of the item(s) they are donating so you can receipt them for the correct value.

***Monetary Sponsorship Tax Receipt**

*Note: Tax receipts can only be given from a 501c3 organization. If you are not a 501c3, but are raising money on behalf of a nonprofit – make sure checks, invoices, and tax receipts are going through them.

Step 4: Promote and Recognize

It can be tricky to give all of your sponsors the recognition they deserve without making the event feel overrun with ads. We like to get creative with the ways we promote our sponsors and we encourage you to do the same.

- We recognize every sponsor on our social media platforms. You can use our template online and add your sponsors’ logos to it.
- In years past, we’ve had our sponsors’ logos custom printed on butcher paper that we use as a table runner*. You can have a designer organize your sponsors’ logos into a pattern and get it printed through Jukebox.
- Banners* listing all the sponsors are placed at the entrances, and the presenting sponsor(s) are recognized in a large banner over the table*. You can use our banner templates online. One of our sponsors every year is a

production company that donates the scaffolding for the main banner.

- If you would like to acknowledge Causeway as a sponsor of your event, that would mean a lot to us! You can download our logo in the online guide.
- Pro tip: sometimes it's a windy day, so table tents are not advised.

*More instructions on ordering the table runner and banners can be found in the supplies checklist.

Step 5: Thank Your Donors

And of course, don't forget to thank your donors, and make it special – next year when you go to ask them to support you again, they'll remember this thank you! Here are a few ways you can do that.

- Send a handwritten thank you card with a printed photo from the event.
- Send an email to all of your sponsors and donors sharing stats, quotes, and photos from the event.
- Go old school and pick up the phone to say thank you.
- Send your big sponsors/donors something special from the event – like a custom Gratefull t-shirt or apron you had made, or any other swag from the event.

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BRANDING

The Gratefull brand is free and open for anyone to use. You can use it the way that we use it, or make it your own.

Logo

You can download the logo in our online guide, and add your city's name underneath to customize it.

Fonts

The fonts that we use are open-source and free to download. There are links to download them in our online

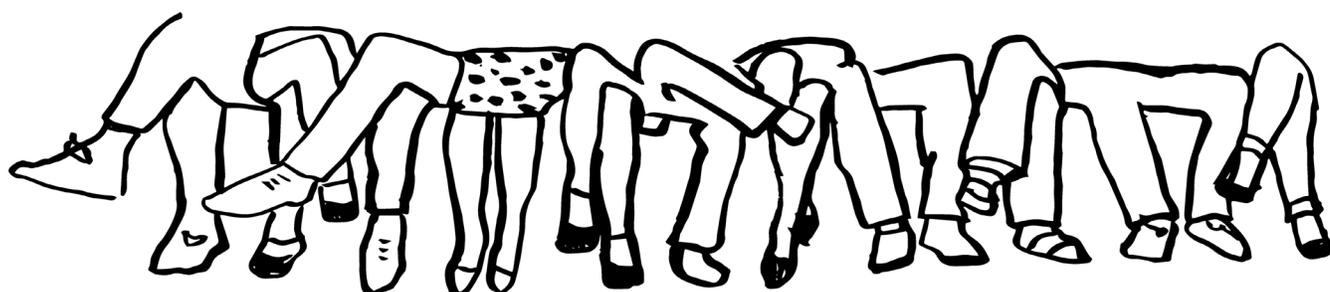
guide. You can use Recoleta for Headlines and Rubik for smaller text.

Colors

There are six brand colors we use for Gratefull. You can find their RGB, CMYK, and HEX numbers in the online guide.

Illustrations

You can also use these custom illustrations in any way that you would like. Download them in the online guide.



OUTREACH

If you build it, will they come? Yes and no. People get excited about Gratefull and it is not hard to get a crowd there. But ensuring that people from all neighborhoods, races, income levels, and backgrounds know that they are welcome is not something that happens without work and intentionality.

