

EST.  *2010*

DETROIT SOUP

HOW TO SOUP

A guide to starting and sustaining community micro-granting dinners

Sarah Craft
October, 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

START A LOCAL SOUP

1. Build a Board
2. Outline Vision, Goals & Values
3. Divide Board Roles and Responsibilities
4. Create a Timeline
5. Outreach
6. Event Logistics
7. Have Fun & Document Your Work
8. Debrief & Grow
9. Sustain

RESOURCES

1. Board Meeting Schedule & Discussion Topics
2. Board Roles
3. SOUP Timeline
4. Dinner Roles
5. Dinner Spreadsheet
6. Dinner Materials
7. Dinner Agenda
8. Creative Ideas from Detroit SOUP Dinners

Dear reader,

For years SOUP and SOUP-like dinners have been popping up across the country as a way to bring people together, build relationships, share resources and raise money for local projects.

Detroit SOUP started in February of 2010 by a small group of female artists based in the Mexicantown neighborhood. The dinner started as a recreation of an idea out of Chicago, InCUBATE. The first dinner was poorly planned on a Superbowl Sunday and had about 20 people in attendance. But the dinner only grew from there.

From that first day through October of 2013, Detroit SOUP has facilitated the process of Detroiters raising \$54,083.99 for 53 community projects. Just in 2013, we have helped eight Detroit communities start their own neighborhood SOUPs and have seen more than 3,500 people at dinners across the city. We are so excited to continue this work and empower others to do the same.

I hope this guide will help you get started and continue your work for years to come. It's not perfect, but growth should be ever-changing. I have put this together based on my experiences in less than one year of working with residents from eight different communities start SOUP dinners of their own. I would love to hear your comments, feedback and experiences as you get started in your own community.

Sarah Craft
Detroit SOUP

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS SOUP?



Photo by Dave Lewinski

Detroit SOUP is a community potluck where residents learn about to creative projects happening in Detroit and vote on which project to fund through donations accepted at the door. SOUP brings together neighbors, supports the democratic process, features local artists, acts as a platform to share resources and supports projects that benefit the community.

HOW IT WORKS

- Residents and supporters make a suggested donation of \$5 at monthly Detroit-wide SOUP dinners
- Four pre-selected proposals working on projects that benefit the neighborhood (anything from filling a pothole to starting a community business) present their proposals
- Over a potluck-style dinner, attendees cast their vote for the project they want to help fund
- The project with the most votes goes home with all of the money raised from the evening
- Winners come back to a future SOUP to tell the audience how their project went, how they used the money and what impact the project had on the community.

To keep art and creativity active in our dinners, we always feature a local artist to share their work. We've featured painters, photographers, performers, fashion designers, singers, musicians, DJs, storytellers, performance poets and more.

OUR RULES

Detroit SOUP only has two rules:

- Projects must benefit the city of Detroit
- Presenters can't use technology in their presentation

That's it.

We try to be flexible and try new things, even if that means we make (and learn from) mistakes along the way. SOUP is fun, creative and an unusual way for people to engage. We try not to over think it.

GOALS & VALUES

The goal of Detroit SOUP is to offer a safe space where people can gather and share a meal. SOUP strives to encourage conversation, relationship building and resource sharing while supporting creative community projects in Detroit. We value democracy, community, collaboration, creativity and action.

But this is just what we do.

The beauty of each SOUP is that they're all different. Each community decides what to focus on and what to celebrate. At the end of the day, someone always goes home with an envelop of money, but SOUP is so much more than that. It's up to you and your community to decide how SOUP can prosper in your community.

The information to follow is meant to help you get started in your own community. There is a packet of resources at the end of the document you can use as templates or just to inspire your own ideas. Feel free to contact us for more information, to talk about your idea or to tell us how your SOUP is going! Email us at info@detroit soup.com.

START A LOCAL SOUP



Photo by Dave Lewinski

1. BUILD A BOARD

Building a strong, diverse board is key to hosting a quality neighborhood dinner. Each person will bring their unique perspective and be able to do outreach in their own personal community contacts. The more diverse the better! Try to find members who can represent various demographics of the community: young and old, different social and ethnic groups, nonprofit organizations, church groups, business leaders, block club members, artists and others. Partnering with neighborhood organizations can be helpful to gain additional resources (for example, maybe a local organization has chairs or space you can use for free).

It's important everyone on the board understands how SOUP works. Unfortunately there isn't a quick 30-second elevator speech you can use. Give examples of past winners and highlight the values of democracy, community, collaboration, creativity and action. If possible, try to attend a SOUP dinner as a board so everyone understands the process and can creatively apply the dinner to your own community.

