

Health Fair Planning Guide

Health fairs give you a chance to present a wide range of information to a large number of individuals all in one place. You can encourage people to make healthier choices and supply the tools to help. You also can provide much-needed services. This guide contains the steps necessary for organizing a successful health fair. Use it to create an event that has positive impact for years to come.

Step 1: Define Your Audience And Health Fair Focus

You may be planning a health fair for your entire community. Or you might have a target audience you want to reach. Possibilities include:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Ethnic Groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expectant Parents | <input type="checkbox"/> Women |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited-Income Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Families |

Considerations When Deciding Focus

- What are the major health needs of this audience?
- Are there critical gaps in service for this audience that should be addressed?
- Do you have a relevant service that you'd like to promote?
- Is this audience familiar with your organization or company?
Has a positive relationship been established?
If not, should these issues be addressed?
- Are there any barriers to this audience's full participation in the fair? If so, can they be eliminated?
- Do you want to hold a general health fair or one based on a specific health event or theme, such as a Heart Health Fair during American Heart Month in February?

Step 2: Establish Goals Of Health Fair

Every organization or company will have different goals. Here are a few examples:

- Make health education available, thereby promoting wellness
- Motivate people to aim for positive health behavior changes
- Create a positive image for the organization
- Generate new business and/or patient volume
- Increase access to care by removing real or perceived barriers
- Raise community awareness of programs, services, products, and/or support groups offered
- Reach out to underserved or high risk groups of people in the community
- Provide a targeted number of screening examinations (blood pressure, breast exams, etc.)
- Register a targeted number of new patients for return appointments, immunizations, and screenings
- Collect data to support future program decisions

Step 3: Decide On The Best Time And Location For The Fair

Choose A Season

- Indoor health fairs can be held year-round, although mid-to-late November and all of December should be avoided due to hectic holiday schedules.
- Outdoor health fairs are best in late spring, summer, or early fall –depending on your geographical location.

Pick A Date And Time

- What day of the week is most likely to be convenient for your targeted audience (weekends for young families, weekdays for older adults, etc.)?
- What will be the hours of the fair? Given this time frame, will there be any problems with setup (one to two hours before start of fair) and cleanup (one hour after fair)?

Other Considerations Regarding "When"

- Are any other major community events planned for this day? To avoid conflicts, check with your Chamber of Commerce, and obtain a calendar of events from the local school district.
- Does your anticipated date conflict with a holiday or major religious observance? Avoid scheduling the health fair on a date that could offend or alienate any segment of your community.

Things To Consider In Choosing A Location

- Is the site accessible to disabled individuals? Older adults? Families with strollers? Children?
- If the fair is to be held at a hospital or community health center, will your event interfere with other services?
- Are space modifications necessary to accommodate booths or services of the fair?
- Are there limitations on the number of people this space can accommodate? How many might attend?
- Is there ample parking?

- Are there enough restrooms? Are they handicap accessible?
- Are quiet areas available for blood pressure, hearing, and other screenings? Are there private areas for exams?
- Will there be a separate area for food? Will refrigeration be available for food?
- Are you holding the fair in a gymnasium or other space where noise might be magnified? Seniors may have difficulty hearing in this setting.

Step 4: Design Your Stations

Decide Upon Health Screenings And Services, As Well As Providers

Possibilities include:

- Anemia
- Asthma Testing
- Blood Glucose/Diabetes Screening
- Blood Pressure
- Body Composition
- Cholesterol Screening
- Dental Checkups
- Fitness Assessments

Screening Considerations

- Plan for meeting universal precautions in regards to drawing and handling blood.
- Prepare for delivery of results to participants if results won't be available at the fair.

TIP: Consider supplying coupons for discounts on screenings that are too difficult to complete on the day of the fair. Perhaps set up appointments right then.

Arrange Demonstrations And Activities

Possibilities include:

- "Ask The Doctor" Booth
- Back Care
- Breast Self-Examination
- Children's Educational Games
- CPR/AED
- Exercise Equipment
- Healthy Cooking Demonstrations
- Little People's or Teddy Bear Hospital
- Personal Safety
- Proper Lifting
- Recipe Analysis
- Testicular Self-Examination
- Upper Body Massage
- Yoga and/or Tai Chi

Choose Topics For Awareness Booths

Possibilities include:

- Colorectal Cancer
- Dental Health
- Employee Assistance Programs
- First Aid
- Health Risk Assessment
- Insurance Provider
- Lead Risk
- Nutrition
- Prostate Health
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Stress Management
- Substance Abuse
- Sun Safety
- Tobacco Cessation
- Weight Management
- Women's Health Issues

Step 5: Prepare Your Budget And Obtain Approval

Now that you know your target audience, the location, and the services and educational materials you want to supply, you can prepare an estimated budget for approval. Here are some things to consider:

- Publicity and promotion
- Equipment and supplies
- Refreshments and other food
- Permits
- Costs of providing screenings
- Entertainment: band, magician, etc. (if services aren't donated)
- Staff/personnel costs if not volunteered
- Additional insurance coverage if current policy does not cover accidental injuries, etc.
- Cost of follow-up mailings, outreach, etc.

Budget And Expense Considerations

- Who will be responsible for writing/signing checks?
- How will records of expenditures be maintained?
- Will deposits for certain services/supplies be required?
- What is the deadline for final submission of bills and expenses after the fair?