Because Gratefull is an annual event and people know to expect it, these days we usually start advertising on November 1st, after Halloween. But, if you are hosting Gratefull for the first time, you might want to start as early as August or September. There is an example of our Communications Plan in the online guide. There are several ways that we get the word out.

A Web Presence

There needs to be one consistent place online that people can go to get all of the information that they need. There are several options for this though. You can build a stand-alone webpage for the event, have a page dedicated to Gratefull on the website of the host organization, or simply start a Facebook event that can serve as the go-to place for information. There is no right answer, and you can choose what works for your team and your community. The Gratefull website copy in our online guide can be a good starting place.

Personal Emails

If you take one of these sections to heart, let it be this one. If there's one thing we've learned in years of community engagement work – it's that nothing can compare to a personal invitation. This does not mean sending one mass email. Have everyone on your committee reflect on who they want to be there from their social groups, write a general template, then take the time to add one personal detail to everyone that they send it to so that they know it was written especially for them.

This process can be used for people you know, and even for people you do not know personally. We recommend doing some research and writing personal emails to local businesses, faith communities, homeless shelters, young professionals groups, universities, schools, nonprofits,

social services organizations, neighborhood associations, the city government, and civic engagement clubs.

Social Media

We heavily rely on social media to get the word out about Gratefull. We usually make the announcement every year by launching a Facebook event. This can help you roughly gauge the numbers to expect, but note that in years past, the number of people who have responded that they are coming on Facebook is often half the total number we see, because we do outreach through several channels.

We've made some social media templates that you can use to help promote your event.

Here are a few things we've learned through the years:

- On the day the Facebook event launches, have everyone on your committee invite as many people as they can to help the event gain momentum. Facebook will stop allowing you to invite people after you hit 500. Make it a competition to see who can reach that point.
- Encourage the committee to post about the event in any Facebook groups that they are in since those group members will get a notification directly
- Encourage people to tag someone they want to see there
- If you choose to make your event a potluck (more on that in the logistics section) then remind people repeatedly to bring a dish to share
- We usually post a Facebook event, but not an Eventbrite because sometime that causes confusion where people think that they need a ticket to attend
- By November 1st, we are usually doing one or two posts a day about Gratefull, including posting all of the sponsorship recognition posts
- Facebook ads can be a really inexpensive, yet really targeted way to reach people. Consider investing some of your sponsorship dollars into a few ads.
- Use the hashtag #iamgratefull to be included in a national stream of images, but you should also make a local version for your event like #gratefullcha.

Traditional Media

Making traditional media appearances are a great way to reach a lot of people for FREE. You can use the Sample Press Release, and the Press Talking Points in our online guide. Nominate the most charismatic speaker from your committee and have them appear on local news stations and radio shows to spread the word.

Printed Materials and Advertising

We usually design and print (thanks to a print sponsor) posters and postcards advertising the event. While these are great to put up in local restaurants and cafes, they are really valuable to reach audiences who might not hear about the event otherwise. We usually distribute our printed materials in public parks, at the homeless shelter, the food bank, and in surrounding neighborhoods, or low income housing units who have residents that we want to make sure know they are invited to the event.

A few years in, we started buying two billboards a year to advertise Gratefull. Based on the zip code data we gathered in years past, we purchased billboards in neighborhoods that we knew we were not already reaching. This is totally optional, but if you have sponsorship money to spare, it is a great way to reach more people.

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LOGISTICS

The very first Gratefull we planned in a little over a month. It can be done. However, giving yourself a little more leeway time will make your life easier. We start our planning around mid-July. That's when we host our first committee meeting for Gratefull and try to accomplish the following:

Planning the event

- Recruit a committee and assign committee roles
- Pick a date and time for the event
- Choose the location
- Make a rain plan
- Make a budget (template online)

Secure street closure

- Apply with the city to have the street closed. There is probably a “special events and street closure” process on their website.
- Call the parking meter company to put bags over the meters the night before or early in the morning to keep people from parking there before the street is closed.
- Rent barricades for the street closure. Your city should have private barricade companies.
- Figure out the layout of the event and the line flow
- Gratefull Event Map (example online)
- Directional Signage Checklist
- Volunteer check-in station
- Information tent