THE COMMITMENT

Neighborhood boards should consist of 5 - 10 community residents who can invest about 10 hours of work for each quarterly SOUP dinner. It usually takes between 5-6 board meetings to carryout the first dinner. After the first one is complete, boards will need to meet about 3-4 times between dinners. Individuals will need to commit to doing work on their own and commit to doing good outreach and promotion for the event. See Resource 1 for more information on suggested meeting schedules and topics.

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Because the board should represent a diverse group of people who practice different cultures and come from different experiences, do your best to get to know each other. Do icebreakers everyone can participate in, have conversations, take time to appreciate each perspective and past experience. This takes a skilled facilitator so see if anyone on the board has practice facilitating meetings!

2. OUTLINE VISION, GOALS & VALUES

Before the board begins planning, it's important for everyone to share the same vision, goals and values for the dinner. You can use this as a baseline for making decisions. I recommend doing this activity as a group in a brainstorm session, with someone taking notes on a big board so everyone can see. After everyone gets out the ideas, one person should try to craft clear vision, goals and values for the group to approve at the next meeting.

VISION

Very literally, what do people see when they imagine the community SOUP dinner?

GOALS

What is the point of doing SOUP? Why are you all dedicating so much time to this in the first place? What do you want to accomplish?

Of course a goal is to raise money for local projects, but the board will likely come up with other goals, including bringing people together, featuring local artists, strengthening community, etc.

VALUES

What is important to the group? What values will be the basis of decision-making? You can highlight some of Detroit SOUP's values to get people thinking, but the board will come up with a list of values to honor as they carry-out dinners.

3. DIVIDE BOARD ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Being on the SOUP board shouldn't take a ton of work. The idea is that everyone pitches in and makes quarterly SOUPs happen with only a small amount of effort. To do this most efficiently, it's best to divide up roles so each person is responsible for one specific task. Additionally, if each person has a specific role, they will feel more valued as a board member and take more ownership in the project.

Below are responsibilities that have worked well at boards in Detroit neighborhoods. Ask the board what's missing and see what each member wants to do! See resource 2 for recommendations on how to divide up board roles.

4. CREATE A TIMELINE

You've created a strong board that has agreed on dinner goals, you've divided up responsibilities, now it's time to find a great location, set the date and get going!

We recommend allowing the board at least two months to gather and begin the planning process. Set a flexible schedule, goals and timeframes to keep the group on track but be open to changes. It's easiest to start with a dinner date and work backwards. See Resource 3 to help you think about the timeline.



Photo by Dave Lewinski

5. OUTREACH

The most important aspect to the dinner is PEOPLE! People need to learn about SOUP and feel compelled to come. Unfortunately there isn't a quick 30-second elevator speech to describe the dinner. To really inform someone about what the dinner is all about, you have to take a few minutes and practice what you plan. The "How SOUP Works" section in the introduction can help you come up with talking points.

There are also two types of outreach for the dinner—you have to think about getting both proposals and audience members. To best use your board, we recommend sitting down together and taking a moment to talk about each one. The best time to have an initial outreach discussion is after you have your location secured and times set.

PROPOSAL OUTREACH

It's a challenge to get people to submit their ideas to SOUP for the first few dinners. They have no idea what it is, they have no idea what to expect. It's easiest for the board to start with people they know and build from there.

Ask each board member to think for a few minutes about someone in the community they know or have heard about that they can meet with and share information about SOUP and the proposal process. Ask each board member to say two people they're going to talk to and by when and have the secretary or board leader follow up with them after their deadline date. It may be helpful to bring a printed proposal form and talking points about SOUP.

The proposal process is easy and only requires people to fill out the following four questions:

1. What is your project?
2. How does this project benefit the _____ community? (At our Detroit-wide events we ask how it benefits the Detroit community but at our neighborhood focused dinners, we ask how the projects benefits the specific community.)
3. What is your time frame for the project and how could you report progress/completion at a future SOUP dinner?
4. How will you use money raised from SOUP?

That's it. We want it to be accessible and we want people to feel comfortable with the process. Make sure this is explained to community members as you're doing proposal outreach!

GENERAL OUTREACH

The next step is to get people to attend the dinner. To follow a similar process, have each board member think about neighbors, organizations, churches, schools, businesses, homeownership organizations, block clubs, etc. they can contact directly and talk about SOUP. It is also helpful to come up with a list of events and community meetings where board members can bring flyers and make announcements about the upcoming dinner.

