



Planning a Health Fair

Health Fairs are a great way to offer health information to participants from public and private organizations. They provide an opportunity to showcase resources and services that contribute to the health and well-being of the community.

It is exciting to host a successful Health Fair! However, it takes a lot of planning, time, coordination and work. Whatever your reasons for hosting a health fair, a successful and well organized event can be an effective way to reach a “target” population.

The Florida Department of Health in Broward County wants to help. **Those who are new to the field are encouraged to contact the following volunteer advisors from the DOH-Broward Outreach Planning Group (OPG).** They can offer guidance and support to help Event Planners make their health fairs successful and effective.

Gretchen Rovira
Camelot Community Care
954-881-5424 or grovira@camelotcommunitycare.org

Kristine Arenas
Chrysalis Health Care
954-790-7334 or karenas@chrysalishealth.com

Glonevia “Glo” Knowles
Pre-Need Options
561-285-7515 or preneedoptions@gmail.com

Bob LaMendola
Florida Department of Health in Broward County
954-467-4700 ext. 5813 or robert.lamendola@flhealth.gov

Steps to Planning a Successful Health Fair

1. Set Goals and Objectives:

- Why do you want to host a health fair?
- What would you like to accomplish?

Identifying goals and objectives will help guide your event planning, event promotion, implementation and evaluation. Share your goals and objectives with management and incorporate their suggestions. It is also important to share the goals and objectives with any and all event team members (so that everyone is on the same page).

It will be good to determine if similar events have occurred in the past. Perhaps, partnerships would strengthen your efforts- several small health fairs might better be combined into a more effective, larger event.

Focus on what you want the event to achieve. These expectations should be **SMART**: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and have a set time frame.

2. Develop a “To-Do” List

Establish a “To-Do” list, outlining the following elements:

- Each task that needs to be completed
- The person responsible for that task
- The target completion date for each task

Add new responsibilities as they arise and be sure to allow adequate time for each task, keeping in mind that some tasks may need special managerial approval.

3. Set a Budget

Use your goals and objectives to help set your budget and allocate funds. Remember that a big budget isn’t necessary for a health fair. However, you might want to consider incurring some costs as a way to attract attendance and participation. Know your “target” population and your community.

4. Check your Calendar

- Set the Date /Alternate date
- Be sure the date doesn’t conflict with any other large Community Events
- Try to avoid dates when other health fairs are set (check the events pages on the [DOH-Broward website](#))
- Avoid peak vacation times
- Consider combining forces with another existing health promotion day or event
- If you have more than one site, are you going to set a date for each site?
- Consider what you will do if it rains (if it is an outdoor event)

5. Pick a location

Choose a location that will be ideal and convenient for your target population.

If participants will need transportation, organize the event close to public transportation lines.

Make sure you have adequate lighting and electrical outlets for vendor booths

Examples: Cafeteria, large foyer or hallway, large meeting room

If the event is going to be held outside, make sure that there is shade and restrooms available.

Is there adequate parking?

Do you have enough staffing available on the date that you have selected?

Is security needed for the event?

6. Choose a title/theme

Before selecting a title/theme, consider the goals and objectives of the fair, as well as the organization's philosophy or mission statement. Select a theme that will attract attention, try and avoid religious and political names. For example, if you are trying to reach an entire neighborhood to educate them on the importance keeping children healthy, then "Investing in our children's health and nutrition" might be a good title/theme for the fair.

You want a title/theme that will let potential participants know what the Health Fair will be about and one that will encourage them to attend.

7. Contact Vendors

If you would like to invite organizations to set up information tables, be speakers or provide screenings, a good way is through the OPG organized by DOH-Broward.

Please fill out a vendor request form, which can be found on the [OPG page](#) of the DOH-Broward website. Email the form to chd06post@flhealth.gov. Or fax the form to 954-713-3106.

Once DOH-Broward receives your form, we will send your event Information to all our programs and to organizations that participate in the Outreach Planning Group. The event information will also be posted on the DOH-Broward Listing of Events, at <http://broward.floridahealth.gov/events/index.html>.

Completing this form is not a guarantee that any of the services you requested on the form will be available for your event. Each program and organization will decide individually whether to attend, based on the availability of staff and services.