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Organize & Implement A Successful

Step Six: Implement Your Plan

- Use the checklist at the end of this guide to aid in orchestrating your timetable.
- Factor in enough time to meet with key members to assure that they have adequate staff for the health fair. Have appropriate brochures, guides, etc. ordered and delivered or produced in-house. If the fair will be held at a location other than your facility, arrange for round-trip transportation of supplies, paperwork, equipment, etc.
- Create a time schedule for the day of the fair: arrival of entertainment and food, set-up times, screening times, breakdown times, etc.
- Create shift assignments and hand them out with the time schedule.

Order Educational And Promotional Materials

What you purchase depends on your target audience, the health screenings offered, the educational focus, and the activities you plan. Browse this catalog for appropriate products for your health fair. Also consider:

- Business Cards
- Decorations (balloons, banners, etc.)
- Invitations
- Registration Forms

Establish A Site Layout

- Identify the location of services based on the need for electricity, quiet, etc.
- Identify spaces for food, entertainment, first aid, etc.
- Identify the number and placement of dividers.
- Identify restrooms, exits, etc.

Prepare Paperwork

- Consent Forms
- Health History Forms
- Immunization Forms
- Location Maps
- Registration Forms
- Sign-In Sheets
- Site Layout Map
- Other_____

Coordinate Supplies And Equipment

- Extra Trash Receptacles
- On-Site Signage (parking, first aid, restrooms, telephone)
- Posters
- Public Address System
- Skirting, Table Covers
- Stage
- Table, Chairs
- Tents (if outdoors)
- Two-Way Radios (for key personnel)

Publicize

Create a central theme for the fair, with a slogan and graphics, and include it on all your fair advertising. Forms of publicity may include:

- Announcements on Web site
- Articles in newsletters
- Coupon in newspaper for free screenings or a chance to win a special prize
- E-mail sent within organization or company
- Flyers sent home with patients
- Flyers throughout the community
- Invitations mailed to target audience
- Letters to community leaders, agencies, and key organizations
- Newspaper advertisements
- Notices at location
- Press releases
- Public service announcements (television and radio)
- Tabletop advertisements
- Tray liners

TIP: If any of the health screenings being offered at your fair require special preparation ahead of time, such as fasting, publicize this information.

Step 7: Review And Follow-Up

- Ask fair attendees to fill out a survey before they leave the fair. To improve the response rate, you may want to offer a chance at prizes as a reward for completing the survey. Some questions to ask include:
 - Which services did you find most beneficial?
 - Did you receive useful information for making future healthcare decisions? If so, which booth(s) provided this information?
 - Did you become aware of services you did not know were available in your community?
- Send thank you notes to all those contributing to the health fair (organization representatives, staff, volunteers).
- Schedule meetings with community leaders or leaders in your targeted audience to address any health problems, issues, or concerns that were identified.

Health Fair!

Ensure That Appropriate Clinical Follow-Up Occurs When Necessary

Make sure that participants who need immunizations, additional screenings, referrals to support groups, or other services are taken care of.

Build On The Positive Relations Generated By Fair

Send photos and press releases to the media. Include information about the number of people who attended, the number of screenings provided, any anecdotal information about health problems or concerns identified, and any good human-interest stories. Be sure to acknowledge support of community, police, etc.

Respond To Any Unfortunate Incidents

If anything negative took place, meet with key community leaders and targeted audience representatives as soon as possible to develop an understanding of what caused the incident and if further actions are needed. Establish procedures to avoid similar incidents in the future. Send a letter describing steps to all involved.

Review In Depth

Review the surveys from the fair attendees. Also, meet with fair volunteers and discuss what went well, what didn't work, and what could be done differently. Record this information and keep it in your files for future reference.

Document And Report

Prepare a written account detailing overall results of the fair. Distribute it to administration, committee chairs, community leaders, and all other interested parties. Some information to include:

- The number of attendees
- The number of screenings provided
- The number of new patient appointments generated
- Any health problems or concerns discovered within the target audience
- Feedback received from attendees' surveys (if applicable)
- Analysis of attendees' requests for more information (if applicable)

Health Fair Timetable And Checklist

6 To 12 Months Before

- Define audience and focus.
- Establish goals for the health fair.
- Decide ideal time of year, week, and day for the fair.
- Select location.

3 To 6 Months Before

- Establish timetables.
- Decide upon health screenings and services, as well as providers.
- Arrange demonstrations and activities.
- Choose topics for awareness booths.
- Prepare budget and obtain approval.
- Reserve rental equipment (tents, tables, chairs, helium tank, etc.).

3 Months Before

- Order educational and promotional materials.
- Establish a site layout.
- Get paperwork ready.
- Coordinate supplies and equipment.

1 Month Before

- Publicize event.
- Prepare contingency plans.

1 Day To 1 Week Before

- Confirm with and/or remind all participants.
- Set up as much as possible.

Day Of The Fair

- Finish setting up.
- Be ready at least one hour early.
- Have plenty of identifiable help.
- Determine attendance.
- Clean up.
- Deliver photos and press release to local papers.

Follow-Up

- Ensure that appropriate clinical follow-up occurs when necessary.
- Build on the positive community relations that the fair generated.
- Respond to any unfortunate incidents.
- Review surveys.
- Conclude possible improvements.
- Document overall results.