Board members should also think about community calendars, newsletters, email blasts, etc. where they can promote the event. If the community has social media users, it's usually a good idea to create a Facebook page and event for the dinner and to share pictures and progress!

Have each board member list the places/people/events they will do outreach to and set a deadline for completing the tasks. The secretary and/or board leader should follow up with each board member to make sure each member is able to meet their commitment.

This isn't to make things stressful, it's to make sure good outreach is done!

After the first few dinners, the event will grow naturally and word-of-mouth goes a long way. When people attend the dinner, the board should ask people to sign in with their email and/or telephone number if they would like updates on future events. Once you start this list, the outreach gets easier and easier.

6. EVENT LOGISTICS

SETTING

Location is a really important aspect to the dinner. It has to be accessible, somewhat familiar to residents, comfortable and offer a seating arrangement you need. Detroit SOUP is held in a large building that used to be a film production studio. It's a very raw, open space with wood floors, brick and cement walls and high ceilings. Because we often get 200+ attendees at our citywide dinner, it's comfortable. We have floor seating,



Photo by Dave Lewinski

bleachers, some tables and chairs and people stand if it gets too full. Each neighborhood uses a setting that is appropriate for the community.

For example, one Detroit neighborhood is working to rejuvenate its business district so they decided to host their first dinners in an empty storefront. Another community, however, holds their dinners in a church's soup kitchen because the community is very focused on being accessible to even its lowest-income residents. Another community hosts their events in a local café – the possibilities are endless! Do what makes sense and what isn't too much work.

PRESENTERS

Each board requires project proposals to be submitted at least one week before the dinner. The board then meets to review, discuss and vote on the top four proposals they think will be best for the dinner. Boards try to select a variety of types of projects (i.e. beautification, land use, youth-focused, educational, artistic, entrepreneur-focused, etc.) to encourage creativity and to give the audience a range of projects to support.

FOOD

SOUP is a potluck so we ask attendees to bring a favorite dish to share. Often it's soup and salad, but we aren't restrictive! It's helpful to encourage people to sign up with the board's food chair so they can keep track of about how much food to expect. On the sign-in sheet at the front door, it's useful to ask people to check a box if they're interested in bringing food in the future and the board's food chair can follow up with people accordingly.

Food-makers also get a chance to speak for up to 60 seconds (be strict on time! It gets long if there are a lot of people bringing food!) about the food they brought and anything else they want to share. This is when people can make announcements about an event,

a new business or organization in exchange for food. This is useful so attendees don't try to turn SOUP into a platform for announcements.

Detroit SOUP sometimes has plenty of food, and sometimes there's not enough to go around. We never know exactly how many people are coming to the dinner (we don't do RSVPs) and it can be tricky to get people to commit to bring something. Food is a gesture. It's a free (all of the money donated at the door goes to the winner) meal, so hopefully people don't come too hungry in case there isn't enough!

We also reach out to local restaurants and cafes to see if they're interested in donating food to the dinner and promoting their business. For example, at every SOUP dinner, a local bakery donates day-old bread to share at the dinner. Since we don't eat until after the presentations, it's nice to have a chunk of bread to snack on. If we have a low response of people volunteering to bring food, we have relationships with local restaurants that can sometimes donate (or heavily discount) a big pot of soup to share with the dinner.

MATERIALS

Even if you're working within a very tight budget, there are a few items you'll need to bring to SOUP. Some items may be supplied by the venue (table and chairs), some you may be able to get donated (soup bowls and spoons) and others are optional materials to help add to the atmosphere. See Resource 6 for a list of materials you may want to bring to the dinner.

RESOURCE BOARD

SOUP does a lot more than raising money for a community project—it's all about the connections. Each presenter should go home with support, ideas, volunteers and community resources to carry out their project, whether or not they get the most votes. To help formalize this idea, we started a sticky note resource board at all of our dinners. We write the title of each project on a dry-erase board and leave a few sticky notes and pens at each table. If attendees have an idea or resource to share, they can write it and contact information on a sticky note and leave it for the presenter. At the end of the night, each presenter goes home with a stack of stickies to help them carry out their project.

DINNER ROLES

To make the event run smoothly, it's best to assign board leaders to specific roles during the evening. Some roles align with regular board roles, but there are a few other ones to consider. See Resource 4 for a list of recommended dinner roles board members and volunteers can fill.

