

1. How To Choose and Plan a Successful Youth Project

A key strategy in helping youth form positive lifelong health habits is to encourage them to become health advocates. Youth can plan and implement a project that addresses nutrition and physical activity issues relevant to their neighborhood, home, or school. Youth-driven projects give your program great ways to gain visibility and build community awareness, and help youth to develop and practice important team-building, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and organization skills.

The following are examples of some exciting youth-driven projects that:

Promote Community Education

- Research and produce a public service announcement about nutrition and physical activity for a local cable station; or research, write, and submit an article or editorial to a local paper.
- Develop a resource guide of places where youth can be physically active in their community.
- Conduct a survey of foods served at youth hangouts (shopping mall, corner stores). Make a list of affordable and healthful snack foods available at those locations.
- Work with local restaurants to add healthful menu items or modify existing items to be healthier.
- Conduct a community assessment such as a walkability survey to find the safest and best places for walking in the community. Make a list of those locations.

Influence Policy and Legislation

- Gather information on foods served at class parties and sporting events or sold for school fund raisers. Work with the school to set a health-conscious policy for foods at school functions.
- Write letters or make phone calls to a local public official regarding a nutrition or physical activity issue that affects the community.

Change Organizational Practices

- Work with your school to add healthful food items to school menus and vending machines.
- Work with the school physical education department to broaden the classes taught (e.g., hip-hop dance, swimming).

Strengthen Individual Health Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills

- Conduct parent education meetings on nutrition and physical activity.
- Give parents nutrition and physical activity information so that they can reinforce the health messages your program provides.

To ensure success, it is essential that youth have ownership of the project by being fully involved at each step—from deciding on an issue, to developing an action plan, to completing an evaluation. Youth are full of creative ideas, fresh opinions, energy, and enthusiasm. They can be a valuable asset in exposing issues that affect the community and finding solutions to problems. However, working with youth will require time and patience. All activities should be closely supported and monitored by adult mentors to encourage responsibility and ensure follow-through.

To facilitate a youth-driven project, you will need to help with the following steps:

1. Assessing the environment
2. Deciding on a project
3. Building an action plan
4. Gathering detailed information
5. Reviewing progress

Step 1. Assess the Environment

Have youth think about their neighborhood or their school or home environment: What types of grocery stores, restaurants, and recreational facilities are there? Does their school sell unhealthy foods in the vending machines and at lunch? Do they have opportunities for physical activity during school hours? Does their family regularly participate in physical activity? Are fresh fruits or vegetables available for snacking at home? By observing these aspects of their environments, youth can determine the significant nutrition and physical activity issues and select an area to change or improve.

Use the *Assess Your Environment* handout, or develop your own questions to assist your youth to assess nutrition and physical activity in their environment. You can also use the School Health Index (<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/shi/default.aspx>), a useful assessment tool for school-based nutrition and physical activity. They can use the results of their assessment to make a choice or vote on their top issue.

Tip: These questions can be completed and discussed in groups or completed individually as a homework assignment. For younger youth, we suggest you have them consider one environment only (i.e., school, community, or home).

Step 2. Decide on a Project

Once youth have identified an issue, it's time to come up with a project. Brainstorming is a great way to tap into everyone's ideas. Facilitate a brainstorming activity during a meeting or class, or ask youth to brainstorm ideas with parents and other family members.

1. Brainstorm ideas for a project on the identified issue.

- Everybody must participate and help identify as many ideas as possible—from silly to serious and everything in between.
- Write down everybody's ideas. You'll make choices later.
- Nobody criticizes anybody else's ideas.

2. Narrow ideas by asking questions.

- How much time do we have to complete the project?

- What specifically do we want to do—create a new policy or legislation, change a practice, provide education, or help to improve individual choices?
- Who will be the target audience?
- Which idea will make the most difference or have a lasting impact?
- Which idea has the best chance of succeeding?

3. Choose one idea to work with.

4. Set goals and objectives so that the achievement can be measured.

Use the *Brainstorming Worksheet* handout on page 79.

