

Join the Presidential Fitness Partners in May



Mark the month of May on your calendar and join us in celebration.

Since 1983, May has been observed as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. Individuals and organizations everywhere have joined in the fun to promote awareness of the value of physical activity in the pursuit of happier, healthier, more productive lives. To further this vital mission, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports reached out in 1994 to both public and private organizations to form the Presidential Fitness Partners in May. By working together in this partnership, our individual health and fitness messages will achieve increased public resonance.

Let's move Americans to move themselves in a healthier way this month (and throughout the year). Here are some tips for reaching out during National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

HOW TO GET STARTED



One agency in your area such as a school, company, recreation department, or club should assume leadership and pull together representatives from other local agencies to help. A series of planning and organizing meetings should be held to discuss responsibilities. Committees such as publicity, program development, fund-raising, etc., should be selected. Keep them small and efficient. A lot of work is required to stage a successful fitness month celebration; therefore, everyone selected must be willing to devote time and make a commitment.

FINANCING THE CELEBRATION



It has been demonstrated that a two- or three-day program can be staged effectively with little cost. The effort would certainly be helped if each cooperating agency would provide some financing for preliminary planning purposes. Additional funds may be solicited from local businesses.

The following guidelines may make a fund-raising solicitation more productive.

1. Develop an itemized budget plan with full explanation.
2. Select/appoint a committee of no more than three people to execute the fund solicitation plan.
3. Select a list of companies to be solicited from the local telephone business directory.
4. Contact these businesses early. Ask each to contribute an equal percentage of the total budget.
5. Establish and maintain a bank account and expense ledger for these funds.
6. Offer some type of benefit to each contributor, such as recognition in the official program and in public advertisements.

THE PLAN



National Physical Fitness and Sports Month event plan should include the following elements:

1. Begin planning far enough in advance.
2. Get early commitments on location and space, particularly in areas such as shopping malls.
3. Decide which activities will be included.
4. Develop a schedule of events.
5. Obtain official proclamations from the governor and/or the mayor or appropriate officials.
6. Solicit the assistance of as many local organizations as possible.
7. Form committees and delegate responsibilities.
8. Solicit sponsorship and financial support from local business and industry.
9. Include the media in all planning and provide frequent and continuous information on progress. Work closely with the media and try to get as much publicity as possible.

SUGGESTED EVENTS



Community agencies have sponsored a variety of fitness events that have proven successful including:

1. **Fitness/Health Fair** – A special celebration with participating groups such as the local medical association, heart association, chamber of commerce, business and industry, educational institutions, or clubs. It may be conducted at local malls, in shopping centers, schools, or designated recreation centers.
2. **Fitness Festival** – An organized series of fitness activities involving school, recreation, business and industry, and/or other sports and fitness agencies. Outstanding fitness activities may be highlighted or new fitness programs introduced to the public, that can then be carried out on a long-term basis.
3. **Fitness Talks/Lectures/Film Showings/Television** – Create increased awareness of and participation in local fitness activities by inviting national/state experts, local physicians, health officials, and fitness professionals to participate in talk and lecture programs, film discussions, and/or television shows.
4. **Distance/Fun Runs/Fitness Walks** – Many agencies and groups promote such events as part of their regular fitness programs, and these may be tied into Fitness Month. Assistance may be available from local running clubs or such groups as the National Road Runners of America. It is extremely important, however, that necessary precautions for emergency care be observed in planning and conducting distance runs.

5. **Social Events** – Include community fun days, combinations of multiple events, proclamation signing or reading ceremonies by the governor, mayor, etc., at the end or beginning of an event. This can be done by calling a press conference and inviting medical personnel to cover the initial day or the opening of each agency's celebration.

6. **Sports For All Day** – Agencies/organizations may wish to schedule a series of sports events, tournaments, and other athletic activities highlighting their participation in the celebration.

7. **Fitness/Sports Testing** – Assistance should be enlisted from local medical groups, universities, and/or fitness/sports experts.

8. **Other Suggestions** – Take this opportunity to launch your community's Presidential Sports Award Program or assist your school and others who conduct the President's Challenge Youth Physical Fitness Awards Program (top achievers are eligible for the Presidential Physical Fitness Award).

Aspects of the program may include a focus on youth fitness, employee fitness, fitness for special populations, and events of special emphasis such as 10K runs, volksmarches, walking tours, fitness assessment, and sporting events.



The Sample Proclamation you'll use is as follows: Whereas, The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has designated the month of May (date) and (year) as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month; and created the Presidential Fitness Partners in May;

Whereas, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month is our country's observance of fitness and sports. Many agencies have initiated programs designed to improve our quality of life. As partners, we can better help one another communicate the common message of improved health through physical activity more effectively; and

Whereas, National Physical Fitness and Sports Month is a time when we can do something special to direct deserved national attention to the benefits of physical activity.

Now, therefore, I (name) (governor) or (mayor) of the (name of city or state), do hereby proclaim the month of May (date) and (year) as "Physical Fitness and Sports Month" in (city) or (state) and urge our community to promote physical activity in recognition of this month.



PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

promotion and publicity program are key elements for maximizing participation. Involve the media (television, radio, newspaper) early because they may provide assistance and follow-up.

A fitness or wellness committee may be established to handle this aspect. A face-to-face meeting will help to establish a good relationship.

Make initial media contact at least two months in advance. The more help you will need, the earlier the media should be contacted.

An early discussion of plans with representatives from the media must be followed by a complete schedule of activities. Local weeklies may want to print the entire schedule of events, with times, locations, and phone numbers to contact for additional information.

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