AGENDA

Detroit SOUP usually takes about three hours or less and we follow a general timeline:

- Doors at 6:00 p.m. – People arrive, talk, get something to drink, people bringing food set up the food table and relax. We play music and try to create a fun, comfortable environment.
- Program starts at 7:00 – We allow a full hour for people to arrive and try to start the program promptly at 7. We talk about what SOUP is, what people should expect from the evening and what we hope people leave with. We then invite



Photo by Dave Lewinski

- presenters up one at a time to talk about their project. We only allow a four-minute presentation and ask them to touch on each question they described in their proposal. We allow speakers to take four questions from the audience but then encourage people to connect with the presenter over dinner to ask more questions or share ideas.
- Dinner and voting start before 8:00 – After the presentations are finished, we invite everyone who brought food to the front of the room to talk about what they brought and to make their announcement. We try to keep people to speak in 60 seconds or less so people can eat! This is also when we encourage people to talk, use the resource board and vote!
- Winner is announced by 9:00 – When the food line is down, we give people a five-minute warning and remind them to cast their vote. Board members should count up money raised from the door donations and tally up the votes. Before we announce the winner, we often use this time to give the artist feature a chance to perform and/or talk about their work. This is usually only a 5-10 minute presentation. After the artist presents, this is usually when we invite a past winner to speak about their project and update the audience on how they used the money and what has come out of the project. This is also just a five minute presentation. Finally, we announce the winner, hand over the money and encourage everyone to help clean up!

See Resource 7 for a more detailed agenda template.

7. HAVE FUN & DOCUMENT YOUR WORK

Don't let yourself get stressed out the day-of! SOUP should be fun and full of positive energy so try to keep your mindset there. After the first event, things will become easier and easier. Keep an easygoing attitude and celebrate your work. The board should go back to their values and visions for the dinner to remind themselves why they're doing the work!

It's important to take pictures, share stories and promote the work! Keep a list of

- Past winners' projects, money raised and contact information
- The approximate number of attendees at each dinner
- Attendees (contact list and food sign-up)

It's important to celebrate your own numbers and share the stories your SOUP tells. Send out a newsletter, tell the news, announce your stats at each dinner. Celebrate hard work and success in your community!

8. DEBRIEF & GROW

After each dinner, it's important for the board to gather feedback from attendees and meet as a group to debrief the event. It's nice to break up the conversation into segments and do "SWOT" Analysis: Talk about **STRENGTHS** and **WEAKNESSES** of the dinner, **OPPORTUNITIES** you see in the future and potential **THREATS** that may prevent the board from accomplishing its goals.

From this discussion, create a to-do list to continue the things that are going well, improve the areas that have weaknesses, take on opportunities and avoid threats. Ask board members and volunteers to take on specific tasks to make sure everything gets done before the next SOUP.

9. SUSTAIN

Detroit SOUP has been going on for nearly four years. We have come up with a way to keep the event fun, effective and a great community event. Hopefully this resource will help your neighborhood dinner sustain itself and continue the work. Help board members develop skills, try to make sure no one on the board is overworked and tasks are being divided equally.

To be sustainable, the event has to be fun and beneficial. Are you meeting your board goals and vision for SOUP? Are you helping people connect? It's important to follow up and invite back past winners to see that the projects are carried out and SOUP is bringing good things to your neighborhood.

THAT'S ALL!

It may seem like a lot of work, but after the first few, the dinner really runs itself. Just remember to have fun and do good in your community. Don't get overwhelmed by this document—it's just some pointers that could be useful in your neighborhood's SOUP. Take it with a grain of salt. Each SOUP should be unique and creative and shouldn't operate with strict rules.

Detroit SOUP is very happy to be involved, as time and funding allows. We want to hear your stories and help support you in whatever way we can. Contact Program Manager Sarah Craft at sarah@detroit soup.com.

RESOURCES

The documents below may be helpful in helping you think about your own dinner. Everything is just *recommended*. Each community should host a unique dinner and do what makes the most sense for the board and neighborhood at hand.

1. Board Meeting Discussion Topics
2. Board Roles and Responsibilities
3. SOUP Timeline
4. Sample Proposal Form
5. Dinner Roles
6. Dinner Logistics Spreadsheet
7. Dinner Materials
8. Dinner Agenda
9. Creative Ideas from Neighborhood SOUPs across Detroit

1. BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE & DISCUSSION TOPICS

To make the best use of everyone's time, the board leader will need to think carefully about each meeting's agenda. Meetings should be as short as possible (max time of 90 minutes) and should be useful and fun. At the end of each meeting, review each person's commitments and set the next meeting date.