Issues	Ideas
There are too few planned sports activities in my community.	Survey youth in the neighborhood to come up with ideas for physical activity and present your results to the city council, school district, or community center.
My neighborhood is not a safe place to be physically active.	Assess the neighborhood, come up with ideas for improvements (e.g., increased security/police patrol, lighting, repair sidewalks) and present results to the city council.
My school serves too many high-fat, high-sugar foods.	Work with school food services, school health councils, and/or school administrators to find healthier alternatives to serve at school functions, in the cafeteria, and in vending machines.
We do not have enough opportunities to get physical activity at school.	Develop a petition to give students increased access to the school's recreational facilities and sports equipment before, during, and after school hours. Or Talk with the principal about how to increase opportunities for physical activity during the school day.

Step 3. Build an Action Plan

Have youth build their own action plan by considering what needs to be done, who will do it, and when it should be done. If they are working in groups, make sure that all members are involved by assigning specific tasks from the action plan to each person. Always have an adult available to give direction and keep everyone focused. After each step is completed, have youth assess how their plan is going, identify hurdles, and come up with solutions. This is also a good time for an adult facilitator to provide direction, advice, and positive reinforcement.

Use the *Action Plan* handout on page 81.

Sample Action Plan

Idea: Too few opportunities for community participation in physical activity

Project: Prepare a report for the city council on how to increase community physical activity.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Who Does It</i>	<i>By When</i>
Gather information about physical activity in the neighborhood	All of us	October 4
Take photos of unsafe and unkempt recreation areas, sidewalks, etc.	All of us	November 4
Meet to discuss data and come up with solutions	All of us	December 4
Put together report	All of us	February 4
Write news release	Omar	February 4
Contact media	Joe	February 4
Meet with city council members or attend city council meeting	All of us	March 4

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project Lean, Public Health Institute

Step 4. Gather Detailed Information

Once a decision has been made about an issue and project, the next step is to become familiar with the issue and gather information. Examples might include collecting specific nutrition information on menu items from local restaurants or on snack foods available in school vending machines, surveying students on what they think of foods served at school, or conducting a walkability survey of their neighborhood.

Here's how to get started:

■ Help youth become familiar with their issue.

- Provide learning opportunities such as hands-on activities, handouts, or guest speakers. If your youth project involves improving snack choices, talk about what makes a healthy or poor snack choice and conduct an activity on reading food labels.
- Encourage youth to contact local groups that support similar issues and find out what they do. Examples might include a local chapter of the American Heart Association, a hospital, the school district, the City Parks and Recreation Department, the City Health Department, community-based organizations such as the YMCA or Boys & Girls Clubs, or local businesses such as a health club or grocery store. Have the youth create a list of organizations, groups, businesses, or individuals to contact and potentially work with. (Please refer to the *What Resources Are Available?* handout on page 82.)
- Show youth how they can learn more about their issue via the Internet. (See Resources chapter for a list of nutrition and physical activity Web sites.)

■ Help youth decide what information to collect and develop a data collection tool. For example:

- Collect nutrition information on foods served at school, at home, or in neighborhood restaurants and fast-food places; at movie theaters; and at sporting events.
- Interview students or family members for their opinions on food served or available at school or at home.

- Collect information on community recreation facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers (e.g., safety, hours open to the public, their condition, organized physical activities, equipment available, variety of physical activities available).
- Taste test healthy snack options at school, at home, or in the community.

Sample data collection tools include *What's in Your Vending Machine?*, *Prepared Combination Foods*, and *Walkability Checklist* on pages 83-85.

■ Review the findings.

Step 5. Review Progress

From the time you put your plan into action, evaluation and monitoring are key to determining whether your activities are on track, how well you are moving toward achieving your objectives, and whether your goals have been met. It is important to keep stakeholders and community partners informed and involved in order to effectively gain support and keep communication lines open.

Remind youth about the possibility of challenges that may arise and give them examples in order to prepare them to address the issues they may face. There may also be times when tasks may take longer than expected. This is common and youth can be encouraged to evaluate their progress after they complete each step in their action plan. They can then make adjustments as needed and stay on target.

After the entire project is completed, it is also important to assess whether overall goals were met. Encourage your youth to write an evaluation report. The document could be useful when applying to colleges or for scholarships, and when looking for employment.

Use the *Project Review Worksheet* on page 88.

2. How To Promote and Publicize Your Project

Publicizing your youth project means bringing community awareness to your issue, generating support, and highlighting your program and the positive work it does for youth in the community. Your youth can write letters, make phone calls, give presentations, create a public service announcement, or work with local media. The media especially enjoy hearing from young people, so get the word out about your program and its exciting activities.

