Be Well Communities™

Event planning resource guide for the Houston area

Be Well Communities™ is The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center's place-based strategy for cancer prevention and control, working with communities to promote wellness and stop cancer before it starts. Be Well Communities unites individuals, schools, workplaces, government agencies, health care providers and policymakers to plan and carry out sustainable, community-led solutions that will make positive, long-lasting changes in people's lives.
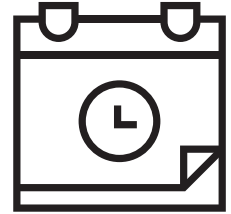
An important component of the Be Well Communities model is working with community-based organizations such as schools, workplaces, community colleges and non-profit organizations, who all have an important role to play in reducing the risk of cancer. More than 50 local, regional and state organizations are actively engaged on Be Well Communities steering committees in the areas of healthy eating, active living, sun safety, tobacco-free living and preventive care.

This event planning resource guide has been created to provide support and knowledge-based resources for community-based organizations in the Houston area, who host and organize events that serve the community.

Please note, this resource is for organizations and does not include information for individuals or local events listings.

- For more information or technical assistance,
  contact: BeWellCommunities@MDAnderson.org

- To learn about Be Well Communities,
  visit: MDAnderson.org/BeWellCommunities

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD Anderson
Cancer Center

Making Cancer History®

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Planning timeline

Community events are an important component of community engagement. Well planned events can accomplish several objectives including providing a space for community residents and organizations to socialize and network, build trust, foster collaboration, deliver education and provide resources. To plan and host a successful community event, follow these tasks during the following time periods prior to the event.

6 to 12 months prior to the event

Tasks	

Event Logistics	• Establish the event purpose (including key audience), goals and objectives
	• Select a date and time
	    ○ Research and consider potentially competing community events
	• Select a location
	    ○ Research and consider parking and back-up options
	    ○ Ensure inclusivity and accessibility
	    ○ Schedule and/or reserve site cleaning once the site has been secured (e.g., street sweeper)
	• Select a co-chair(s) and/or planning committee
	    ○ Agree on planning committee outcomes, roles and responsibilities and time commitment (dependent on the size and scope of the event)
	• Prepare a budget
	    ○ Determine if sponsorships are needed and if the event will be funded by one or multiple organizations

Meetings	• Establish meeting cadence with the planning committee ○ Monthly cadence is suggested to ensure planning stays top of mind • Set up recurring calendar invites
Permits/Permissions	• Look into location and event-type permitting • Look into specific reservations or permits needed for amplified sound
Vendor	• Identify possible services, information, exhibits and activities
Sponsorhip	• Outline event purpose/goal • Establish a fundraising goal • Create sponsorship levels • Write sponsorship letter and put together sponsorship packet • Send out sponsorship packet • Identify potential sponsors

3 to 6 months prior to the event

Tasks	
Event Logistics	• Conduct site walk-through of the event location • Arrange for any additional transportation (buses, shuttles), if necessary • Reserve rental equipment (as needed) • Reserve tables and chairs • Make a back-up plan (inclement weather, indoor, etc.) • Create an event sitemap including all details of the event layout (e.g., vendors, parking, inflatables, etc.) • Establish event timelines and run-of-show
Meetings	• Host meetings with co-chair(s) and/or planning committee • Consider increasing frequency of meetings as the event draws near
Permits/Permissions	• If the event is held at a school, complete all required background checks for staff, volunteers and vendors. • Ensure any required work orders at the host site are completed (e.g., air conditioning, access gates and doors, custodial, tables and chairs, use of restrooms and water (especially if a weekend event)).
Vendor	• Update vendor registration form (as needed) • Send out vendor registration form • Decide on exhibits, activities, demonstrations, etc.
Volunteers	• Issue a call for event volunteers • Many cities in the Houston area host volunteer opportunities or matching programs on their websites. Check out the resources section to learn more
Sponsorhip	• Resend sponsorship packet as needed • Coordinate with sponsors
Promotion	• Create promotion / communications plan • Create flyers and receive all necessary approvals (minimum of 2 weeks for MD Anderson turnaround, TBD for other sponsors) • Draft social media posts • Draft and schedule radio ads and / or public service announcements (PSAs)

3 months prior to the event

Tasks	
Event Logistics	• Outline staff and event leads for event areas • Create event passport (if you are doing this activity) • Make list of items needing to be purchased • Request and confirm school district or police department to assist with crowd control, traffic and parking control (including VIP parking entrances), road closures, presence at the event, fireworks safety, etc. • Make a safety and emergency preparedness plan • Reserve and schedule an event photographer
Meetings	• Host meetings with co-chair(s) and/or planning committee • Consider increasing frequency of meetings as the event draws near
Vendor	• Create event evaluation surveys for attendees and for vendors • Provide confirmation to vendors including – date of event, time (to set up booth and open hours), location (include map), general guidelines, equipment needed/provided • Receive and document all requests for electrical cords, outlets, etc.
Volunteers	• Develop volunteer plan assignments
Promotion	• Send invites to dignitaries • Share the PSA • Implement the communications and promotion plans, as directed in the plans
Incentives	• Order incentives

1 month prior to the event

Tasks	

Event Logistics	• Purchase and store needed items
	    ○ Ensure there is an identified storage space or place, especially for larger items (e.g., industrial fan, pop-up tents, signage, tables/chairs, giveaways, etc.)
	    ○ Print signage and any other printed materials
	• Create a shot list and share it with the event photographer
	• Develop talking points for any leaders and/or dignitaries that will be speaking at the event
	• Organize audio components including DJ or emcee timetable and/or playlist, etc.
	• Review and add additional detail to the run-of-show (e.g., lighting/music cues, speakers, etc.), add emcee strip, room monitor talking points, etc.
	• Schedule additional staff, as necessary

