

NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

One of the first steps in planning a successful National Prevention Week event is to develop a detailed timeline and checklist of tasks.

This checklist will help you stay on track and ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. Use the following schedule of activities to plan your event.

Not every step in this checklist may be necessary for your event, so customize it to fit your organization's needs. You may also find that the checklist can be shortened depending on your event's size and purpose or when you begin planning your event.

Tell us about your prevention event! [Submit details about your event](#) for a chance to be featured in future National Prevention Week promotional materials.

Planning Timeline

TIME FRAME	ESSENTIAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES	FOR CONSIDERATION
FOUR MONTHS OUT	<p>PLANNING THE EVENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm the core elements of your event with staff, board members, and/or event planning committee members.<input type="checkbox"/> Create a draft budget.<input type="checkbox"/> Create a timeline.<input type="checkbox"/> Form teams and assign duties.<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a brief fact sheet to provide an overview and explain the goal of your event.<input type="checkbox"/> Ask sponsors, partners, and vendors to help underwrite the costs.<input type="checkbox"/> Determine a location. Submit requests for permits (as needed). Secure/reserve an event location for your chosen date(s). Identify a backup location in case of inclement weather (if the primary event location is outdoors).	<p>When Brainstorming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the goal of the event and topics or themes to address.• Identify the target audience.• Identify the type of event and the setting (educational, sporting, community, workforce).• Identify a date for the event — determine whether other community organizations or coalitions may be planning something around the same time that could support the event or compete with it.• Identify tangible outcomes and the impact you want to achieve as a result of the event.

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<p>FOUR MONTHS OUT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create a detailed supplies list—determine what must be bought and what can be borrowed or received as donations. <input type="checkbox"/> Book necessary vendors. <p>PARTNERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify potential community and state partners. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact these potential partners. <p>PROMOTION/MEDIA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create a marketing strategy. <input type="checkbox"/> Craft messages for promotional materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Create a list of promotional materials for distribution, focusing on who receives which materials and when. <input type="checkbox"/> Assess the need for a professional printer and set up a printing schedule if necessary. <input type="checkbox"/> Start collecting national and local data from samhsa.gov/data and other resources with community-specific data. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine whether audiences are active on social media and create a social media promotion plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a media outreach strategy and schedule. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine the specific story you want to communicate to the media, and craft corresponding key messages. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify key networks and publications for outreach efforts. <p>EVALUATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine the objectives of your event. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine target outcomes and evaluation metrics to document ongoing processes and final results. Identify a process for capturing data. 	<p>When contacting partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your event fact sheet. • Send the partner sponsorship letter to the partners you want to approach to help fund or provide resources in support of your event. • Invite partners to participate on your event planning committee. <p>When creating a social media promotional plan, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating accounts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and/or other social media sites that are relevant to your target audiences (e.g., Instagram); • Identifying local community and prevention bloggers for targeted outreach and engagement; • Creating a YouTube promotional video; and • Visiting samhsa.gov/prevention-week for sample <p>Check with other organizations that have planned similar events to discuss media outreach tips and lessons learned.</p>
<p>THREE MONTHS OUT</p>	<p>PLANNING THE EVENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create a guest list. <input type="checkbox"/> Invite speakers or special guests. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine how many volunteers you will need to help plan and implement the event. 	<p>Identify and contact local businesses, centers, schools, places of worship, community event calendars, health and fitness groups, local gyms, etc., that may promote your event.</p>



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<p>TWO MONTHS OUT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for room visuals (e.g., background for podium, posters for speaker presentations, visuals for sign-in areas, directional signs). <input type="checkbox"/> Make arrangements for security. <p>PARTNERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to identify new partners or partner roles for the event. <p>PROMOTION/MEDIA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Begin posting about your event and use the National Prevention Week hashtag on social media. <input type="checkbox"/> Send follow-up emails to identified bloggers. <input type="checkbox"/> Print fact sheets to distribute at the event. <p>EVALUATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a feedback/evaluation form to collect information about outcomes and ideas for future events. 	<p>Think about event logistics, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are facilities available that are accessible by persons with disabilities? • Who controls the lights and thermostat? • Is the sign-in area an anteroom or a wide hall with sufficient space to keep traffic moving as media and guests arrive? • Is there an area to serve refreshments with enough wastebaskets? • Are there a sufficient number of restrooms? • Where will people put coats if the weather is rainy or cold? • Is there parking close by for media, participants, and others? <p>Post a YouTube video or link to videos hosted on SAMHSA's YouTube channel.</p> <p>Set up meetings with local radio stations to arrange for live-read radio broadcasts.</p>
<p>ONE MONTH OUT</p>	<p>PLANNING THE EVENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Send confirmation letters to speakers and participants. <input type="checkbox"/> Compile a list of event duties and indicate who is responsible for each. <input type="checkbox"/> Make arrangements to videotape or photograph the event. <p>PARTNERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Invite staff from partner organizations to volunteer or participate at the event. 	<p>Line up backup speakers in case a last-minute replacement is needed.</p> <p>Identify who will be responsible for activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport of supplies to the event area, • Event setup, • Greeting of attendees and management of sign-in tables, • Attendee and speaker escorts, • Post-event cleanup, and • Monitoring of office phone during the event and coordination of calls to cell phones at the event.