Deciding Who to Contact

Your ultimate goal is to reach as many people as possible and get them talking about your project and its positive messages. The first step is to identify who should know about your project and the best way to reach them. Collect information about who's who in your community and make a target contact list. Although working with the media allows you to reach a large number of people at one time, there are always other avenues available to help you reach your target audience. Examples of these are:

- *Local associations and organizations.* If local organizations (e.g., voluntary health groups, universities) are involved with your program, ask their communications departments to help publicize your activities. They can send out press releases, put announcements in their newsletters, and inform their members about your activities.
- *Local politicians (mayor, city council members, school board members, etc.).* You will attract attention simply by having these people involved. You can also work with local or State officials to create a proclamation.
- *Media personalities.* Media outlets are always looking for local stories. (Use the *Working with the Media* handout on page 91.) Watch your news station and read your local newspapers to find out if they have special correspondents who cover community activities, education, health, fitness, or other relevant subjects. You can also contact the assignment editors or reporters yourself. (Please refer to the end of this chapter for additional media support information.)
- *Local sports figures.* Get your local high school, college, semiprofessional, and professional sports teams involved. Many of them are looking for ways to contribute to the community, and their

involvement will generate publicity for your activities. Contact the team's public relations representative.

- *Weather forecasters.* One of the most effective ways to get your message out is through local weather forecasters. They can mention activities and show promotional items on the air. They generally appear several times throughout a newscast and often mention community activities each time.
- *Local DJs.* Enlist a radio personality to help spread the word about your project. Consider making a visit to the radio station while a popular show is broadcast live. Bring the youth along—they may get the chance to talk on the air about their project. They can also create and submit a public service announcement.

Developing Promotional Materials

Now that you know who you want to tell, you need to decide what you want to tell them. Your goal is to catch their attention.

- *Develop a press release.* A press release conveys information about your project in a quick and easy-to-read fashion. Make sure to include who, what, when, where, how, and why clearly and concisely. Also include the title, date, time, and location as well as a contact person and phone number for further information. Be sure to state if the press release is written by the youth. People will be much more interested in your story. You can develop a press kit with additional information such as a backgrounder (information on your program and participants and activities), biographies, photos, activity descriptions, etc. Assemble the kit with the most important information in the front and any secondary information in the back. (There is a *Sample Press Release* on page 97.)
- *Create a public service announcement.* Have the youth develop their own public service announcement by dividing up the tasks (writer, recorder, supervisor, timekeeper, etc.).
- *Submit an article or editorial to a local newspaper.*
- *Create posters and flyers.* These can be hung in local storefronts or on community information boards.

Making Contact

Develop a media contact list to use to spread the word about your project.

- *Contact the media.* When working with the media, it is especially important to contact the right person. In large metropolitan areas, media directories are often available at most public libraries. You can also contact the station or publication directly and find out who covers the nutrition, health, food, or community beat. Mail or fax a copy of your press release or kit along with a cover letter explaining your project and why it would be a good story to cover. You might find that you get the best response by faxing your press release. Use the *Working With the Media*, *Media Contact List*, *Media Plan Checklist*, and *Sample Media Advisory* handouts at the end of this chapter.
- *Contact your weather forecaster.* Write an introductory letter. Briefly discuss your activities and request his or her participation. Prepare a special promotional gift, like a basket of fresh fruit and vegetables, a healthy menu cookbook, or sample healthy snacks. Your gift may end up on television, so make sure it looks attractive and appealing. Include your press kit with the gift, and if possible deliver it in person to the station.
- *Write letters.* A letter is a great way to either inform someone about your project or get someone to support your cause.
- *Make phone calls.* There are two handouts to assist in telephoning: *Making Phone Calls* and *Phone Guide*.
- Contact the community calendar sections of the local newspapers and television stations to post your activity.
- Include articles written by youth in your parent newsletter.

3. How To Work With Parents, Community Members, and Community Institutions

Getting parents and the community involved in supporting your youth projects is essential. Parents and community members can create a positive environment by being role models—setting a good example by being physically active and making healthy eating choices. They can also offer an abundance of valuable resources such as time, money, supplies, expertise, feedback, and free publicity.