Meetings	• Host meetings with co-chair(s) and/or planning committee • Consider increasing frequency of meetings as the event draws near
Promotion	• Implement communications and promotion plans

1 week prior to the event

Tasks	
Event Logistics	• Gather items to bring to the event • Send and receive final confirmation from all assigned staff, volunteers and vendors • Conduct a site walk-through at the event location ○ Be sure to include people leading various areas including volunteer leader, light and sound technician, etc. • Order food for vendors/volunteers (as needed) • Create and print volunteer and/or staff name tags, as needed
Meetings	• Host meeting with co-chair(s) and/or planning committee—review run-of-show, photography shot list, talking points
Promotion	• Implement components of the communications and promotions plans, as directed in the plans

Day prior to the event

Tasks	
Event Logistics	• Set up tables, chairs, other as possible • Set up welcome/registration table, as possible • Preview site • Clean as needed
Meetings	• Host meeting with co-chair(s) and/or planning committee — review run-of-show and safety/emergency plans

Day of the event

Tasks	

General	• Set up all event areas
	  ○ Primary event area
	  ○ Parking area
	  ○ Hospitality room
	  ○ Signage
	  ○ Oversee vendor set-up
	• Direct and instruct volunteers and assigned staff
	  ○ Check-in with volunteers and staff throughout the event, including providing restroom breaks
	• Check-in at hospitality room and restock as needed throughout the event
	• Check-in restrooms and clean/restock as needed throughout the event
	• Take out trash as needed during event
	• Greet dignitaries and acknowledge as appropriate
	• Administer attendee evaluation
	• Estimate attendance
	• Clean up
	• Administer vendor evaluation and analyze results
	• Analyze results from attendee evaluation
	• Send sponsor, vendor and volunteer thank you notes
	• Host a post-event debrief with the planning team
	• Handle any invoices
	• Update any websites or online information post-event
	• Send and/or post and share photos from the event, as appropriate
	• Follow up with event attendees, as appropriate depending on event

Event Evaluation

Add these to an online survey platform site to make the surveys available digitally. Have it available as a QR code for event attendees and send it as a link with the vendor follow-up email.

Sample questions for <u>vendor</u> survey:

Statements	Answer Choices
1. I was given the appropriate resources and tools to promote the event through your organization	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree
2. I was given adequate support for set-up	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree
3. This event was well organized	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree
4. The event provided a sufficient opportunity to engage with our intended audience	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree
5. Did you have to file attendee complaints or questions when delivering your services (at your booth)? Did you receive adequate support to handle these complaints/questions?	Yes No [open response field]
6. The event layout flow and position of our booth / activities was optimal. Would you suggest any improvements?	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree [open response field]
7. How was the duration (length) of the event?	Too long Too short Just right

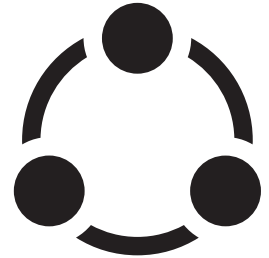|	
8. How was the timing (time of day) of the event?	Too long Too short Just right
9. What was your favorite part of the event?	[open response field]
10. How can we improve future events?	[open response field]
11. Please provide any other feedback.	[open response field]

Sample questions for <u>event </u>survey:

Statements	Answer Choices
1. The event flow was thoughtful and convenient	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree [open response field]
2. How was the duration (length) of the event?	Too long Too short Just right
3. How was the timing (time of day) of the event?	Too long Too short Just right
4. I was aware of the event's online presence	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree [open response field]
5. Did you actively post about the event on social media?	Yes No

6. The activities had a practical educational benefit	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree [open response field]
7. What was your favorite activity?	Too long Too short Just right
8. The event was engaging	1 – strongly disagree 2 – disagree 3 – neither agree or disagree 4 – agree 5 – strongly agree [open response field]
9. How can we improve future events?	[open response field]
10. Please provide any other feedback.	[open response field]

Resources

The organizations below provide resources that may be helpful to various aspects of event planning including volunteers, promotions, vendors and permits/permissions.

AARP	This organization may provide volunteers for your event.
Americans with Disabilities Act Guide	This site contains a planning guide for making temporary events accessible to people with disabilities.
BakerRipley	This organization may provide volunteers for your event.
City of Houston Mayor's Office of Special Events	This site contains permit information for events in the City of Houston.
City of Houston Volunteer Initiatives Program	This program is operated through the Department of Neighborhoods and works with the Mayor's Office, City departments and community partners to improve communities through volunteering.
Harris County Public Health Outreach Team	This site contains local community health information and resources.
MD Anderson Community Outreach activities	This site contains community outreach information including presentations, exhibits, print materials and sponsorships.
National Health Observances	This site contains a list of special days, weeks or months dedicated to raising awareness about important health topics.

United Way	This organization may provide volunteers for your event.
Volunteer Houston	This organization connects individuals, groups and companies with nonprofit agencies to transform the greater Houston community for good through volunteerism.
Volunteer Pasadena	This organization is a City of Pasadena program that matches citizens' skills and energy with current needs in the city through volunteering.

Additionally, search online for free resources to support planning with samples of event communication plan templates, vendor registration form templates, fundraising platforms for non-profits, tools for graphic design, photo sharing platforms, survey creation and distribution and special event emergency planning templates.