How to plan a Health Fair for faith-based organizations
Getting Started

Health fairs are a way to educate on health topics and encourage participants to take advantage of local resources and become aware of issues that are important to a community. The better planned the event is, the better turn out of participants.

Tips for planning a successful event

1. Select a health fair chairperson and committee members. If several people are involved, the work can be easily distributed.

2. Consider what your budget will be even if you don’t have a budget. Estimate the values of donations.

3. Decide on a them or type of topics you would like covered before making contacts with community agencies to provide assistance.

4. Keep in mind the traffic (people), parking space, utilities, inside or outside, time of year (weather), how many participants, activities of participants (movies, physical checks, etc.) will all impact the event.

5. Exhibitors (people displaying at your health fair) will need to know booth space, color of backdrops if furnished, times of operation, and what is furnished (number of tables, table cloths, chairs, etc.).

6. On the day of the event, designate a committee member or volunteer, to be on the spot fair day to help people find spaces, plug-ins, and check booths for safety purposes.

7. Consider a central information booth and welcome center. This helps to reduce confusion and helps the exhibitors get set up quicker. Some event planners have experienced exhibitors arriving and displaying at their health fair that were not invited. This is of particular importance when they may be soliciting items that are not in line with the purpose and promotion of the event.
Staffing the event with exhibitors

Contacting Health Fair Exhibitors:

Avoid calling an exhibitor requesting “any topic” or “anything” they have to offer. A better approach is to explain the event you are planning and examples of what you would like offered. However, if you prefer no solicitations, make that known if it is likely the organization plans to do so.

It is best to be familiar with the services offered by the agency. This will help to determine what will be requested. Websites are a good way to find information about an agency’s services.

The Durham County Health Department has made health fair planning and requests simple, one person coordinates requests from the community for the agency. For more information or to request assistance regarding health fairs, call 560-7767.

Below is a list of organization that may be available to exhibit at your event:

- Senior Citizens agencies (Council for Senior Citizens etc.)
- Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Bureau
- Emergency Medical Services, Fire Department
- Local Dental, Medical, & Nursing Societies, Auxiliaries, Associations (try Old North State)
- Cancer Groups (American Cancer Society, Triangle Sister’s Network etc.)
- Heart Groups (American Heart Association etc.)
- The American Red Cross
- Cooperative Extension/Extension Groups
- Business and professional organizations (Fitness clubs e.g. Curves, YMCA)
- Scouts (boys & girls) other youth groups
- Local hospitals (Duke, Durham Regional)
- Local college or universities (Durham Tech & NC Central)
- Local pharmacies and/or drug companies
- Support groups on the topics that will be exhibited
- Health care specialists (e.g. podiatrists, opticians, dieticians/nutritionists)
- Food suppliers
- Insurance companies (e.g. NC Mutual and Blue Cross/Blue Shield)
- Local chiropractors etc.
- Lincoln Community Health Center
- Community Health Coalition

Check local listings or the Internet to find these agencies or organizations in Durham County. If you would like to contact a potential exhibitor via correspondence, an example is located towards the rear of this guide.
Popular topics at health fairs

- Nutrition—low salt diets, diabetic diets, and use of vitamins.
- Drug or Alcohol use/abuse
- Chronic Disease—cancer, heart disease, tobacco use, physical activity, injury prevention
- Immunizations (adult and child)
- Information for and about senior citizens.
- Communicable disease (STD) prevention—education, testing and counseling
- Parenthood and childcare information (SIDS, car passenger safety)
- Stress management
- Lead education
- Teen pregnancy prevention
- Obesity
- Gun Safety
- Domestic Violence
- **Screenings**: stations for taking of blood pressure, lead, cholesterol, body fat %, BMI.

  *Unfortunately, due to a state mandate, the Durham County Health Department can not provide blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar screenings.*

Suggestions for marketing your event with your congregation:

- Ask your pastor to introduce/encourage persons to attend the fair
- Have the fair announced during the morning service announcements as well as printed in the church bulletin
- When speaking about the fair, be sure to mention that it is for all church members of the congregation and/or visitors
- Emphasize that there will be free screenings, demonstrations, and educational materials
- Encourage members to attend with the family and friends
Using existing resources and committee members to help plan the event

- Check your church directory. Any member of your that is a health professional may be able to contribute to services offered at the event. For example, there may be a podiatrist, pharmacist, dietician who is a member of your congregation that can assist with screenings and exhibit resources/information as opposed to community agencies.

- After you have checked within your church for resources, look for representatives from your local community. Gather their contact information by collecting business cards and writing types of services on the back of the card. This information may be collected during the course of the year and saved for the planning of special occasions.