Consider involving the following community members in your project:

Who	How They Can Support
Parents	Make introductions to key policy makers, transport youth to special events, help conduct activities
Teachers	Assign credit for student projects
City council members	Get traffic patterns changed
Local school districts/representatives	Change vending machine options, school policies
Religious group representatives	Support events, publicize projects at worship services or in the group’s newsletter
Health care providers/hospital	Provide health information, meeting space for events, resources (handouts)
Business leaders, especially those in the food or fitness industries	Donate foods or sports equipment, sponsor events, teams
Media representatives	Publicize events, issues
Local sports figures	Help get local press coverage, attend events, speak at parent meetings
Other youth	Provide information, help conduct surveys, put up flyers about community meetings

4. Handouts

Choose and Plan a Project

- Assess Your Environment
- Brainstorming Worksheet, Sample
- Brainstorming Worksheet
- The Action Plan
- What Resources Are Available?
- What's in Your Vending Machine?
- Prepared Combination Foods
- Walkability Checklist
- Project Review Worksheet

Promote and Publicize Your Project

- Making Phone Calls
- Phone Guide
- Working With the Media
- Media Plan Checklist
- Media Contact List
- Sample Media Advisory
- Sample Press Release
- Sample Backgrounder
- Sample Fact Sheet

Assess Your Environment

In Your Neighborhood

1. Can you buy fresh fruits and vegetables and milk and milk products at the stores near your home?
 Yes No
2. Can you buy lower fat foods such as lowfat (1%) or fat-free milk, or whole-wheat or other whole-grain breads?
 All the time Never
 Sometimes, explain _____ Don't know
3. Are there fast-food places in your neighborhood?
 A lot Not a lot
 Sort of, explain _____ Don't know
4. Are there any restaurants that serve lowfat foods?
 A lot Not a lot
 Sort of, explain _____ Don't know
5. Is there a park or community center in your neighborhood?
 Yes No Don't know
6. Do they offer sports programs and activities for young people and families?
 A lot A few
 None Don't know
7. Are the parks in your neighborhood safe and clean?
 Yes No
 Sort of, explain _____ Don't know
8. Are there enough stop signs, traffic lights, and speed bumps in your neighborhood?
 Yes No
 Sort of, explain _____ Don't know

At Your School

- Does your cafeteria serve fruits and vegetables?
 Every day Sometimes Never Don't know
- Does your cafeteria serve fast food (from restaurant franchises)?
 Every day Sometimes Never Don't know
- Does your cafeteria serve (offer) whole-grain foods?
 Every day Sometimes Never Don't know
- How many vending machines does your school have?
 1-2 3-4 5-6 More than 6 Don't know
- Do the vending machines have lowfat, low-sugar snacks such as fruit, granola bars, water, and 100% juices?
 Yes No
 Sort of, explain _____ Don't know
- Does your school sell candy, cakes, cookies, and other sweets at bake sales or fundraisers?
 All the time Never
 Sometimes, explain _____ Don't know
- How often do students have physical education?
 Every day Every other day 2 times a week
 Never Other _____
- Can students use sport equipment (balls, jump ropes, etc.) during lunch and breaks or after school?
 All the time
 Sometimes, explain _____ Never
- Does your school organize games (basketball, volleyball, etc.) during breaks or lunch?
 All the time
 Sometimes, explain _____ Never
- Can students use school sport facilities (gym, track, weight room, pool) before or after school?
 All the time
 Sometimes, explain _____ Never

In Your Home

1. What foods can you snack on at home? (Check all that apply.)

- cookies chips granola bars yogurt
 fruit veggies bagels other _____

2. If you pack a lunch for school, what foods do you have?
(Check all that apply.)

- sandwich leftovers cookies chips
 granola bar yogurt veggies fruit other _____

3. What is there to drink in your house? (Check all that apply.)

- water soda fruit drink
 1% milk whole milk fat-free milk
 100% fruit juice (e.g., orange, apple, etc.) other _____

4. How many times does your family eat out during the week?

- Every day 4 times a week 2 times a week
 Once a week Rarely

5. Do you have sports equipment (bike, balls, roller blades, etc.) at home?

- Yes No, Explain _____

6. Are your parents physically active?

- All the time Sometimes, explain _____ Never

Which issue would you like to address?

We know that eating healthfully and staying physically active are important to our health. You have described some characteristics of your neighborhood, school, and home that make it difficult to be healthy. Now it's time to think about what you can do to make it easier for young people to eat healthfully and stay physically active in your community.

Which problem is most important to try to solve? Choose one of these issues or come up with your own.

