Planning a Workplace employee engagement budget there date time Health Fair checklists passports needs assessment evaluation objectives goals exhibitors vendors displays participants employees displays demonstrations healthy refreshments physical activity healthy eating wellness tobacco cessation cancer screening alcohol misuse incentives door prizes mental health healthy living stress parenting support community stress





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Introduction

A **health fair** is an educational and interactive event designed to provide basic health and wellness information (including health screening) to people in the community or employees at work.

Health fairs are typically offered in a variety of organizational and community settings such as neighbourhoods, work sites, churches or schools. They consist of a variety of vendors and exhibitors that educate on all aspects of health, wellness, fitness and lifestyle improvements. Health fairs are advertised and promoted ahead of time through print media, radio, social media or television and are usually held over a few hours, as a one-day event or over several days or shifts.

Health fairs offer opportunities to,

- provide health information from various private and public organizations in your community
- increase awareness through education and information sharing
- introduce new skills, (e.g., urban pole walking, goal setting, self-monitoring, etc.), resources and/or community services
- conduct health screening to detect certain health issues before they become more serious health concerns (i.e. high blood pressure resulting from stress that may lead to heart issues)

Health fairs can be large or small depending on the size and needs of your organization or the population you would like to reach. This guide provides you with the information you need to plan, implement and evaluate a health fair in your workplace or community.

For more information about the Middlesex London Health Unit, Health at Work 4 All! program, <u>www.healthunit.com/workplace-health</u> or, contact the program coordinator @ 519-663-5317 ext. 3333

Forming a Planning Committee

The first step in planning your event is to form a planning committee. This committee should be formed 6 to 12 months in advance for a first time event or if your event will be large (300+ attendees).¹

A well-organized planning committee will help ensure that the workload for planning your event is shared by a diverse and dynamic group of individuals with an interest in enhancing employee health and wellness. A dedicated committee will have a significant impact on the success of your health fair.²

The committee will: ^{1,8}

- determine the health fair goals and objectives*
- develop a timeline and schedule
- prepare and manage budget considerations*
- determine site logistics*
- choose a theme*
- determine exhibitors and activities*
- recruit sponsors and volunteers
- promote and market the event*
- coordinate food and refreshments*
- evaluate the event*

* These topics are addressed in this guide



Selecting Committee Members

When selecting committee members: ^{1,8}

- choose members that represent a variety of sub-groups (e.g., departments, age, skills/expertise, cultures, etc.)
- select individuals that are interested in seeing the workplace wellness program or community initiative succeed and who will work towards program and event ownership
- ensure the committee has at least one member in a management role
- decide on a chairperson with strong leadership and mediation skills

Committee size for a Health Fair

Number of employees	Suggested number of
in organization	committee members
< 300	2-4
300-1000	4-6
1000+	6-12

A general guide for committee size⁵



Performing an Environmental Scan in the workplace (or community)

Once your health fair committee has been formed, the next step is to conduct an **environmental scan**. This includes looking at areas such as trends in your workplace, the physical and social environment of the workplace, resources available and the needs of your employees³ or community. It is important to think about all aspects of participants' lives and not just the tasks they perform.

Consider the target audience and their broad and diverse needs.¹¹

- Who is expected to attend the health fair?
- Are your expected participants predominantly younger women with families or older men who have performed physical labour for the majority of their working lives?
- Do your employees work in an office sitting at desks, standing in a factory, travel in vehicles throughout the region or work in an outdoor environment?
- Do your employees have family members, dependent children or elders to care for?

Consider performing a **needs assessment** to get employee input from all levels of the workplace, i.e., staff, management, union and non-union groups. This will help employees feel included and more invested in the health fair.¹ A needs assessment is aimed at finding out what topics are of interest to employees and which approaches may be best suited to meeting their wellness needs ^{1,7} (see Appendix A for sample topics).

It is important to **consider the organizational "culture"** of the workplace. This includes the shared assumptions, values and beliefs of employees as well as the hierarchy within the organization, such as positions of power and decision making abilities.¹⁵ It also includes the respect, friendships and connections between employees¹⁵ and employee groups. Knowing and understanding these organizational factors will have a significant influence on what topics to highlight at the health fair and what will affect the success of your event.

