

## How to Organize an Impactful Event A Checklist

You may have written letters to the editor of your local newspaper. You might have emailed your senator or local representative. You may have called their offices or even visited them in person. **But how do we all work together as a community to stand up for science? Plan an event.** Whether you invite your elected official to a community festival or event with your neighbors and members of local institutions; organize a letter writing party and letter drop-off to your elected official's office; or put together a film screening or teach-in to broaden the network of people who may take action in defense of science—events you organize can motivate members of your community and your elected officials to stand up for science.

*Below is a checklist to ensure you cover five elements of an effective and impactful event. While not exhaustive, this can serve as a tool to guide your strategic planning and implementation of your event.*

### **Setting your goal and strategies:**

- Brainstorm with planning group, and agree on concrete outcomes of the event and benchmarks for success
  - *Note: Remember that events can serve multiple purposes. They can be effective for attracting new members, raising funds, getting media attention, influencing policymakers, and educating & promoting dialogue on your issue. They can also serve as a springboard to direct action aimed at a social or policy change.*
- Draft the top 2-3 takeaways for attendees (This will guide the program, as well as promotional language to set expectations for event.)
- Identify key audiences for the event
- Take inventory of assets and connections to help shape or support a successful event (Consider resources within your group, institutions, and local community.)

### **Designing a compelling program:**

- Map out the best format and tone to meet your goals (i.e. panel, rally, training, teach-in)
- Identify the best voices and messengers for an informative and authentic discussion
- Match the content of the event to your benchmarks for success
- Identify all the venue and supply needs to ensure the event runs smoothly
- Confirm that the message and appearance of any materials reflect your objectives and intended audience
- Develop a timeline that breaks down all tasks and those responsible for them (recruitment, materials, publicity, media, content, presenter/ partner liaising, etc.) to ensure smooth attendee participation, from start to finish
- Conduct a walk-through of the event with the core goals in front of mind

### **Ensuring your event is inclusive:**

- \_\_\_ Take time to learn about communities most impacted on your event's topic covers and their organizing to address the issue
- \_\_\_ Explore any authentic, meaningful opportunities to collaborate with local groups representing impacted communities on the event, or to amplify their stories and work
- \_\_\_ Invite diverse speakers and ensure program has perspectives that represent most impacted communities on the event's topic
- \_\_\_ Check that the language, tone, and format of your recruitment are accessible to the range of intended audiences

### **Recruiting and promoting the event:**

- \_\_\_ Make "publicity pack" with the information and materials needed to easily promote event
  - *Note: Consider the Four C's of recruitment: Connect with people in a friendly way, provide Context of the event and importance of issue, ask for a Commitment, and build Common ground that relates the event to the invitee personally in positive tone.*
- \_\_\_ Brainstorm all "wholesale" venues and tasks for promotion, such as:
  - Online: listservs, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, patches and other community publications
  - Offline: flyer, canvassing, tabling in high-traffic public spaces, banners in public spaces, presentations at related group meetings, press advisories for local papers
- \_\_\_ Map out specific invitees, and send personal invites through individual emails, calls, and meet-ups
- \_\_\_ Explore all personal connections in the event team or partners to expand reach

### **Following up to keep the momentum going:**

- \_\_\_ Design clear next steps or actions for attendees to do after the event
- \_\_\_ Create mechanism to get your attendees' names, contact information, and action interests
- \_\_\_ Develop the communications and tools (e.g. take-home handouts) needed for attendees to envision continued engagement on event's issue
- \_\_\_ Express gratitude to everyone involved in the planning, program, and promotion, and to all who attended
- \_\_\_ Share highlights of event with policymaker staff, local media, institution leaders, or other stakeholders interested in the issue or event
- \_\_\_ Last but not least-- be sure to celebrate all your hard work with your team!