



2026 NCAA Men's Final Four Local Organizing Committee Overview

OVERVIEW

Since 1979, Indiana Sports Corp and the city of Indianapolis have hosted more than 500 world-class sporting events. For our team, it goes well beyond the game, tournament, or championship. It's about utilizing sporting events as a platform to inspire, create impact, and enact change within our community. These events and the long-lasting impact they provide to our community would not be possible without the support of our Local Organizing Committees. They are the secret ingredient and crucial element to what makes sporting events here in Indy successful and uniquely special.

Indianapolis and the NCAA have built a partnership stretching many years based on history, experience, and trust. Hosting more than 85 Championships across 13 different sports, this relationship has evolved to meet the goals of the NCAA for its events centered on providing a significant opportunity for student-athletes while creating a lasting legacy for our community.

From our first NCAA DI Men's Final Four hosted in 1980 to the entire March Madness Tournament in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, Indiana has a storied history of celebrating college basketball in epic fashion. In 2026, Indy will host our ninth NCAA DI Men's Final Four and we are committed to making it the most creative, collaborative, and inclusive event to date. With a focus on the five key strategic initiatives of the NCAA DI Men's Basketball Committee, the 2026 Men's Final Four will connect with each stakeholder group in an intentional and meaningful way. We have achieved a reputation of being the first. As we begin planning, we are striving to be the best – to provide the best support, the best engagement, and the best experience yet.

LOC LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This group is comprised of senior officials from all the key organizations within the city and state that can assist the LOC by providing guidance, support, and solutions throughout the planning process. Organizations represented may include Indiana Sports Corp, LOC Leadership, Visit Indy, CIB, the City of Indianapolis, and the State of Indiana.

LOC CO-CHAIRS

These individuals are the volunteer civic leaders responsible for the oversight and management of the LOC. They assist in the development of the overall event goals, lead Leadership and LOC

meetings at a regular cadence, motivate and encourage LOC members to maintain engagement throughout the planning process, and act as an advocate for the Final Four and surrounding events through promotion to personal and professional networks, attending speaking engagements, and increasing overall community engagement and awareness.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director will be an executive-level leader at Indiana Sports Corp. This individual is responsible for the overall event, strategic initiatives, financials, and cross-communication between the Host Leadership Team - NCAA Leadership, Executive Committee, LOC Co-Chairs, and Tournament Director. This individual acts as a Chief of Staff for the event and will schedule regular meetings with the NCAA and Host Leadership Team.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

The Tournament Director will be a senior-level leader at Indiana Sports Corp who will be involved in the day-to-day management of the LOC through organizing and communicating with the managing directors. This individual will be responsible for scheduling and coordinating LOC Meetings, tracking milestones, tasks, and providing summary high-level updates to the Executive Director.

MANAGING DIRECTORS

The Managing Directors will be senior or management-level leaders at Indiana Sports Corp. These individuals will be responsible for strategy development alongside Division Chairs as it pertains to the overall event goals set forth by the Executive Committee and NCAA. Managing Directors will be responsible for collaboratively managing the event budget. They will also track Division objectives and deliverables, maintain cross-communication between Divisions, and frequently share updates with the Tournament Director.

DIVISIONS

Education

Promote Education as a Brand

Education is the backbone of the collegiate experience and a key component that should be celebrated throughout the Final Four. The Education Division will be responsible for executing educational programming for youth grades K-12 and college students such as the 5th Grade Curriculum and the Final Four College Mentor Program. Additionally, the Division will explore opportunities, programming, and resources related to mentorship, future career navigation, social responsibility, NIL opportunities, financial literacy, and more to be provided to participating student-athletes. Beyond students, the Division will work with local experts to identify the current challenges teachers are facing in relation to recruitment and retention within the profession, mental health support, technology needs, and other needs that allow them to be successful in supporting themselves and their students. Finally, this Division will also be tasked with developing meaningful professional development programs and opportunities for young professionals to executive leaders such as Final Four Talks.

- Youth Programs - Read to the Final Four
- University Programs - University Curriculum Program
- Student-Athlete Programs – Final Four Talks
- Teacher Support & Development
- Professional Career Development

Innovation

Continue to Evolve the Tournament

Indianapolis has a proven track record of innovation and resilience when hosting the Final Four, and that experience will guide us in reimagining what the event looks like at the next level. The Innovation Division will be focused on inventing and creating through collaboration with local partners in areas such as arts & culture, sports tech, and sustainability. Through these collaborations, the Division will be focused on creating new programs and initiatives that represent Indy's diverse community.