To get a clearer picture of your organization, start by asking the following questions; ⁸

- What do employees and management or community organizers want and need from the health fair?
- What are the biggest health issues/concerns for the employees or the community?
- Are there currently any major changes taking place within the organization or community?
- Is this initiative part of an organization wide, fully supported employee health and wellness program or a "one off" event?

Responses to these questions will determine the approaches you will use in planning the health fair event.

TIP: Who to Ask for Information

You may need to ask for some assistance from human resources, other departments or your health benefits provider.

Setting Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives will provide a framework for planning and will help your committee and management identify a clear vision of what you want to accomplish.^{1,9,15} Goals and objectives will also help you evaluate the success of your health fair.

Goals: Statements of broad, long-term accomplishments expected from the health fair.

Objectives: Shorter-term, measurable steps that provide direction on how you plan to work toward the goal.

The goals and objectives you set will depend on your organization's specific situation.¹¹ Review your vision, mission and value statements and when possible, align your wellness goals and objectives with these statements. Share your goals and objectives with management to obtain their input, or better yet ask for management representation on your committee. Each goal should have one or more connected objectives that describe what the project is trying to achieve.

Each objective should be written in a way that allows it to be evaluated. This can be achieved by answering the following S.M.A.R.T. questions:

- **S** = **S**pecific What do you want to achieve?
- **M** = **M**easurable How much and how often will it be done etc.?
- A = Attainable How will you achieve the objectives?
- R = Realistic Can it be done?
- **T** = **T**imely When will it be done?

(See Appendix B for sample evaluation questions)

TIP: Example Goals and Objectives for Workplace Health Fairs

Goal: To motivate employees to make lifestyle changes that will improve their health

Objectives:

- To have 75% of employees attend the health fair on (specify date)
- To increase knowledge of 75% of employees who attend the health fair about the importance of healthy behaviours
- To have 90% of health fair attendees participate in health risk screening on (specify date)

Establishing a Budget

The planning committee should establish procedures for budget management and reimbursement of expenses early in the process. Once the available funds are known, prioritization of the spending can be decided based on the identified goals and objectives.^{11,15}

For example;

- If the main goal is to educate employees on healthy lifestyle strategies, set aside more money for educational resources and interactive activities that can teach skills in this area.¹⁵
- If the main objective is to have a certain number of employees attend, then decide on incentives to encourage them to participate.

To help reduce costs, consider utilizing various departments within your organization, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, non-profit agencies in your community and your local public health unit.

Budget consideration should include, 9,11,15

- publicity and promotional costs
- administrative material costs (e.g. paper, pens, pencils, tape, poster board, thank you cards, mail postage, etc.)
- rentals (e.g., tables, chairs, equipment, etc.)
- decorations
- health risk screening costs (medical agency with equipment and knowledge, computer programs, bio testing laboratory costs etc.)
- exhibitor/vendor costs
- incentives and giveaways for participants
- healthy refreshments for exhibitors and attendees (optional)
- healthy lunch for exhibitors and volunteers (optional)



Choosing a Theme

Be creative and have some fun brainstorming ideas with the committee. A theme can help boost interest and make the event more memorable. ¹⁵

When choosing a theme;

- Be sure to review the goals and objectives of the health fair.
- Consider the overall philosophy of your workplace. ^{4,8} (e.g., is your workplace relaxed and fun or more formal in nature? ⁴)
- Consider the demographics (age, gender, ability) of the potential participants?



- Refer to the results of the employee needs assessment survey for ideas.³
- Think of the health fair as a good strategy to launch your new wellness program, or be used as a kick-off for another event that your wellness committee is planning.
- Think about basing the theme on seasonal or national health observances (e.g., "Spring into Health" or a Valentine's Day theme for National Heart Month in February).^{4,8} Refer to the Health Canada Calendar of Health Promotion days, weeks or months for some great ideas and links to resources <u>http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/calend/index-eng.php</u>

Is your workforce predominantly male or female?

