

How to Organize Water Paloozas/Educational Outreach Programs

13 Steps to Successful Events

1. **Getting started:** Identify what method of outreach your organization wants to hold.
 - a. Live demonstrations, exhibit-booths, actively including students and/or community members (hands-on/interactive), etc. Hands-on and demonstrative activities have shown to best grab and maintain younger participant's attention.
2. **Key questions for choosing a location:** a school, a Community Center, a pre-planned community event, etc.
 - a. Who is your target audience? Make sure the material is conveyed in an age-appropriate manor.
 - b. How many people will participate? Be conservative in your estimate for your first year. Note: A school provides the benefit of a "built-in" audience if held during in-session hours.
 - c. How far do you want participants to travel from a central location (site of corresponding conference, site of corresponding service event, etc.)? Use 15 minutes travel time as a restriction. Traveling more than 30 minutes may limit the number of people who participate and waste precious volunteer time.
 - d. How long do you want the event to last? Choose a reasonable length of time given the location and expected attendance. You will want people to want to participate in subsequent years.
3. **Develop an outline.** It can be a paragraph or a page, but should summarize:
 - a. What outreach method you will be employing
 - b. What your goals for the outreach are
 - c. What you will be expected to provide (volunteers, materials, etc.)
 - d. Why other groups should want to partner with your organization
4. **Determine your metrics**
 - a. Set goals and track your progress of meeting them. Track goals and successes from year to year: fundraising, number of volunteers, number of local community participants, effectiveness of outreach method, etc.
5. **Project planning/development**
 - a. Document everything! You will want this for your next event and to hand the leadership role over to the next person.



6. **Identify what materials you need to gather for the outreach**

- a. It's great to work with a local business. They may be able to help with materials, video equipment, port-a-potty, speakers and podium, etc.
- b. What materials do you need (displays, signage, demonstration supplies)?
 - i. Develop a list of possible material vendors. Ask for donations or for discounted/wholesale pricing. Many companies provide donations for events such as this that positively impact the community, just make sure to ask!
 - ii. How much money do you need to raise to cover the cost of materials identified?
- c. Potential Cost Considerations
 - i. Transportation, food/drink for volunteers, t-shirts, banner, activity materials, give aways, insurance, shelter, venue rental, etc.
 - ii. Look to maximize partnerships by partnering with groups that have a venue or available transportation for participants to reduce major costs.

7. **Reach out:** to government entities, nonprofits, schools, etc. to publicize the outreach and suggest participation opportunities.

- a. Identify organizations whose goals align with yours as they make great partners and/or participants

8. **Solicit volunteers:**

- a. Start talking about this event (whatever it might be) and get people excited. It's good to have a champion group (YPs are always enthusiastic) to help spread the word.
- b. If they have to travel, let everyone know so they can plan accordingly.
- c. Have a marketing strategy
 - i. Come up with a catchy name for the event (Water Palooza)!
 - ii. Develop a flyer with the project description, goals, and why people should get involved.
 - iii. Request the organization add this info to the website, marketing emails, newsletters, and post on social media.
 - iv. Feel free to reuse a similar description for each advertisement, you want a consistent message.

9. **Solicit funding:**

- a. Set your donation levels (under \$100, \$100, \$250, etc.) and what the benefit is for each level.
- b. Does your MA host a large event that the donation can be rolled into as a sponsorship?



- c. Don't limit yourself to the typical water-related companies – think about other associations, agencies, businesses that would be interested in supporting an endeavor like yours (community focused).

10. **Frequent communication with the volunteers is key.**

- a. Plan emails to the volunteers at 8 weeks out, 6 weeks, 4 weeks, then every week until the event. Use these communications to provide important logistic information: where to meet, what to wear, whether food is provided, and when the event will start and end.

11. **Day of Event**

- a. Assign volunteers to set-up prior to the event. Typically, 2 hours before the event starts.
 - i. Assign locations of organizations prior to arrival. Align locations in proximity to specific needs they may have to host their activity such as water, electricity, or additional space.
- b. Organizations should be allowed to set-up between 30-60 minutes prior to the event beginning.
- c. Conduct a safety meeting with all volunteers and organizations prior to the start of the event. Identify the location of first aid materials, shelter, available water for drinking, and identify a volunteer to be notified if any safety issues arise.
- d. Welcome participants in a manner to set the tone for your event, it should be exciting and energized!

12. **After the event:**

- a. Send thank you's to key event participants, planners, and all partners/donors (monetary, materials, and in-kind).
- b. Get feedback from the venue host, participants, and partners on how you can improve the event for next time.

13. **Repeat!**

