

TIPS FOR GETTING THE WORD OUT

When publicizing your National Prevention Week event or activity, it is vital to maximize the event's visibility by promoting it to your intended audience effectively.

While traditional methods, such as media outreach and advertising, are popular promotional strategies, you can also spread the word inexpensively by focusing on promotion through local resources described below.

Always remember to keep your intended audience in mind. If wide-reaching exposure is your goal, consider a large campaign to spread the word. If you want to focus on reaching a specific population, such as youth or community leaders, narrow your outreach efforts to local businesses and community centers and schools, and other locations that are popular with these specific groups.

Publicize Your Event Locally

Hosting a prevention event or activity can rally your community around substance use prevention and mental health promotion.

By spreading the word locally, you will ensure that your community members are aware of your group's or organization's prevention efforts. Below are some free and low-cost ways to publicize your event within the community and the surrounding area.



TIP

Tell SAMHSA about your National Prevention Week event or activity! **Submit details** about your event for a chance to be featured in future National Prevention Week activities or promotional materials.

ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND

If you team up with local businesses, chambers of commerce, organizations, or community members to publicize your event or activity, be sure to provide them with an ample number of flyers, information to post on their website or include in their e-newsletter, and a contact number for someone who can give them additional information about your event.

Local Businesses

Many communities have coffee shops, restaurants, barbershops, beauty salons, grocery stores, bookstores, libraries, theaters, commissaries, pharmacies, health and sports facilities, and other places where community members spend time and share information. Brainstorm to identify popular and trusted local organizations in your community, then approach them about helping to promote your event or activity. Can you post flyers in their window or on their announcement board? Can you leave a stack of cards at the checkout counter announcing the event? Do they have a way to reach their customers online—through a website, Facebook page, Instagram account, or email distribution list—and would they be willing to share information about your event or activity there?

Nonprofit Organizations and Associations

Consider connecting with national and local organizations such as Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Rotary or Lions clubs, parent-teacher association (PTA), Knights of Columbus, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), National Urban League, or the National Latino Behavioral Health Association to increase your event's visibility. These organizations often have a strong local presence and large membership rosters, providing a powerful voice in the community. Supply volunteers and organizations with a simple card or flyer that highlights the information you'd like to share, in addition to a website or phone number that anyone can turn to for more information.

Community Centers and Schools

Is your event geared toward youth? Families? Intergenerational groups? Senior citizens? Community centers and schools can provide ways to spread the word about your event to specific audiences. Make sure to contact the director of the community center or the principal of the school to get approval on publicizing your event or activity within the center or school, and to find out if there are regulations on what materials you can post and where. You may also want to ask if there is an upcoming assembly or gathering where you can announce your prevention event or activity.

Places of Worship

Faith-based organizations and places of worship can offer another way to promote your event or activity. You may be able to share flyers or include information about your event in a weekly bulletin or in a congregation's e-newsletter or website. You also may want to reach out specifically to youth groups within the organization. However, be sure to first talk to leadership within the organization or place of worship to ensure that you are following any guidelines and policies they have in place.

Community Event Calendars

Print and online community events calendars are great opportunities for free event promotion. Contact your local newspaper to see if it has a community events calendar. Request that your event or activity be included in the calendar listings. Be sure to research the deadlines to submit information in advance of your event and ask about online listings, as well. Because you are often given a limited space to describe your event or activity, list the most important details (what, where, when, and why) and provide readers with a website or phone number that they can turn to for more information.

Word of Mouth

Never doubt the power of word of mouth in gaining your community's attention! Encourage staff and volunteers to promote the event or activity to their friends and other organizations or groups with which they are affiliated. Provide them with talking points that highlight the key messages and information to share.



Ways to Get Started

Follow the steps below to start publicizing your prevention event or activity locally.

LOCAL RESOURCE	ACTION STEPS
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify popular and trusted local businesses in your community. • Ask to post flyers in their window or on their announcement board or leave a stack of flyers announcing your event. • Determine if they are willing to promote your event through their website or social media accounts.
Nonprofit Organizations and Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify influential nonprofit organizations and associations in your community. • Ask them to share a locally developed flyer with highlights about your upcoming event with their members or constituencies. • Determine if they are willing to promote your event through their website, social media accounts, or email list.
Community Centers and Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the center director or school principal to get approval to publicize your event on the premises. Ask if there is an upcoming assembly or gathering where you can make an announcement about your event or if there is an email list or forum for parents where information can be shared.
Places of Worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask to share flyers or include information about your event in a weekly bulletin or in a congregation's e-newsletter or website. • Identify and engage any youth groups affiliated with the place of worship. • Ask to make a presentation to or host an educational activity with their youth groups or share flyers/information for distribution at youth group events.
Community Event Calendars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your local newspaper to see if it has a community events calendar (print or online). Request that your event be included in the calendar listing as your event approaches.
Word of Mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop simple talking points about your upcoming event (e.g., event name, date, location) to share with volunteers. Ask volunteers to email or speak with friends, other groups they are affiliated with, and community members about your event.