- Consider hosting a health fair with gender specific exhibitors/vendors (i.e. prostate or breast cancer screening info, hair loss experts, hormone therapy for women, erectile dysfunction experts, retirement/financial planners etc.)
- If your workforce consists mostly of men consider inviting their partners, spouses, or significant others to attend (or whomever is generally the health care organizer in the family).
- Recognize diversity and acknowledge that not everyone identifies as male or female so make an effort to be LGBT2Q+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-Spirit, Queer) inclusive and sensitive in planning the health fair. Connect with Leanne Powell, Public Health Nurse at MLHU 519-663-5317 ext. 2352 <u>Leanne.Powell@mlhu.on.ca</u> if you have questions related to ensuring your event is diverse and inclusive for everyone.

Additional Suggestions:

- Consider hosting the health fair over a 24 hour period (to accommodate shift workers and/or their shift working partners).
- Create a date night or party like atmosphere.
- Serve mock-tails <u>http://allrecipes.com/recipes/1822/drinks/mocktails/</u> and appetizers or snacks <u>http://www.healthunit.com/recipes</u> or coffee/tea and flavoured waters.

Once you have decided on the theme for your health fair, coordinate colours, decorations, materials, displays and prizes.

Check out the Health at Work4 All! **Topic List** for **free** Public Health program areas to consider for your health fair <u>www.healthunit.com/workplace-health-resources</u>

See **Annex A** on page 21 for ideas of some other community organizations, services and exhibitor/vendors to invite to your health fair

Choosing a Date, Time and Location

Choosing the right day, time and location can have a significant impact on how many employees attend your event.⁸

Date Considerations

- Try to schedule the health fair for mid-week as this is often the best time to accommodate employees who are off work at the start or end of the week.
- Check that there are no other workplace or community events being held at the same time that might conflict with your event.
- Avoid scheduling the health fair on holidays or during peak vacation times.
- Decide whether you will set a different date for each site or only offer the health fair at the main location (applies to workplaces with multiple sites). If the latter is chosen, be sure to allow for travel time for all employees from other locations to attend the health fair (be sure not to leave anyone out).

Time Considerations

- Schedule your health fair for a few hours during the day when the majority of employees would be able to attend. For workplaces with more traditional business hours, midway through the work day may be appropriate.
- Try to accommodate all shifts so that as many employees as possible have the chance to attend.
- It is easier for employees to attend health fairs if they are given time to attend during their shift rather than only on their break. Discuss with management how these arrangements might be possible. ^{8,11}
- To accommodate shift workers, consider hosting or extending it over a 24 hour period.
- Don't forget about those who work nights.

Consider asking exhibitor vendors to leave displays set up with a supply of resources overnight so evening and night shift employees can benefit too!

Location Considerations

- Choose an area with high traffic such as a cafeteria, foyer or boardroom.
- Make sure the location is convenient and can be easily accessed.
- The room should be large enough to accommodate all exhibitors, their booths and employees attending the event, as well as provide enough lighting and electrical outlets, etc.
- Book and confirm the location well in advance.
- Check health and safety standards: fire code and liability insurance.
- Create a floor plan that outlines the location of each exhibit.



Exhibits and Exhibitors/Vendors

- Ensure that the exhibits and vendors invited compliment the overall theme of your event.
- Consider a variety of formats for vendors to use (displays, presentations, demonstrations, breakout sessions etc.).
- Request that displays be staffed if possible.
- Determine the exhibitor needs (i.e. hydro, tables, chairs, table space etc.).
- Make the necessary arrangements for shipping and receiving of exhibits, displays and resources to and from the event location.
- Invite vendors to bring samples and/or door prizes.
- Create an Emergency Information sheet for vendors that includes contact information for an organizing committee member, the emergency exits and the health fair address (in case emergency services are needed at the site)



Send a Confirmation/Welcome letter to vendors/exhibitors as early as possible.

Include,

- $\checkmark~$ date, location, time of the event
- \checkmark the expected number of participants
- ✓ contact person, phone number and email
- ✓ available equipment
- ✓ set-up and take down times/instructions
- ✓ shipping instructions
- ✓ facilities and amenities
- whether food/beverages will be available or not
- ✓ safety and security policies

Promoting the Event

A common concern is how to attract those who need the health and wellness information or services the most to the event.² Often individuals who are at the highest risk for developing health conditions are the hardest ones to attract to a health fair.² Promoting the event using the following tips may help.