- Restaurants in my neighborhood do not have enough healthful menu items.
- It is difficult to find healthful food/snacks in my neighborhood.
- There are too few planned sports activities in my community.
- My neighborhood is not a safe place to be physically active.
- My school serves too much processed and high-fat food.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to get physical activity at school.
- There is not enough fresh and healthful food at my home.
- My family eats too much fast food.
- My family does not get the recommended amount of physical activity.
- Your own issue _____

Steps to Brainstorming:

- A. Come up with ideas.
- B. Narrow ideas by asking questions.
- C. Choose one basic idea to work with.
- D. Set goals and objectives.

A. Come up with ideas

Issue: *It is difficult to find healthy snacks/food in my neighborhood.*

What you could do:

1. *Do a community food assessment to determine healthy food availability.*
2. *Plan a food fair. Invite local restaurants to provide healthy menu items.*
3. *Cook a healthy meal and invite parents and community guests.*

B. Narrow ideas by asking questions

After you compile a list of ideas, it's time to make a choice. Ask the following questions to help you make your decision.

- How much time will you have to complete your project? *6 months*
- Who will your target audience be? *Youth*
- Which project will make the most difference and have the longest effect?
- Which project has the best chance of succeeding?

C. Choose one idea

Idea: *Do a community food assessment to determine healthy food availability.*

D. Set goals and objectives:

1. *Survey local stores and restaurants to determine healthy foods and menu items.*
2. *Develop a neighborhood meal/snack guide featuring places to purchase healthy foods.*
3. *Distribute guide to youth in the neighborhood to increase awareness of healthy foods available in the community.*

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

Steps to Brainstorming:

- A. Come up with ideas.
- B. Narrow ideas by asking questions.
- C. Choose one basic idea to work with.
- D. Set goals and objectives.

A. Come up with ideas

Issue: *Not enough opportunities for youth to be physically active.*

What you could do:

1. *Do a community walkability assessment.*
2. *Develop a neighborhood resource guide of places to be physically active.*
3. *Plan a community physical activity event.*

B. Narrow ideas by asking questions

After you compile a list of ideas, it's time to make a choice. Ask the following questions to help you make your decision.

- How much time will you have to complete your project? *6 months*
- Who will your target audience be? *Youth*
- Which project will make the most difference and have the longest effect?
- Which project has the best chance of succeeding?

C. Choose one idea

Idea: *Do a community walkability assessment.*

D. Set goals and objectives:

1. *Survey neighborhood to determine if it's a safe place to walk.*
2. *Develop a news release.*
3. *Meet with city and school officials to discuss results.*

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

Brainstorming Worksheet

Steps to Brainstorming:

- A. Come up with ideas.
- B. Narrow ideas by asking questions.
- C. Choose one basic idea to work with.
- D. Set goals and objectives.

A. Come up with ideas

Issue:

What you could do:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

B. Narrow ideas by asking questions

After you compile a list of ideas, it's time to make a choice. Ask the following questions to help you make your decision.

- How much time will you have to complete your project?

- Who do you want your target audience to be?

- Which project will make the most difference and have the longest effect?

- Which project has the best chance of succeeding?

C. Choose one idea

Idea:

D. Set goals and objectives:

1.

2.

3.

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

The Action Plan

Now it's time to put all of your ideas into an Action Plan. This means you need to figure out what has to be done, who will be responsible for doing it, and when it should be completed.

Project: _____

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Who Does It</i>	<i>By When</i>

What Resources Are Available?

Build a list of organizations, groups, and companies that you would like to contribute to your project. You will need to communicate with these people through letters and phone calls.

Project:

Name	Phone
Organization	
Address	
Notes	

Name	Phone
Organization	
Address	
Notes	

Name	Phone
Organization	
Address	
Notes	

Name	Phone
Organization	
Address	
Notes	

Name	Phone
Organization	
Address	
Notes	

What's in Your Vending Machine?

Data collector: _____ Vending machine location: _____

Name and brand of the item.	Size or amount in the pack	How many servings per package?	Price	How much is in each serving?						Where is sugar listed on the ingredients list?
				Total Fat grams	% DV for Fat	% DV for saturated fat	% Daily Value of sodium	Fiber in grams	% DV for fiber	
<i>Example: peanut butter cracker sandwiches</i>	<i>1 package (50g)</i>	<i>1 (sometimes it's 2 or more)</i>	<i>\$0.85</i>	<i>16g</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>1g</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>It is the 4th item on the list</i>

Walkability Checklist

Everyone benefits from walking. But walking needs to be safe and easy. Take a walk with your child and use this checklist to decide if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk. If you find problems, there are ways you can make things better.