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<p>ONE MONTH OUT</p>	<p>PROMOTION/MEDIA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute promotional materials locally and digitally. <input type="checkbox"/> Create and post “Save the Date” notices on social media—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram—and include the event name, date, website, and National Prevention Week hashtag (recommend posting during the first and last weeks of the month). <input type="checkbox"/> Draft a press release about your upcoming event. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a media advisory. <input type="checkbox"/> Send designated reporters a media kit that includes a press release, media alert, and community or National Prevention Week fact sheet. <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with reporters as necessary to secure coverage of your prevention event. <p>EVALUATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> As promotional and media outreach materials are disseminated, monitor online activity to measure the promotion and reach of your event. 	<p>If needed, hire a person to sign for the hearing impaired.</p> <p>If needed, conduct a second round of outreach to volunteers for the day of the event.</p> <p>Consider speaking opportunities for partners at the event.</p> <p>Write an op-ed for a local publication.</p> <p>Place your event on the daybooks of local media and local Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI).</p> <p>If partners promote your event, request information about how extensive their reach is as well.</p>
<p>MONTH OF THE EVENT</p>	<p>PLANNING THE EVENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Send out reminder invitations. <input type="checkbox"/> Assess supply list to identify outstanding gaps. <p>PARTNERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Request any materials or visuals the partners may want to have at the event. Coordinate delivery and setup. <p>PROMOTION/MEDIA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Post reminders on websites and/or social media networks and post flyers that include your event name, date, website, and the National Prevention Week hashtag. <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with reporters as necessary to secure coverage of your prevention event. <p>EVALUATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> As promotional and media outreach materials are disseminated, monitor online activity to measure the promotion and reach of your event. 	<p>Post the reminders during the first week of the month and a week before the event.</p> <p>If partners promote your event, request information about how extensive their reach is as well.</p>



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<p>WEEK OF EVENT</p>	<p>PLANNING THE EVENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hold a meeting to finalize any logistics prior to the event. <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm all arrangements (e.g., payment, delivery of goods, photographer, and schedule) with any vendors, speakers, or important event attendees. <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the event site to ensure preparations are in place. <input type="checkbox"/> Collect equipment to take to the event, including easels, tape, staplers, note pads, pens, extension cords, and other items. <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a walk-through of the event, including testing of audiovisual equipment, 1-2 days before the event date. <p>PARTNERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide partners with an overview of the final logistics for the event. <p>PROMOTION/MEDIA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Post messages on websites and/or social media networks with a call-to-action message of how to make a difference and be part of SAMHSA’s National Prevention Week. Include your community’s name and your event name, date, website, and the National Prevention Week hashtag. <input type="checkbox"/> Print hard copies of promotional materials to hand out during your event. <p>EVALUATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Disseminate a feedback/evaluation form to event planners and/or participants with instructions for how to complete the forms and a submission date. 	<p>Coordinate partner speakers for media interviews.</p> <p>Post the promotional messages at the beginning of the week and on the day of the event; for the day of the event, alter the message to “Today is the day!”</p>
<p>MONTH AFTER EVENT</p>	<p>EVENT WRAP-UP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Place thank-you calls to supporters, sponsors, and media contacts who provided coverage. <input type="checkbox"/> Write thank-you letters and notes. <input type="checkbox"/> Post pictures and videos from your event on your website and/or social media networks and share the photos with SAMHSA. Obtain the necessary permissions from people featured in the photos and videos before posting them online or using them in print materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Compile press clippings from the event coverage. 	<p>Post a message on websites and social media networks thanking those who participated—especially in-kind donors and volunteers.</p>



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<p>MONTH AFTER EVENT</p>	<p>PARTNERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Place thank-you calls or write thank-you letters to partners. <p>EVALUATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review and assess media coverage. <input type="checkbox"/> Collect feedback forms from event planners and/or participants. <input type="checkbox"/> Compare and evaluate event objectives and results. <input type="checkbox"/> Write an overview of the event, including lessons learned, for internal use and future planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Share feedback with SAMHSA with your success story and examples of specific outcomes, such as new partnerships formed, new products developed, and/or engagement of policymakers in your organization’s initiatives. You can email David Wilson, SAMHSA’s National Prevention Week Coordinator, at david.wilson@samhsa.hhs.gov or submit details about your event on the National Prevention Week website. <input type="checkbox"/> Send articles that cover the event to David Wilson, SAMHSA’s National Prevention Week Coordinator, at david.wilson@samhsa.hhs.gov. Be sure to include photos! 	<p>Share event summary and media coverage received with partners.</p> <p>Request that partners complete a feedback form and share lessons learned on the experience, to be used for future planning.</p>