It's often a good idea to build in short, meaningful icebreakers at the beginning of each meeting. Some good get-to-know-you questions include: Describe yourself in one word. What do you bring to this group? What were you most proud of this past week? What is your favorite part of this community? It could be fun to ask a board member to come to the next meeting with a question like this to get the conversation started.

MEETING ONE

- Describe: What is SOUP: Vision, goals and values, past winners
- Discussion: How it could work in this community?
- Commitment: Are you in? Who else needs to be here?

MEETING TWO

- Brainstorm: Vision, goals and values for neighborhood SOUP (sometimes this meeting needs more attention and should take up a whole meeting on it's own. Use your best judgment.)
- Share logistical information
 - Quickly review estimated timeline (using this schedule and the timeline outlined in this resource packet)
 - Quickly review board roles - Assign if people are ready to commit, otherwise let people think about how they could be most useful and make commitments at the next meeting (outlined in this resource packet)
 - Quickly review the budget – If you have access to some funds, talk about what those are so everyone is on the same page
- Brainstorm: Possible locations, date and times
 - Commitment: Who is getting information for each location? What do they need to report back at the next meeting? (Contact person, cost, size, availability of tables and chairs, etc.)

MEETING THREE

- Review and approve: Vision, goals and values discussed at the last meeting
- Location report-back and vote
 - Set dinner logistics and proposal drop-off locations
- Set board roles (if you haven't already done so)
- Create an outreach plan
 - Commitment: Who is each board member reaching out to and by when? Who's checking in with board members? Who's printing flyers, creating social media, etc.

MEETING FOUR

- Chair check-in and new commitments:
 - Food
 - Art
 - Outreach
 - Proposals

- Dinner logistics:
 - Set dinner roles
 - Set agenda (sometimes best done in a small group)
- Try to set approximate next dinner date so you can announce it at the event

MEETING FIVE – Last Meeting Before SOUP!

- Chair check-in: Set final outreach strategy
- Proposal selection: Which four projects are going to present at the dinner? Do these projects illustrate a variety of projects?
- Room set-up: (it's best to hold this meeting at the venue SOUP is taking place) What will the room look like? Who can help with set up? What time?
- Review dinner roles

MEETING SIX – Host After Each SOUP Event

- Debrief: SWOT analysis
 - Strengths of the dinner
 - Weaknesses of the dinner
 - Opportunities to take on at future dinners
 - Threats that can get in the way of hosting SOUP
- Create task list and set commitments:
 - How will you continue strengths?
 - How will you avoid weaknesses?
 - How will you take on opportunities?
 - How will you avoid threats?
- Set a first meeting back:
 - Take a break but work backwards to set a first meeting to get ready for your next dinner.

The first dinner is the hardest to prepare for. After the board puts on the first dinner, it gets easier and easier. For the second dinner, see if you can run the SOUP in fewer meetings and make sure to follow up on commitments from the debrief session!

2. BOARD ROLES

Don't make SOUP too hard! Divide up board roles and make sure everyone feels valued and attached to the work.

BOARD LEADER

The Board Leader is the leader and facilitator of each board meeting and keeps track of the timeline and each person's responsibilities. They need to plan, build agendas and facilitate each meeting. The board leader must be a skilled facilitator and be comfortable contacting board members one-on-one to follow up on commitments and tasks.

SECRETARY

The secretary takes notes at each board meeting and work closely with the board leader to clearly highlight decisions and commitments made at each meeting. It's best if this person can email notes to the group within 48 hours to make sure everyone stays up-to-date and is prepared for each upcoming meeting.

PROPOSAL CHAIR

Having one person be the main point of contact for people submitting proposals can be very helpful, especially as the dinner date comes close. This person will check in with proposal drop-off locations and manage an online proposal submission form.

At least a week before the dinner, the board will need to decide which proposals should present at the dinner. The proposal chair should facilitate this process at the board meeting and be the main point of contact for all proposal submitters. This means:

- Notify winners they will be presenting at the dinner and what to expect
- Notify proposal submitters *not* selected to present and offer a few points of feedback, encourage them to attend the event and resubmit their proposal if they would like.

At each dinner, the proposal chair should check-in with each presenter before the program begins to make sure they know the timeframe, which order they're speaking in and to answer any last-minute questions presenters may have before they speak.

FOOD CHAIRS

SOUP is a potluck, where attendees are encouraged a dish to share. We also use this as a way to let people make a 60-second announcement in front of all attendees to promote an organization, business or upcoming community event.