Getting started: Pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house, or just somewhere fun to go. Read over the checklist before you go and, as you walk, note the locations of things you would like to change. At the end of your walk, circle an overall rating for each question. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk.

Rating scale

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 = awful | 4 = good |
| 2 = many problems | 5 = very good |
| 3 = some problems | 6 = excellent |

1. Did you have enough room to walk safely?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

- Yes Some problems: (use rating scale)
- ___ Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
 - ___ Sidewalks were broken or cracked
 - ___ Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, dumpsters, etc.
 - ___ No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
 - ___ Too much traffic
 - ___ Something else? _____

Locations of problems: _____

2. Was it easy to cross the streets?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Yes Some problems: (use rating scale)

__ Road was too wide

__ Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross

__ Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals

__ Parked cars blocked our view of traffic

__ Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic

__ Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair

__ Something else? _____

Locations of problems: _____

3. Did drivers behave well?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Yes Some problems: (use rating scale)

Drivers...

__ Backed out of driveways without looking

__ Did not yield to people crossing street

__ Turned into people crossing streets

__ Drove too fast

__ Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through red lights

__ Something else? _____

Locations of problems: _____

4. Was it easy to follow safety rules?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Could you and your child...

Yes No

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?

Stop and look left, right, and left again before crossing streets?

Walk on sidewalks, or shoulders (if no sidewalks), facing traffic?

Cross with the light?

Locations of problems: _____

5. Was your walk pleasant?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Yes Some unpleasant things: (use rating scale)

__ Needs more grass, flowers, or trees

__ Scary dogs

__ Suspicious activity

__ Not well lit

__ Dirty, lots of litter or trash

__ Something else? _____

Locations of problems: _____

How does your neighborhood stack up?

Add up your ratings and decide.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

() = total

How did your neighborhood rate?

26–30 Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking.

21–25 Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good.

16–20 Okay, but it needs work.

11–15 It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.

5–10 Call out the National Guard before you walk. It's a disaster area.

Taken from National Child Passenger Safety Week Activities, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site, www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/ped/walk1.html.

Project Review Worksheet

Take a minute to think about your work and answer these questions.

1. What have you done so far? What steps have you taken?
2. Which steps worked? Which steps didn't work? Why didn't they work and what did you do about it?
3. Have you made any changes to your plan?
4. What new skills did you learn?

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

Making Phone Calls

Making calls to potential donors, supporters, and volunteers is a way to get support for your project or event.

When you make a phone call, follow these tips:

1. Fill out a copy of the phone guide.
2. Get permission to use the phone.
3. Have paper and pencil handy for note taking.
4. When someone on the other end answers, always introduce yourself by giving your name, age, and the program you belong with. Speak clearly and slowly enough to be easily understood.
5. If the person you are calling is not there, ask what time he or she is expected to return.
6. Write down the time and call back then.
7. If you need to leave a message, make sure to leave your name, your program, phone number, the best time to call you back, and a short message about why you are calling. Don't be afraid to call back as many times as it takes to get a response!
8. While you have your contact on the phone, get the correct spelling of his or her name, title, mailing address, and phone number.
9. Always say thank you before saying good-bye.

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

Phone Guide

Fill out this Phone Guide before you make your calls.

Contact Information

Contact name: _____ Contact title: _____

Contact organization: _____ Contact e-mail: _____

Contact phone: _____ Contact fax: _____

Contact address: _____

Hello, may I please speak to [contact name] ?

**My name is _____ and I am _____ years old and am
enrolled in the [program name]_____.**

I am calling to speak to you about...

Why you are calling. What you want to say or ask:

Notes: Write down what your contact tells you:

Thank you very much. Good bye.

Your Information

Sometimes your contact will ask for more information about you. Fill out the section below so that you have the information handy.

Name of your program: _____

Program address: _____

Program phone: _____ Program fax: _____

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

Working With the Media

Make a media contact list for newspapers and radio and TV stations

Find the phone numbers and addresses in the phone book. Call newspapers and radio and TV stations to ask which reporters cover health and education. Put all the names, phone and fax numbers, and addresses you find into a media contact list.

Write a Letter to the Editor

Newspapers print letters to the editor. These letters express opinions about issues that affect the community. You can find the editor's name and address on the editorial page of the newspaper.