- Arts & Culture – Programs like SWISH that infuse a diverse array of Indy's arts & culture scene into the event and promote inclusion
- Sports Tech – Partner with local companies to implement tech solutions across all aspects of the event to appeal to the needs of sports fans. Possible solutions include artificial intelligence, augmented reality, NFTs, or other forms of a digital presence.
- Sustainability – Improve the sustainability efforts surrounding the event by utilizing the most up-to-date technology and resources

Stakeholder Relations

Align with Key Stakeholders

This Stakeholder Relations Division will be responsible for working with the NCAA to identify key stakeholders and their interests with the goal of creating synergies through partnership opportunities, brand elevation, and unique experiences that creatively engage these groups.

- University VIP Experience – programs and events to engage coaches, administrators, faculty, and student-athlete families
- Media Experience - Media Hub, Media Party
- NCAA Staff & Men's Basketball Committee Engagement – programs to engage NCAA Staff and the Men's Basketball Committee
- NCAA House – VIP experience for sponsors, partners, and key stakeholders

Outreach

Expand Demographics of Fans

The Outreach Division will aim to make the Final Four more accessible and inclusive to residents and traveling fan bases. Through a strategy that targets local, statewide, and regional communities, they will expand awareness and access to opportunities surrounding the Final Four to showcase there is something for everyone even if you don't have a ticket to the games. This Division will also focus on creating and amplifying messaging around all aspects of the Tournament through various media outlets including social.

In addition, the Division will be responsible for collaborating with civic partners to execute programs that impact and engage the community in the Final Four.

- Strategic Marketing Council
- Statewide Ambassadors
- Community Engagement & Impact Programs – Fan Jam, Dribble, Legacy Court Restoration
- Public Relations
- Social Media

Tournament Experience

Create an Elevated Tournament Experience

The Tournament Experience Division will be tasked with focusing on all aspects related to a positive and elevated experience for teams, fans, media, officials, administrators, commissioners, and residents. They will identify enhancement elements and organizations to assist in the development of these programs based on the current needs of these key groups. Elements could include lounges for student-athletes and coaches, a concierge-like host program, and other thoughtful touchpoints that will be integrated into their time here in Indianapolis. Finally, the Tournament Experience Division will assist the NCAA in determining city branding opportunities that elevate the brand and raise awareness throughout the city, state, and at the airport.

- Event Operations – City Services (public safety, clean zone, permitting), Transportation, Parking, Hotels, Auxiliary Venues, Volunteer Services, Fan Experience, City Beautification
- Stadium Operations – Master Planning, Security, Ticket Operations, Credentials, Catering
- Game Management – Site Control, Officials Liaisons, Band & Spirit Squad Hosts, Medical, Game Presentation,
- Media Operations
- Participant Initiatives – Concierge Program, Team Lounges, Student-Athlete Experience, Gifts, Team Welcome
- City Branding
- Fan Event Operations – Music Fest, Fan Fest, Tipoff Tailgate, Final Four Friday
- Championship Operations – DII, DIII, NIT Championship Operations

COMMITTEE MEMBER DESCRIPTION:

Committee Member Expectations:

- Develops and maintains a positive and meaningful relationship with the NCAA Men's Basketball staff, committee, and other affiliates.
- Participates in the development of committee milestones and timelines.
- Acts as an ambassador for the event and Indiana Sports Corp by participating in regular promotion to the community, participating in speaking engagements, and sharing information within personal and professional networks to increase awareness.
- Promotes cross-communication of committees to ensure information sharing and collaboration are streamlined throughout the planning process.

Committee Chair Expectations (in addition to the above):

- Sets meeting dates and agendas.
- Leads all committee meetings.
- Delegates tasks to committee members and follows up on action items.
- Provides verbal and written updates at LOC Meetings.
- Leads the vision and implementation of committee objectives.
- Assists in managing a committee budget alongside ISC Staff and the NCAA.
- Motivates and encourages committee members to maintain engagement throughout the planning process.

Benefits of being on the LOC:

- Opportunity for professional development
- Be a mentor to an emerging leader on the LOC to build the next generation of talent
- Expand your network and continue to build your personal brand
- Be part of the leadership team hosting the 2026 Men's Final Four
- Create community and statewide impact
- Be an ambassador for Indy to the NCAA, visitors, coaches, and student-athletes

Time Commitment – February 2024 to April/May 2026:

- LOC Tip-off Onboarding & Social – February 26, 2025 from 4-6 PM
- LOC Meetings
 - Committee Meetings are scheduled within the three-day timeframe monthly by Committee Co-Chairs in collaboration with ISC and NCAA.
 - Each month, there will be a wrap-up meeting on Thursday morning. This is typically from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM AM and recaps all committee meetings that occurred during the previous two days.
 - Dates:
 - June 17-19, 2025
 - July 15-17, 2025 – Subject to change
 - August 12-14, 2025
 - September 9-11, 2025
 - October 14-16, 2025
 - November 11-13, 2025
 - December 16-18, 2025
 - January 20-22, 2026
 - February 17-19, 2026
 - March 2026 - TBD
 - April/May 2026 – Recap Meetings