



Uncertain times and unprecedented circumstances have forced most of us to make some big changes to our daily lives both personally and professionally. Least of these has been the format of our annual fundraising events. While things may feel somewhat uncertain and new, you can rest assured that AES has been successfully hosting online events for over a decade and we are currently conducting Virtual Galas across the nation with great success.

Livestreaming Guide

1. **Contact your AES representative** to discuss timing and dates so we can be sure we have a support team in place for you as needed.

2. **Select a Livestreaming platform** that best fits your needs:

Zoom, Facebook Live – simple and easy to use, but lower production value/quality. Guests will need to download the app to participate.

YouTube Live, Vimeo – Better streaming quality, audio and graphics options, but requires video switching software to swap between speakers and slides. AES is able to embed the video directly into your virtual gala website, so there is nothing for your users to download or sign up for separately.

3. **Do you want to enable chat functionality?** Allowing your participants to add comments during the livestream can be fun for smaller events but may quickly get out of control with larger events. Consider the difficulty in moderating and responding to comments in a timely fashion before enabling this feature.

4. **Like any other event, you will want to select your hosts/speakers.** We recommend this being a small group of 2-4 people. A moderator or emcee, one or two people from your organization and your AES Event Manager (we are happy to be involved in as much or as little of the live stream as you would like).
5. **Create a run-of-show for the live stream.** AES recommends keeping the live stream to about 1 hour, give or take. In the virtual world, we are competing for your audience's attention a bit more, so you want to be respectful of time and get right to the fundraising.
6. **Put together a Power Point presentation** for your live stream event. This will help educate your audience on what to expect, provide critical program content, keep you on track and on schedule as well as serve as entertainment.
7. **Pinpoint your technical support** and ensure you have back up plans in place. AES can assist with what these needs are and, in most cases, fulfill this role for you.
8. **If you intend to host a Live Auction** during the stream, make sure the auction is a manageable size (no more than 5 items).
9. **Stick with your theme!** Keeping any traces of the fun and social aspect of what your in-person event provides can make this a fun and engaging experience for you and your audience. Dress up, use fun backgrounds and keep it light-hearted for all involved.
10. **Practice Makes Perfect.** Make sure you allot enough time to practice your entire program a few times before going live to work out any kinks. This also helps everyone learn and get used to your live stream service and its features before the big show.
11. **Relax, you've got this!** While virtual may be new to you, your event and its supporters are not. We will help ensure the details are covered so you can focus on your mission and your people as always.