

PLAN AN EVENT

A successful event takes planning, organization, timing, and follow-up. Use this guide for tips on producing an effective event.

Brainstorm

Events are most effective when they advance your chapter’s overall strategy; they provide great opportunities to recruit members, raise awareness, educate, promote advocacy, and raise funds or materials for the specific issues your chapter has chosen as a focus. Events can also be effective ways of attracting media attention, influencing policymakers, and promoting dialogue on your issue. Agree on your objectives before planning an event.

- After agreeing on your objectives, establish **SMART** goals. The outcome of your event should be:
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Achievable/Ambitious
 - Relevant
 - Time-bound (deadlines)
- Events can lead to direct action aimed at a social or policy change. If you intend to incorporate an action component, establish specific success objectives.

Examples of Success Objectives:

- Written letter from each chapter member
- Published letter to the Editor, Op-Ed (or other publicity)
- Action by Member of Congress (or other elected official)
- Forming a coalition

Successful events require resources.

Take a moment to explore what resources may be in reach. Here are a few possibilities (see [Develop Resources](#) for more information):

Within your PHR chapter	In your community	From PHR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer, writing, or art skills ▪ Media contacts ▪ Connections with businesses ▪ Commitment to the issue ▪ Personal knowledge and/or experiences with the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local relevant institutions ▪ Local businesses ▪ Supportive faculty ▪ Nearby NGOs and other organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PHR Toolkit ▪ PHR videos & reports ▪ PHR staff ▪ Nearby PHR chapters ▪ physiciansforhumanrights.org

Build Coalitions/Work With Others

Build power in numbers. Other groups may be happy to work with your chapter on an event and just require specifics about how they can help.

- Coalition partners can help with planning, publicity, and participation. Be clear on what type of assistance you need.

- Consider partnering with groups such as: the student council, academic departments, faculty associations, other student organizations from your campus or other schools, community groups and NGOs.

Assign Tasks

- Create a timeline with a breakdown of tasks (recruitment, materials, publicity, media, general, etc). Work *backwards* from the due date of each task to ensure all the components come together in timely fashion.
- Plan out your volunteer needs. You will need people to cover the program, recruitment, registration, set-up, folder-stuffing, copying, greeting media, audio-visual set-up, photographer, etc.
- Delegate responsibilities clearly. If you have enough volunteers, set up work teams. Make event planning fun, and express the importance of each person's contribution.
- Check in regularly with your event team to provide support and ensure they meet their goals and timelines.

Build an Audience & Publicize Your Event

- Set a target number of people you hope will attend the event. Make it an ambitious but reachable goal. Consider whether you are looking for sheer numbers and/or certain people, e.g., health professional students, policymakers, the general public.
- The law of halves: Consider that you will reach about half of the people you call or email. Of the people you talk to or reach by email, about half of those will express interest, and about half of those people will actually come. This means that if you want 100 people, 200 have to say yes. For 200 to have said yes, you must have reached 400 people, and sent out emails or tried calling about 800.

Consider the Four C's when recruiting prospective attendees: **Connect** with people in a friendly way; provide the **Context** of the event and importance of issue; ask for a **Commitment**; and **Common ground** (relate the issue or event to the invitee.)

- Start wholesale (group emails/mailings), and end up retail (individual emails, calls, and meetings). Nothing beats individual contact!
- Recruit others to recruit for you. Utilize links from other websites and include event notices in others' newsletters and emails.
- Publicize your event widely!
 - Consider: fliers, listservs, tabling, announcements in class, Facebook & Myspace, banners in public spaces, letters to the editor of school paper, announcements in publications, Evite.com, presentations at club meetings, advertising on T-shirts, public service announcements on your local radio station, and ask faculty to announce your event during class.

Media/Publicity

- Prepare a news advisory to be released ahead of the event and a news release for the day of event (see [Using the Media](#) for how to write and distribute these and then do follow up pitch calls).
- Utilizing strong visuals will increase chances of getting media coverage and will provide a visual record of your event.
- Consider preparing and distributing a press kit (see [PHR online advocacy toolkit](#)).
- Contact Danielle Fox at dfox@phrusa.org if you need help getting media attention; send Danielle any media coverage you receive.
- See the guide [Publicize your Event](#)

Supply Check

- Reserve a venue well in advance; try to find a good fit for your event (parking, price, size, neighborhood, convenience).
- Ask everyone presenting at the event what audio-visual aids they need, ahead of time.
- Be sure the message and appearance of any materials reflect your objectives and are appropriate for your audience. (Very important: contact Danielle for guidelines on using the PHR logo before producing materials!) Give yourself enough time for design, printing, distribution, and transporting materials to the venue prior to the event. Do a separate plan/timeline just for materials.
- Have a sign-in sheet to collect names and contacts of the attendees.

Evaluate & Celebrate

- In a follow-up meeting, have an open Q & A to evaluate the event (What went well? What would you change for the next event?)
- Update contact information.
- Have a post-event celebration with the event team and volunteers.
- Send thank-you cards to all people involved in the event.
- Report your event to Danielle Fox at dfox@phrusa.org. Send pictures and summary paragraph for possible use on the PHR website.

Practice Exercise

Your chapter would like to organize an event on the health crisis in Darfurian refugee camps with the goals of raising community awareness and funds for relief efforts. What specific activities should the event include to accomplish these two goals? What connections and resources may would be helpful to use? Who in your group will lead tasks such as logistics, publicity, and supplies and how will you ensure they are taken care of? How will you follow-up with the event?