To ensure enough food is present at the dinner, this role often works best with a two-person team. Food chairs are responsible for getting enough food donations for the dinner, communicating with food-makers before the event, managing the list of food-maker sign-up sheet from each event and helping set up and manage food table during the dinner.

ARTIST CHAIR

To promote art and creativity, the artist chair is responsible for securing an artist feature for each SOUP. This person should also be responsible for making sure there is music (even just plugging in an iPod is fine!) when people come in and during the dinner (unless this is part of the artist performance).

OUTREACH TEAM

Each member of the board should do individual outreach for the dinner, but there should be a few members dedicated to organizing and managing local outreach. At a planning meeting before the dinner, the outreach team should facilitate a brainstorm of local organizations, businesses, churches, events, etc. board members can reach out to. Each member should commit to doing outreach to a few organizations on the list and the outreach team will manage these commitments.

The outreach team should be responsible for making and printing a SOUP flyer and creating a social media page to promote the event.

At each dinner, the outreach team should collect a sign-in list of emails to notify attendees of future SOUP dinner.

TREASURER

Even if you have just a small amount of money to work with, it's important that someone is keeping track of money raised and money spent at each dinner. This person should also record how much money is handed off to the winner of each SOUP so you can document your progress.

It's very possible to organize a SOUP dinner with little to no budget. Detroit SOUP operated for years by just skimming the top of drink donations to cover the minimal costs of printing proposal packets and other expenses. Each board member should be aware of the budget they're working within and the group should decide how to spend funds.

3. SOUP TIMELINE

It's important to set an estimated timeline with the board to keep everything on track. Be flexible, but it's useful to value commitments and group expectations. Below is roughly the timeline Detroit neighborhoods use to carryout successful SOUP dinners.

ABOUT TWO MONTHS BEFORE SOUP:

- Set a date and location for the dinner
- Set board member roles
- Estimate a number of attendees
- Set online and physical proposal drop-off locations
- Initial outreach: Save the date and call for proposals
 - To community members through newsletters, flyers, email blasts, events, word-of-mouth, etc.
 - On social media and website
 - Create a flyer with all of the information to send out electronically and to promote physically
- After the first dinner, check in with past winner and confirm their attendance to give a 4-minute progress report on their project

A MONTH BEFORE SOUP:

- Begin to secure an artist feature
- Begin to secure food-makers, based on the estimated number of attendees

TWO – THREE WEEKS BEFORE SOUP:

- Secure artist
- Secure food-makers
- Big push for outreach and proposals:
 - Community event/speaking engagements to promote the dinner
 - Email and newsletter outreach to community residents and SOUP supporters
 - Social media - Post on the Facebook page regularly, announcing information (artist feature, venue, posting pictures of prep work)
 - Flyer residents and popular community locations
- Begin to secure volunteers and board roles for the dinner

ONE – TWO WEEKS BEFORE SOUP:

- Heavy promotion and outreach for attendance
- Board select the evening's presenters and notify all parties and encourage attendance
- Set the evening's agenda
- Confirm food-makers
- Confirm artist
- Confirm board member roles and responsibilities
- Arrange for dinner materials

SOUP DAY:

- Set up the room
- Put a sign out front
- Position volunteers and board members, review responsibilities
- HAVE FUN!

4. DINNER ROLES

The SOUP event should be fun and easy. It's easiest to assign board members and any volunteers into specific roles so everyone has a clear task and expectations for the evening. Here are a few positions Detroit SOUP neighborhoods have found useful:

