

Planning a Health Fair



What are health fairs?

- Health fairs are events conducted by health professional to provide education, services, and health awareness to the communities.

Purposes for having a health fair:

- Determine the health needs of your community.
- Assess local health needs.
- Attract health facilities and health professionals.
- Make your community's health related issues known to the public.
- Distribute health information.
- Offer health services such as immunizations and health screenings.
- Access health services.

When is the best time of the year to have a health fair?

- Avoid summer months, because of family vacations.
- Avoid severe winters, due to unsafe traveling.
- Weekdays and weeknights are difficult for working parents to attend.
- Weekdays would work if you are trying to reach the retired community.
- Saturdays or weekends seem to be the most appropriate for a health fair.
- Keep demographics and weather in mind!

Location for your health fair:

- Hold it at a location that is easily accessible to your community.
- Place with a large parking area.
- Well known buildings, such as schools, churches, civic centers, or shopping centers.

Paying for your health fair:

- Pre-determine your total funding needs.
- Business sponsorship is very common.
- Plan carefully how you will spend your funding.
- Solicit local, individual businessmen in your community (Doctor, pharmacist, etc.).
- Most health care professionals will volunteer their time at no cost to you.
- Majority of your funds will go to materials, print publications, and marketing.

What agencies or participants do you invite to your health fair?

- Health related agencies
- Health care professionals
- Chiropractors
- Medical doctors

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- Nutritionists
- Personal Trainers
- Local Fitness Facility Representatives
- Emergency Medical Technicians
- Local Fire and Police Department
- Nurses
- Massage Therapists
- Health Food Supplement Retailers
- Registered Dieticians
- American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, etc.
- Dentists
- YMCA or Boys & Girls Clubs
- Local grocery chains
- Non-profits with a health-related mission statement and goals

Publicizing your health fair:

- If you do not make your community aware, they will not come.
- Give plenty of advance notice.
- Try to use your local newspaper to run a short column at no cost.
- Use advertising media if you have the finances for it.
- Newspaper ads, flyers, bulk mailings, inserts, and printed reminders for your students' parents.
- Social marketing, such as Facebook, Twitter, and emails.

Your health fair and children:

- Give plenty of attention to your children, especially if you use a school setting.
- If you can get kids to come, their parents, grandparents, and other family members will follow.
- Have some age appropriate activities for children and teenagers.
- Actively involve your students in the health fair, and parents will definitely attend.
- Give your students tasks, such as being part of the staff or greeters.
- Older students may run a booth or conduct fitness testing on adults.

Design and layout of your health fair:

- Always draw a map of the venue you are going to use.
- Designate booth sizes for vendors and write them in on your map.
- You may have to draw up several layouts to determine which is going to be the most space efficient.
- Post arrows and directional signs throughout your community's neighborhoods.
- Provide plenty of traffic control and parking spaces!
- Adult volunteers or off duty police officers may help you coordinate the parking arrangements before and after your event.

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Freebies, raffles, and giveaways:

- Everyone loves free stuff!
- Set aside some funds to purchase giveaways and freebies.
- Discuss with your participants about them bringing a few items or free product samples that they may give away.
- Doctors, chiropractors, dentists, and massage therapists are always willing to give away a few free checkups or consultations.
- Fitness centers may give a free week or month membership, and personal trainers may give away some free training sessions.
- The possibilities are endless, so before you spend any money, ask your participants to help you where they can.
- Giveaway budgets are better suited to purchase big ticket items, such as a large screen TV, an iPad, or a weekend getaway that could be part of a raffle.
- Raffles are also another way to attract the community!
- Always remember to hold your raffle at the end of your event, so that the majority of attendees stay for the entire health fair.
- Another good option for freebies is to go to your local retail stores and supermarkets and ask if they are willing to donate items for your health fair.

Evaluating the success of your health fair:

- After your event, you should make a conscious effort to evaluate your health fair.
- You should have written and oral feedback from participants, visitors, and sponsors if possible.
- Your evaluation and/or survey should include the total number of visitors and how many services were provided.
- The easiest way to collect this data is to hand out a short questionnaire to the visitors as they walk in the door. They can fill it out as they go through your event and turn it back in at the end before they leave.
- The questions in the survey should include residence, how they learned about your health fair, what they learned at the health fair, what was the most appealing about your health fair, how many family members attended, most important health care needs in their family, and any questions, concerns, comments, and input for future events.
- Share your results with your sponsors and participants.
- Obtain feedback from your vendors to see how they liked the event and how you can improve. Send them a follow-up questionnaire after the event.
- Health fair evaluations are very important when planning your future events.

Thanking your health fair sponsors and participants:

- Health fairs take much planning, coordinating, and implementation.
- Take the time to individually and publically thank all of your sponsors and participants.
- Use your local newspaper to run a short story

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- Write a short letter to the editor
- Always thank your sponsors and participants! It doesn't take a lot of money, just a little time and some creativity.

Record Keeping:

- Retain all records of plans, names, addresses of participants, correspondences, invoices, etc.
- Keep detailed records!
- Planning for future health fairs will be easier if you maintained good records of previous ones.

Important Tips:

- Always state your health fair's objectives to your sponsors and participants in advance.
- Use all of your available options to publicize your event.
- Carefully plan the timing, location, and what it will cost to host your health fair.
- Encourage as many participants from your local community to take part in making your health fair a success.
- Evaluate your health fair so that you know if the stated objectives were accomplished, to plan future events, and to determine what changes need to be made when planning future health fairs.