To Potluck or not to Potluck

We are in the south here, y’all. The original Gratefull in Chattanooga, Tennessee, was founded as a community potluck, and still operates that way every year. We purchase the turkey and dressing (at cost, thanks to a local caterer). Local restaurants cover some other basics like mashed potatoes, rolls, green beans, mac and cheese, etc. We give individuals and businesses the option to sponsor a dish for \$50, which we then use to buy extra side dishes from minority owned or smaller restaurants in town. After that, it is up to individuals to bring a dish to share.

But we get it. Food allergies are real, and some people are just totally freaked out by the idea of eating food prepared by a stranger.

We separate the food, so the first few tables in line are full of restaurant food, followed by the last few tables that are a potluck free-for-all. Some people dive right in. Some people only take the restaurant food and avoid the rest.

It is totally up to you as the organizers to decide how you want to handle this at your local event. Maybe you only get churches, schools, and organizations with commercial kitchens to participate in the potluck. Maybe you cover the basics and invite everyone to bring a dessert. Maybe it’s open for whoever to bring whatever. The feeling of

a community meal can be achieved in many ways—it's up to you!

If you do go the potluck route, we recommend asking people to bring a dish that does not need to be heated up, in a disposable container.

Get People Talking

In our experience, a lot of people come to Gratefull because they are interested in sharing a meal with people who they might not normally interact with. Sometimes the desire is there, but striking up a conversation with a stranger can be intimidating. To break the ice we came up with a little activity. In each roll of silverware there is a colored sticker (We use all six Gratefull colors!) and a slip of paper with instructions saying to find someone who has the same color sticker as you, and ask them to take a photo with you in the photobooth. In our surveys every year 96-100% of people say that they had a conversation with someone they did not know before.

For the photobooth, we usually have a company sponsor it, and order a backdrop with their logo included. Then we use Simple Booth on an iPad. There is a small one-time fee, and the app allows people to take the photos themselves, and email or text it to themselves, while also retaining an album of all the photos taken that day.

Supplies

Depending on the size of your budget and how many people you think will show up – the supplies needed will vary. We've included everything we purchase for Gratefull for around 1500 - 2000 attendees. We also try to get as much as we can donated in-kind or borrowed to help us keep the cost low.

Order and gather all the supplies you need for the event

- There is a Master Supplies and Shopping List in our online guide

Services to purchase, rent, or get donated:

- Get event insurance
- Hire event security
- Truss rental to hang banners on
- Chair and table vendor
- Porta Potty rentals (handicap accessible)
- Trash and recycling vendors
- Composting vendors (we asked a local farm)
- Get venue WIFI login information
- Find your electrical and water access for the event
- Secure music and entertainment vendor

Food and drink

- Place an order from a caterer for turkey, dressing, and gravy
- Order additional sides from catering companies, small businesses, or minority owned restaurants. Place the orders about one week out.
- Post to Facebook details on bringing potluck dishes
- Send instructions and map to the restaurant sponsors for day-of delivery (see the template online)

Manage your team day-of and pull it off

- You'll need a team of people that can manage groups of volunteers throughout the day (we call them our team leads). For Causeway, we had staff to help with this – but if you don't have a staff you may want to ask your committee members to play this role, or recruit some friends and family that can help on the day of. There's a list of day-of volunteer lead roles that you'll need to have covered in the online guide. We usually have a team huddle the week before the event and run through the day using the Run of Show just so everyone knows what's expected of them.
- The Run of Show (template online) is our playbook for the day and helps our team know exactly where they need to be and when they need to be there. It keeps everyone on track! We print off a copy for each of our staff leads to have with them throughout the day. Each team member's copy has their individual tasks

highlighted. If you want the event to go off without a hitch – this is the winning formula

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You can do this!

As of November 2019, six other cities have replicated Gratefull using this guide. Everything you need is right here. We wish you luck, and we are so thankful that you want to bring your city together in this way.