Using the goals and objectives you have set for the Health Fair as well as your organizational situation, consider all of the community agencies, voluntary organizations, for-profit and non-profit organizations you would like to invite to your

Health Fair. Make a list of the appropriate organizations and continue to contact these for support and participation.

Don't forget to identify departments within your organization or your community partners (e.g. Human Resources, food service providers, houses of worship, etc.) that may be able to contribute to your event.

8. Strongly consider attending an Outreach Planning Group meeting

At each of our monthly meetings, OPG members give a constructive critique of every health fair they attended during the previous month. Most of the participants have years of experience attending health fairs and know what vendors and the public want to find at an event.

Hearing their remarks BEFORE YOUR EVENT is a great way to learn valuable insight that will make your health fair more successful.

9. Confirm content & exhibitor needs

- What type of information they will be sharing?
 - How will the material be presented (display, brochures, demonstration)?
 - What is the title of their display?
 - Does your exhibitor have a floor or tabletop display?
 - What size is the display? (Is there enough room?)
 - Does your exhibitor need a table? If yes, what size do they prefer?
 - Is there a need for an electrical outlet? Chairs at the table? How many?
 - Is there a keynote speaker? Will a microphone be needed? A Podium?
 - If there is food...what about proper refrigeration?
 - Will there be enough trash cans? Who will clean up?
 - When will vendors need to set up? Who will send them directions about set up?
- Will vendors need to know anything else?

10. Promotion

- Don't forget the importance of advertising the event. Local print, radio and TV outlets generally require a few weeks advance notice to advertise an event.
- Create a marketing plan. Promotion is very important for generating awareness, interest and excitement about your event. You should begin promoting at least four weeks before the event.

While word of mouth is a good means of advertising, try to use as many of the following to promote your event:

- Voice-mail, E-mail, social media, newsletters, banners/posters, announcements, meetings, newspaper, radio, television, etc.

- Identify a spokesperson for your event
- Contact media outlets several weeks prior to your event. Send an event alert or press release (Appendix C) to the appropriate news outlets (newspaper, television, radio, websites, etc.)
- Don't forget church newsletters/bulletins and community newspapers
- Create flyers for distribution in grocery stores, dry cleaners, other local establishments
- Send a personal invitation to "key" people (e.g. local government officials, key business leaders, etc.)

11. Logistics

Staffing

- Set-up of the event
- Exhibitor greeter & aide
- Someone to move traffic and greet staff
- Someone to pleasantly welcome those who attend and vendors
- Tear-down & clean-up

Draft a floor plan

- Be mindful of the traffic flow – look for potential "jams" and try to move things to ease them
- Outline where each display will be set up
- Note the location of electrical outlets and assign those areas according to need
- Ensure each display is allotted enough space (consider width and height)
- Assess your equipment needs

Prepare a list of equipment that will be required:

- Tables (how many and what sizes)
- Chairs
- LCD projectors
- Extension cords
- Reserve all equipment and rooms well in advance (find out the procedure for the event location and follow it)

Other issues

Is parking adequate?

Is security needed at the event?

Will someone take pictures at the event?

12. Other things to consider:

- Consider games, giveaways, raffles, etc.
- Solicit donated items, gifts, etc. (for participants)

- Plan an alternative for bad weather
- Create an emergency kit with first aid supplies
- Send maps and parking instructions to all vendors
- Create “Goody bags” for giveaways
- Create an evaluation tool (so you know how successful you were)

13. At the Event:

- Talk to those who attend and to vendors
- Is the information helpful to those who attend?
- How will they use the information to improve health?
- What would they like to have happen next year? (If anything)

14. Following the event

- Send thank you letters to speakers, providers and vendors
- Have an evaluation meeting with the team to analyze results, to determine if goals and objectives were met and to decide if you should make this a recurring event.

We strongly encourage planners to attend the very next meeting of the Outreach Planning Group after the event. Any participants who were vendors at your event will give a constructive critique of their experience. This will be invaluable in planning for next year.

These steps were written by folks who have put on successful Health Fairs for years in our community. There are no guarantees, but these steps give you the best chance to have a totally fantastic event. Thank you for working with us to make Broward County a healthier place to live, work and play and we wish you much success with your event.

Outreach Planning Group
Florida Department of Health in Broward County

January 9, 2014 (updated July 16, 2015)