1. **Set-Up Team** – A group of people who can meet at least an hour before the doors open to set up tables, arrange chairs, prepare food table and speaking area, decorations, etc.
2. **Door** – A team of two people to stand at the door, greet diners and accept donations as they enter the space. These people should be friendly and be able to answer questions about the event.
3. **Bar** – Offering drinks for a donation can be another way to raise money for presenters or an easy way to raise a small amount of money to help cover costs of the dinner. Depending on the space and the audience, you can offer water, coffee, tea, beer and wine for a cash donation. This person (or people) is responsible for managing the bar area and keeping track of the money.
4. **Food Table** – As attendees come in with their potluck meals, the person assigned to the food table will manage the table, thank the volunteer for their donation, ensure there is a sign for each dish and a serving utensil. At dinner, this person is responsible for making sure the food table remains well-stocked and relatively clean. The board's Food Chair is often the best person for this role.
5. **Proposal** – This person is responsible for checking in with evening presenters as they arrive. Each presenter should understand the evening's agenda, their responsibilities as a presenter, which order they're speaking and any other logistical information.
6. **MC** – The MC is a very important role. This person should be a confident speaker, understand how to control the room's energy and should be comfortable explaining and talking about SOUP values and history. The MC (can also work well as a two-person team) facilitates the evening, tries to stay within the recommended agenda and supports a fun, community-based environment.
7. **Timer** – To make sure each presenter only uses about four minutes during their presentation, have a timer sit in the front row and give the presenter a one-minute warning.
8. **Floater** – If possible, it's helpful to have a few people assigned to mingle with guests, encourage conversation and be prepared to step in and support or replace other positions.
9. **Clean-Up Team** – It's important to encourage all SOUP attendees to help with cleaning up the space (the MC should direct where to put trash, tables, chairs, etc.) but assign board members to stay after and make sure the venue is left clean and all SOUP supplies are well organized.

5. DINNER SPREADSHEET

To help the board keep track of evening logistics, it can be helpful to use this evening spreadsheet to ensure all roles are filled before SOUP.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ATTENDEES:		
FOOD-MAKERS		
Name	Email/Phone	What they're bringing
ARTIST FEATURE		
Name	Email/Phone	Type of Art
PROPOSAL PRESENTERS		
Project Name & Contact	Email/Phone	Confirmed Attendance?
PAST WINNER REPORT		
Project Name & Contact	Email/Phone	Confirmed Attendance?
DINNER ROLES		
Set-Up		
Door		
Bar		
Food Table		
Proposals		
MC		
Timer		
Floater		
Clean-Up		
DINNER MATERIALS		
Tables & Chairs		
Proposal packets		
Ballots		
Voting Box		
Microphone and Speakers		
Tablecloths		
Trash Cans		
Napkins		
Bowls		
Sorks		
Cups		
Drinks		
Etc.		

6. DINNER MATERIALS

It's important to bring a few items to the dinner, even if your SOUP is working within a tight budget. Here are some ideas of materials you'll want to have available:

THE BASICS

- Bowls
- Sporks
- Napkins and/or paper towel
- Trash cans and bags
- Cups and/or drinks
- Extra serving utensils
- Tables and chairs (*remember, Detroit SOUP has a lot mixed use seating: floor, bleacher, chairs and lots of people standing if it gets too full. You want to have your audience *slightly* uncomfortable—get them to move around and talk!)
- Voting mechanism (ballots and voting box, marbles and jars, whatever you can do!)
- Sticky notes
- Pens
- Resource board
- Sign-in sheets
- Proposal packets (with each proposal as it was submitted and the evening's agenda— But don't worry, you don't need enough for everyone! Encourage people to share and talk by saving paper and printing only a few packets for each table)
- Sign for the front (even if it's just a piece of paper posted to the door!)

EXTRA MILE

- Soup warmers
- Table cloths
- Music and speakers
- Centerpieces (candles, flowers, something creative)
- Creative lighting and room decorations (Christmas lights, art, a mural)
- Rugs for floor-sitters
- A creative sign for the front
- A nice voting box and/or booth

7. DINNER AGENDA

Here is the basic agenda Detroit SOUP and neighborhood dinners use to keep things moving and to keep the audience engaged. Make changes to fit your own community, but here is a good outline to start with:

6:00 DOORS

All board members and volunteers in place, make sure floaters are mingling and encouraging people to talk and explore. Turn on music (or ask your artist performer to start playing), dim the lights.... This is it!

6:55 FIVE-MINUTE WARNING

MC remind folks to use the bathroom, get something to drink and then get in their seats.

Detroit SOUP and most neighborhood dinners give a whole hour for people to arrive. In this first hour we try to create a comfortable environment and encourage people to get to know each other.

7:00 PROGRAM BEGINS

WELCOME: The MC welcomes the audience and gets things started! In about five minutes discuss:

- What is SOUP, brief history and why in this community?
- Values and goals of the neighborhood SOUP
- Describe sticky note board
- Review tonight's agenda, how SOUP works

Keep it brief, fun and exciting! If the MC is excited, the audience will be!

PRESENTATION #1: Invite the first presenter up, give four minutes to speak, MC asks for four questions from the audience

- Remind audience to get more information on this project over dinner.
- Remind audience to use the resource board to share ideas or resources with the presenter.

PRESENTATION #2: Invite the second presenter up, give four minutes to speak, MC asks for four questions from the audience

- Remind audience to get more information on this project over dinner.
- Remind audience to use the resource board to share ideas or resources with the presenter.