Timing

Promote the health fair 4 - 6 weeks beforehand.⁸ If possible send out

a "save the date" message as soon as the date of the health fair is confirmed. This will ensure people/employees are aware of the event and set aside the time in their calendars.

Make it simple and clear

Use plain language and short sentences to promote the messages. Plenty of white space and graphics make promotional materials attractive and easier to read.

Make it personal

Be sure to let employees know how they will benefit personally by attending the health fair. Tell them the "WIFM" (What's in It for Me).

Consider segmenting your population demographically and design promotional items specifically for each group's concerns, needs, and interests. By showing a personal interest in employees, they will be more likely to pay attention.^{9,14}

Invite spouses/partners and create a party or date night atmosphere.



Use Multiple Media Channels

It is important to vary the promotional strategies used in order to reach as many employees/people as possible. ^{2,4} Try to come up with at least 5 to 6 different methods to promote your event and highlight the benefits.²

Consider: 2,3,8,10,11

- Emails or company newsletters
- E-bulletins or websites with promotional messages and links
- Social media Twitter, Facebook, Linked In etc.
- Posters in common areas
- Flyers sent through interoffice mail or stuffed in paychecks
- Voicemail message reminders
- Announcements at meetings

Keep it fresh and upbeat!

Try to have a little fun. Consider handing out flyers while dressed as your favourite fruit or singing a creative and humorous jingle for your event. Anything you can think of to get people talking; the more interesting and creative the better! ^{6,11,13}

Think outside the box

Promote the program in all of your organization's possible work settings including remote offices, trucks, factories, outdoor worksites, etc. ^{6,9,12}



Engaging Employees

Health Fair Passport

A "health fair passport" can be used to encourage employees to visit multiple vendor/exhibitor booths during the health fair. A passport has a number of spaces that the vendors can stamp or sign as proof of interaction. At the end of the health fair completed passports can be used as a draw for a larger prize.



Offer Incentives

Small incentives can make a big difference in terms of increasing participation. Try to set aside some of the budget for incentives such as small gifts, giveaways and prize draws. Larger gift items can serve as raffle prizes which may add excitement and motivate employees to attend.^{9,10} Remember to offer incentives that are in line with the goals and objectives you are trying to achieve through your health fair.¹⁰

Consider contacting companies and organizations who may be willing to provide free or low-cost items as incentives,⁹ particularly those who will be vendors at your event.¹⁰

Ideas for incentives:

- Merchandise that promotes your company such as pens, magnets, key chains, mugs, hats, t-shirts, reusable water bottles etc.
- Gift cards for grocery stores, local farmers markets, local attractions, downloadable music or books, hardware stores, local sporting goods stores, etc.
- Pedometers or fitness wearables for walking or bicycling
- Passes to recreational facilities
- Magazine subscriptions
- Cooler bags or backpacks
- Tickets to events
- Paid time off
- A draw for one larger item



Ask your employees what other types of rewards might motivate them to participate in the event.⁹

Think health!

- Focus on fresh vegetables and fruit, like fruit kebabs, fruit infused waters, whole fruit, or raw vegetables. Check out the great recipes and snack ideas at EatRight Ontario https://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/recipes.aspx
- Avoid using food and beverages that we are recommended in limited amounts in "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide", (such as chocolate, candy, or sugar sweetened beverages)
- Advise exhibitor/vendors about this decision before the health fair. Encourage them to
 use non-food rewards to attract employees to their displays and booths, such as draws
 and other giveaways.