- Next, someone must be designated to invite the exhibitors. Such invitations should be done promptly after finalizing the date and time of the event. Sample letters are available in the back of this guide.

Evaluation

The best way to determine “what worked” and “what didn’t work” during your event is to evaluate on several levels:

- The number of participants, if this is your first event, how many participated?
- If it is not your first event, was there an increase or decrease from the previous year.
- What can be done to improve the event?

Ask the participants in written form what they liked and how the event can be improved. The planning committee should review this information following the event and keep the suggestions in mind for planning later events.

Need assistance with evaluation? The Durham County Health Department can make available copies of evaluations or assist you in planning your unique evaluation tool.
Sample Health Fair Evaluation Form

To make the health fair better next time, we want to know what you think about today’s event. Please complete this form at the end of the health fair and return…...(instructions for returning the form)

Why did you attend this health fair? (Please check the 2 most important reasons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health screenings</th>
<th>Seemed like fun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn about health issues</td>
<td>Incentive prizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did you hear about the health fair? (please check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>posters</th>
<th>flyers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Someone told me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate the following aspects of the health fair on a scale of poor to excellent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Avg</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers/staff at the booths</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up/organization of the fair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of topics covered</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of screening results</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall impression of the fair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list 3 booths you liked the best:

1.______________________________________________________________________
2.______________________________________________________________________
3.______________________________________________________________________

Please comment on the time, length and location of the health fair

As a result of this fair, will you do anything differently regarding your health behavior?

Please make any other comments or suggestions about the health fair.
Helpful planning tools

**Planning:** Will this be an annual event?  ___Yes  ___No

**If yes:** Establish a consistent time of year and month. For instance, the second Saturday in September. This will help to prevent a delay in planning because your event can be set on the calendar early.

**Choose a theme for your health fair.** Try to stay within the theme for the event. For instance if the focus is heart disease, choose only things that relate to heart disease (a wide variety). Contact us if you need assistance deciding on a theme.

**If no:** A one time event is perfectly fine. Who knows, the event may go so well that you may consider holding it annually.

**Start your planning 6 months or more in advance.** Form a committee and start the discussions with a tentative date and the type of activities desired.

*Place a check next to the items your organization would like to include in your health fair.*

_____ **Activities:** Establish what activities and educational information will be offered. If there is a specified theme such as a Diabetes Health Fair, make sure to include activities that relate directly to the chosen theme.

_____ **Screenings** can be an added bonus. Several can be handled “in-house” such as by the nurses that may be a part of your organization (for blood pressure). Below are some screenings and possible resources.
How to plan a health fair for faith-based organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Committee Tasklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Completed by when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members are responsible for publicizing the event internally and externally if chosen to do so.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Announcement—church/community via bulletin and/or community publicized calendar in newspapers and on television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• flyers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exhibitors/Materials</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members will identify people to be invited to participate, send invitations, confirm participation and follow-up with a thank you note.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be sure to find out about needs such as tables and chairs, and most importantly, if an electric outlet is needed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide directions and information on parking unloading and loading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set Up/Break down</strong></td>
<td>All committee members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set up tables and chairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mark the tables for the exhibitors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supply name tags for exhibitors if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Screenings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Screening committee will contact and organize professionals for chosen screenings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incentives &amp; Door Prizes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask exhibitors to bring an item for a door prize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask local businesses to donate items for a door prize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribute and collect evaluation forms at the fair (try to avoid evaluations being return-mailed at a later date)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The DCHD can provide a sample evaluation</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Health and Wellness Ministry of the xxx church would like to extend an invitation to your agency to partner with us to promote health and wellness in our church and surrounding community. The challenges of getting important information, screenings and resources to individuals and families are too great for any single organization to address; yet together we can make a difference. It is our intent to provide an opportunity for a diverse group of health providers and service organizations to offer their services.

Our 20XX health fair event will occur on Saturday, XXXXXX at XXXXXXX located at address, Durham NC 277XX. The event is part of XXXXX

Whether you have participated in the past, or would be a new participant, we sincerely hope you will give us your support. We are recruiting health professionals and community agency representatives to provide education, screenings, sample products, resources etc for both youth and adult populations. If you can participate, please contact ________________________ by date at phone number.

Thank you in advance for your support and we look forward to seeing you at the 20XX event.

Sincerely,

Name

Position
This document has been provided courtesy of the Durham County Health Department
Health Education Division
Health Promotion & Wellness Program Area

If you have questions or need more information, please call 919-560-7771.