PRESENTATION #3: Invite the third presenter up, give four minutes to speak, MC asks for four questions from the audience

- Remind audience to get more information on this project over dinner.
- Remind audience to use the resource board to share ideas or resources with the presenter.

PRESENTATION #4: Invite the first presenter up, give four minutes to speak, MC asks for four questions from the audience

- Remind audience to get more information on this project over dinner.
- Remind audience to use the resource board to share ideas or resources with the presenter.

AROUND 7:30 PRESENTATION OF THE FOOD

MC describes that SOUP is a potluck dinner and we need people to bring food! Remind attendees to sign up in the front of the room to bring food next time.

- Highlight that this is also a way to announce a community event, business or organization in front of the group.
- Invite food-makers to the front, allow up to 60-seconds per person to talk about what they brought and to make an announcement.
- MC describes the flow of the food table, where trash cans are, bathrooms, etc
- Remind people to talk to the presenters, each other and to VOTE on which project they like the best. Make sure everyone knows where the voting box is and how to cast their vote!

ABOUT 7:45 DINNER

Put on music and give people a good amount of time to eat, talk and vote. Keep track of needs at the food table!

After the food line goes down, remind folks to cast their votes! The board members at the door and bar should be organizing their donations and combine the total to give to the winner.

When it seems like everyone has done so, select a few board members to count the ballots and determine a winner.

AROUND 8:30 ARTIST FEATURE

The MC should bring everyone back and quiet in their seats and introduce the artist feature. Depending on what the art is, this can be their time to share or just talk about their work. They should only use about five minutes while board members finish up the tally for winner.

8:45ISH PAST SOUP WINNER REPORT

After your first dinner, of course, invite the last SOUP winner to speak for about 5 minutes about how their project is going, how they used the money from SOUP and to share stories about their successes and challenges in the past few months.

BY 9:00 ANNOUNCE THE WINNER

Thank everyone for being part of SOUP, highlight the importance of each person in the room

- Recognize board members and volunteers for their work, thank the venue for using their space
- Announce when the next dinner will be and how to stay updated—sign up at the door, Facebook, website, email, etc.
- ANNOUNCE THE WINNER AND DOLLAR AMOUNT- Invite them to the front to accept the money and publicly ask them if they will come back to report on their project at the next event.

CLEAN UP

Ask everyone to help! Tell people where to put tables, chairs, tablecloths, paper products, pens, etc!

10. CREATIVE IDEAS FROM DETROIT SOUP DINNERS

Use an empty storefront to host the SOUP to promote available retail space.

Facilitate a Proposal Workshop to give community members an opportunity to think through their project and write their proposal.

Put together a book of community resources for everyone who submits to SOUP.

Offer a time before the dinner for presenters to practice their four-minute speech in front of a few board members or volunteers.

Encourage conversation at dinner tables by leaving “Conversation Cards” at each table that ask attendees about their connection to the community, what they would like to see in the neighborhood, what proposal they like the best, etc.

Get creative with the artist feature. Invite all types of artists to share their work and think of ways to get audience members engaged with art. One neighborhood SOUP in Detroit invited a caricature artist to do drawings during the opening hour, another invited a muralist to paint a mural inside the empty venue.

Bring in or paint a chalkboard on one of the walls and ask attendees to write down ideas of what they want in their neighborhood.

Have fun with themes. One neighborhood in Detroit hosted an event right before Halloween so they went all out with decorations, brought in hay barrels for seating and encouraged people to come in costume.

After you’ve had a years-worth or more of SOUP projects, host an open house and encourage people to re-connect with past winners and presenters.

Keep past winner engaged with SOUP and ask them to help select the four projects that will be presented at each event. You can do this easily by creating a Google questionnaire and emailing it out.

SOUP has been called a new town hall. Think about ways to encourage democracy and discuss local issues in an open and comfortable setting. One Detroit SOUP encouraged local government candidates to attend a dinner before the election to talk to residents one-on-one during SOUPs open times.

Print pictures and brief project descriptions of each past winner and bring it to every SOUP so audience members can see the impact each event has made.

Buy flowers or green plants for a winter SOUP event to warm the room. Encourage attendees to go home with the centerpieces.

THERE ARE SO MANY GREAT IDEAS AND ACTIONS COMING OUT OF SOUP. SHARE YOUR STORIES AND IDEAS WITH US SO WE CAN SPREAD THE WORD!