Questions? Speak to a Registered Dietitian from EatRight Ontario (call 1-877-510-5102 or email a question online at <u>www.eatrightontario.ca</u>)



Health Fair Checklists

Use the following checklists to help plan your workplace health fair.^{4,6,8,10,11}

Six to 12 Months *before* the Health Fair:

- □ consider surveying your employees to find out what they want from a health fair
- □ establish goals and objectives for the health fair
- □ select co-chairs
- □ select/invite planning committee members
- □ create and meet with subcommittees
- identify target audiences
- □ select a theme
- □ select a date and time (send a "save the date" when it is established)
- □ select and reserve the location(s)
- □ identify possible services, information, exhibits, activities
- □ prepare a budget

Three to Six Months before the Health Fair:

- establish timelines
- secure commitments from the exhibitors, community partner agencies etc. (Don't forget to contact the Middlesex London Health Unit <u>Health@mlhu.on.ca</u>- see instructions in text box below).
- □ book the @ work kits <u>www.healthunit.com/workplace-health-resources</u> that are appropriate for your health fair
- ask exhibitors, clinicians, and other people working at the Health Fair to reserve the selected date
- secure volunteers, including someone who can take pictures the day of the fair and someone to welcome and direct participants
- □ create a photo consent form
- select health screenings and services to be offered
- □ decide on exhibits, activities, demonstrations, etc.
- reserve rental equipment
- reserve tables and chairs

Interested in asking MLHU program areas to participate in your Health Fair? Email <u>Health@mlhu.on.ca</u> to receive an electronic copy of the Health Fair Request Form or call Communications at, 519-663-5317 ext. 2448.

Three Months before the Health Fair:

- order educational and promotional materials from relevant community organizations,
- □ request prize donations and begin securing decorations, gift bags, giveaways, etc.
- reserve hand carts and trolleys
- plan to secure trash bags
- □ plan to secure tablecloths
- □ make posters, flyers, etc. to publicize the event
- receive written commitments from exhibitors, vendors, volunteers, including requests for special equipment (hydro, tables etc.)
- provide written confirmation to exhibitors, including the following:
 - date of event
 - □ time (when to arrive to set up of booth and the hours your event will be open)
 - □ location (include a map) and instructions for parking
 - □ general guidelines
 - Let title for their booth signs (provided by either committee or exhibitor)
 - any special equipment exhibitors may need (i.e. extension cords, etc.)
 - inquire about specific space and electrical requirements that exhibitors may need

One Month before the Health Fair:

- □ meet with committee, and subcommittee chairs to review progress
- □ publicize the event with flyers, posters, email, voicemail, social media etc.
- □ plan a floor map of the exhibitor/vendor booth locations
- □ make booth signs
- and participants make map for exhibitors (to know where to set up booth on arrival) and participants
- create an Emergency Information sheet for vendors that includes contact information for an organizing committee member, the emergency exits and the health fair address (in case emergency services are needed at the site) Add this information to the participant passport or health fair map
- □ create the program, acknowledging exhibitors, volunteers, donors, etc.
- □ make a list of items still needed to be purchased
- □ secure the following supplies for the day of the event:
 - pens and pencils
 - □ felt-tipped markers—large, small, different colors
 - extension cords
 - □ paper clips, rubber bands, tacks, pins
 - □ stapler and extra staples
 - □ scotch, masking and duct tape
 - □ hammer, nails, pliers and screwdriver
 - poster board
 - paper
 - batteries
 - □ emergency kit with first aid supplies
 - \Box trash cans and bags
 - paper towels
 - □ exhibitor and volunteer lists with phone numbers, etc.

One Week before the Health Fair:

- □ confirm attendance with all participants
- □ print map and program and send to participants
- make name tags for exhibitor, volunteer, chairperson, planning committee members
- make and distribute a list of where volunteers will be assigned the day of the health fair
- □ finalize plan for the registration table process
- determine where your "organizer's hub" location will be for the day; Finalize who will staff this area; volunteers will report to this area and any issues that arise throughout your event would be reported here and dealt with by your personal that are staffing this "hub"
- □ finalize plan for evaluation, including distribution and collection methods

One Day before the Health Fair:

- purchase perishable items
- □ set up tables, booths, exhibits, chairs, classrooms, etc.
- □ label the "organizer's hub" area
- □ set-up the registration table, including:
 - □ sign-in/registration sheets, including employee phone extension numbers if you are distributing draw prizes after the event
 - plenty of pens and pencils for participants
 - maps of exhibits and programs
 - □ assignment list for volunteers
 - □ gift bags
- set-up the evaluation area, including evaluations forms for exhibitors and participants
- □ ensure there are enough electrical cords, outlets, audiovisual equipment, etc.





