

STEPS TO PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING AN EVENT OR ACTIVITY.

OVERVIEW

Hosting community events is a great way to strengthen local ties and build awareness of agriculture.

- Set goals to help identify what type of event best fits your needs.
- Define your objectives and outcomes to determine your target audience.
 - Who are you hoping to reach? Adults, youth, urban families, politicians, others?
- Consider your resources – volunteer time, financial resources, etc.
- Use micro-volunteering opportunities to entice new or time-strapped volunteers to participate.
- Customize these suggestions or create your own to fit your needs.

CREATE A TIMELINE

Communicate the timeline to everyone involved in the planning or fulfillment of the event.

Months in Advance

General Details

- Develop goals and objectives for your event.
 - Why are you organizing this event and what do you hope to achieve?
- Choose a theme and name your event.
- Outline all essential decisions/activities in a time sequential order from the point of initial consideration to decisions being finalized and executed.
 - Document which volunteer is responsible for each function.
- Set a date and time for your event.
 - Ideally, you should have 4-6 months to plan, but this will vary depending on the nature of your event.
 - Be aware of holidays, school breaks and other major events.
 - Will this be a “rain or shine” event or will you need a contingency plan in case of inclement weather or similar situations?
- Consider location options and the type of facilities you will need to host a successful event.
 - Think about capacity, seating and learning station arrangements.
 - Partner with community organizations who might be able to offer a venue and/or assistance with organizing or staffing the event.
- Will participants need to register for this event?
 - For free events consider using *Eventbrite.com*
- Think through any safety issues that may arise and plan accordingly.
- Plan how you will promote information to local media outlets and/or on social media platforms.

Create a Budget

- Identify sources and amounts of potential revenue and expenses.
 - Consider seeking corporate sponsors to fund a portion of the event. This can range from national organizations that might want to sponsor a dinner, offer a door prize or a silent auction item, to local businesses that might be able to provide good or services, such as flowers for the tables, gift bag items, etc.
- Apply for an activity grant from the Kansas Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

- Revise for realistic and necessary cost and revenue updates.

Select Presenters

- Identify the topics to be shared based on your goals, objectives and outcomes.
 - Once you know what you are looking for, it is never too early to contact potential speakers.
- Be prepared to provide details such as when, where, how often, length of presentation, target audience, etc.
- Trade contact information – email, work and cell phone numbers.
- Request the speaker’s biography for introductions (as needed).
- Request audio/visual needs in writing.
- Confirm needs for tables, electricity or other needed presentation materials.

Speaker Considerations for Rotation Schedules

- Have a set amount of time for stops at each station, allow a few minutes for groups to rotate.
- Spread your groups out, speakers should not have to compete for attention.
- Plan restroom breaks for your speakers.
- Consider providing “goodie bags” complete with bottled water and various snacks for your speakers.
- Avoid varying age groups - it is difficult to relate to high schoolers and 1st graders during the same presentation.
- If you are hosting an event for students, provide related accurate agricultural information for teachers to use in their classrooms as well.

The Week Before

- Follow-up with all speakers, making sure you confirm their presentation needs. It’s also very important to double-check the date, time and location.
 - Ask your speaker(s) to arrive early so they can set-up and make sure there is plenty of time to provide for any extra needs that may arise.
 - Provide all presenters with a copy of the day’s agenda.
- Follow-up with all volunteers, making sure you confirm their duties for the event. Again, it’s very important to double-check the date, time and location.
 - Provide a copy of the day’s agenda to all volunteers. Be sure they know the scheduled rotation of stations.
 - Assign volunteers to greet presenters and to offer their assistance.
 - If needed, provide speaker biographies for introductions by volunteers.
- Be specific with directions, out-of-town speakers and/or volunteers may not be familiar with your location.
- Remind everyone involved about your contingency plan in case the event needs to be rescheduled.

The Week After

- Send a thank-you note to presenters and volunteers.
 - If you’re planning additional programs, mention that you look forward to their continued involvement.
- Evaluate your event.
 - How will you determine if your event was a success? By the number of attendees? The amount of money you raised? The message? How you engaged members or the public? These are all things to consider when you set your initial goals and objectives.
 - A follow-up survey sent to everyone involved is a great way to determine how the program could be improved in the future.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

This is a great opportunity to involve your county leadership team!

When recruiting volunteers, remember people volunteer for different reasons such as wanting to make a difference, having an opportunity to meet new people, or by learning or experiencing something new. A positive volunteer experience means they may volunteer again. Above all, make sure your volunteers feel welcomed and that they feel like what they did was worth their time.



Possible Volunteer Opportunities:

Event Coordinator

- Responsible for organizing the event and securing the facility.

Budget Coordinator

- Responsible for creating and sticking to a budget.

Volunteer Coordinator

- Responsible for recruiting and scheduling volunteers.
 - Consider partnerships with other organizations to assist.
 - Make sure everyone knows their role.

Presentation/Equipment Coordinator

- Responsible for contacting speakers, setting time frames and securing presentation needs (i.e.: audio/visual, table(s) & chair(s), electrical needs, etc.)
- Responsible for the pick-up and return of any equipment.

Materials Coordinator

- Responsible for determining what materials are needed and identifying potential sources to obtain them either by purchasing them, borrowing them or having them donated.

Publicity Coordinator

- Responsible for the development of invitations, flyers, press releases, event programs, emails, social media posts, etc. and should also be the contact for public inquiries regarding the event.

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

For volunteers who don't have much time or for those who have a specific interest, any of the opportunities listed above may be broken down into smaller duties.

PUBLICITY

Even with the most amazing line-up, you need publicity to get people to attend.



Create tools to assist you in obtaining coverage of your event, including:

- Pre-Event Media Alert
- Post-Event News Release

Consider the following:

- Promote your event with a social media campaign
- Have you established relationships with local media outlets?
 - If not, contact them to introduce yourself as a source of accurate information about agriculture and Farm Bureau.
- Visiting with local reporters can help you build rapport and generate interest in your program and Farm Bureau.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Social media event invitations are free and are an easy way to spread your message quickly.



Pre-Event Push

- Create an event.
- Entice people to attend by promoting the event in advance.
 - You can spend as little as \$5!
- Highlight the basics: who, what, when, where and why.

Realtime Sharing

- Post photos, live-tweets, Facebook Live, etc., as the event unfolds. Be sure to tag your sponsors.

Post-Event Follow-Up

- Provide details such as total number of participants, quotes from attendees and what was unique or educational about the event.
- Tag sponsors and people in the photos to expand your reach.

KEY MESSAGES/THEMES

Ensure your message stands out by using themes and logos.



- Choose a timely theme.
- Create a tagline related to your theme.
 - Keep it short, memorable and descriptive.
- Design a related logo to represent your event.
 - Logos are effective branding tools that may be used to brand t-shirts, water bottles, bags, etc.
- Include your county Farm Bureau logo on materials as a way to market yourself.
- If a Kansas Farm Bureau logo is used, the request must be made to KFB Marketing Staff Meagan Cramer, cramerm@kfb.org or Sandi Cowdin, cowdins@kfb.org.

OTHER

Take into consideration these special additions/items as needed:



- Food
- Music
- Decorations
- Flowers
- Photography
- Clean Up

Additional Resources

Eventbrite.com – Registration (online sign-up, payment and tracking; on-site sign-in, etc.)

Canva.com – A free graphic design site that makes creating social media art, posters and more easy.