The Day of the Health Fair:

- □ set-up the food area
- □ greet exhibitors/vendors
- □ oversee exhibit/display set up as necessary
- □ set-up your "organizer's hub" area with central supplies etc.
- □ complete any outstanding set-up as needed
- □ be ready one hour before opening
- direct and instruct volunteers as required
- collect participant registrations
- □ take pictures (ensure participants are aware photos are being taken)
- estimate attendance
- collect evaluations
- □ clean up after event

Follow-up after the Health Fair:

- □ send thank you letters to exhibitors, volunteers, etc.
- if applicable, check with health agencies doing screenings to make sure follow-up is done for all lab tests taken at the health fair and ensure privacy and confidentiality procedures are followed
- □ summarize evaluation results
- □ use the evaluation results to make improvements for next time
- □ report results to exhibitors, media, etc., as appropriate
- report results to management
- □ follow-up with an article and pictures in a company newsletter, email message or internal web-site
- □ **celebrate** successes with your wellness committee and subcommittees, learn from mistakes and begin plans for your next health fair!



Appendix A: Sample Needs Assessment Survey Topics

Conduct an employee needs assessment before planning a health fair or while evaluating a health fair to help you plan for the next one.

Topic suggestions that you may want to include in an employee needs assessment:

- Physical Activity (e.g., leisure time, during work, active transportation)
- Yoga/ Tai Chi/ Pilates, martial arts
- Healthy Eating (e.g., cooking, gardening, shopping, food safety)
- Work/Life Balance (e.g., work stress, caregiver stress, mental health)
- Chronic Disease Management/Prevention (e.g., osteoporosis, diabetes association, Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, Heart and Stroke foundation, Canadian Blood Services)
- Tobacco-Free Living (MLHU, Lung Association)
- Substance Misuse Prevention (e.g., alcohol or other drugs, Pharmacist re: taking meds properly)
- Sun Protection
- Cancer Screening (e.g., breast, colorectal or prostate and/or cervical cancer)
- Healthy Pregnancy and Transition to Parenthood
- Breast Feeding Support
- Parenting (i-parent program, healthy beginnings programs through your health unit)
- Road Safety (e.g., distracted driving, cycling promotion)
- Health Protection (e.g., flu shot, infection control, food safety, hand washing, travel health/immunization, first aid, emergency preparedness)
- Gardening for exercise and/or healthy eating experts
- Financial -retirement planning experts
- Culturally appropriate connections (depends on the cultural make-up of the workforce)
- Mindfulness/ stress reduction experts
- A Dentist or Dental Hygienist



Appendix B: Sample Evaluation Questions

Conduct a short evaluation of the health fair to evaluate attendance, knowledge gained, what worked and what could be improved for the next time. All information shared is valuable in planning future employee wellness efforts.

- Obtain feedback from participants and exhibitor/vendors.
- Provide incentives for completing evaluations.
- Send results to organizers, participants and exhibitor/vendors.

Consider asking questions such as:

- What did you like most about the health fair?
- What did you like least about the health fair?
- Why did you come to the health fair today?
- What was the most important thing that you learned today?
- What change(s) are you planning to make as a result of attending the health fair today?
- Overall I was satisfied with the health fair (*strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree*).
- What topic(s) would you like to see at the next health fair?
- Did all aspects of the health fair support good health? (Food & drinks, prizes, location, etc.) (*strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, with room for comments related to potential improvements*).



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Please note: Some references on this list are no longer available and were last accessed in November 2014 when the original document was produced by *Region of Waterloo Public Health*. The information provided remains valid and contributes to the planning of a workplace health fair. Middlesex London Health Unit, Healthy Workplace Program Coordinator, August 2016





For more information on planning a Health Fair in your organization or to arrange a consultation in your workplace contact: <u>Sandy.richardson@mlhu.on.ca</u> or 519-663-5317 ext. 2412 <u>www.healthunit.com/workplace-health</u>