Write a Media Advisory

A media advisory is a little different from a press release. It is not a narrative description of what you are doing. Instead, it is a snappy heads-up with a few facts and reasons why the media should be interested in reporting your project or attending your event. See the sample on page 96.

Write a Press Release

A press release is a written description of a news story or event. A press release should be short and to the point—no more than two typed pages. Your press release should include:

WHAT WHO WHEN WHERE WHY

Make sure that reporters know that the release was written by young people. They will be much more interested in your event or project. Fax or mail a copy of your press release to all of the reporters on your media contact list, then telephone them to make sure that they have received it.

It is a good idea to include a quote from someone who supports your project. This could be from one of your youths or from someone who is important in your community—a business person; civic, political, or religious leader; or other influential person who supports or endorses what you are doing.

Backgrounders and Fact Sheets

These are other ways to present information to your media contacts, which you can include with your press release or media advisory. They allow you to go into greater detail about your project—history, facts and figures, lists of supporters, and other information that would help a reporter write a story. See pages 98 and 99.

Create a Public Service Announcement

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are announcements that publicize the events and activities of nonprofit organizations. TV or radio stations donate the broadcast time so that the announcement can be played on the radio or viewed on TV. PSAs are usually 10-60 seconds long.

When developing your PSA, always remember:

- Keep it short and simple
- Identify the main issue in the first 10 seconds
- Emphasize the solution and the problem

After you get media coverage, remember to get a copy of the article, or a recording of the TV or radio story. If you are unable to record it, politely ask your media contact for one. You may have to purchase it.

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

Media Plan Checklist

Make Contact

- Collect basic information on who's who in the media including local radio, TV, daily, weekly and monthly newspapers, and local and regional magazines.
- Check out content and style of programs, specialized columns.
- Identify ethnic and specialized publications in the community, if applicable.

Know Your Media

- Get to know the reporters and editors.
- Know who covers what "beat"—education, schools, food, health, nutrition, chefs, and restaurants.
- Call local newsrooms.
- Note who has covered community events in the past.

Research Other Media Sources

- Ask chefs which writers may have covered them in the past and if they have their own publicist.
- Keep a clipping file of stories from publications that have articles on food, health/nutrition, schools, education, chefs, communities, etc.

- Use the News Media Yellow Book (available at most public libraries) and other library resources.
- Contact print media that needs longer lead time—monthly magazines and publications.

Establish a Relationship With the Media

- Designate specific spokesperson(s) to talk to the media.
- Contact assignment editors.
- Develop your press release and teaser.

Press Release

- Tell who, what, where, when, how, and why as clearly and concisely as possible.
- Think of who the audience is and what would appeal to them.
- Try to keep to one page.
- Be creative and innovative—make it stand out from the others.
- Include title, date, and location.
- Include a contact person and phone number for further information.

Teaser

- Develop a creative media attention getter.

Mail Press Release and Teaser

- Find out who is the right person to fax, mail, or e-mail press releases, background information, and “teasers” to. Faxing is usually the best way.
- Ask to speak to that person to establish a personal contact and to get them interested in the upcoming activity.
- If contact can not be made on the telephone, then fax or mail an introductory letter. Set up a personal meeting, if necessary.

Questions for the Media

- Name, media outlet, phone/fax numbers.
- Deadline for publication or broadcast AND when the story will run.
- Encourage a photographer or camera crew to accompany the reporter.
- Find out if the outlet has a special angle to cover on the event.
- Fax information to them.

Assemble the Media Kit

- Include press release, biographies/photos of chefs, and chef recipes.

- Provide reporters with media kit as soon as possible.
- Designate a photographer.

Reach Out

- Contact reporters to remind them of the activity 2 or 3 days in advance.

Last Minute

- Telephone media contacts to remind them of the activity the day before.
- If the media contact is unable to attend, make sure to get follow-up materials and photos to them.
- Be sure to have all press attendees sign in; give them a map of the activity.
- Capture addresses, phone numbers, and affiliation.
- Keep track of all media attended and interested parties who were unable to attend the event and who may do a follow-up story.
- Assign a guide to direct media to activities.

Follow up

- Collect all newspaper articles written; ask media outlets for copies of their story.
- Evaluate the event. Take notes as to what might be done next time.

Media Contact List

Use this worksheet to list newspapers and television and radio stations in your community.

Project: _____

Name _____

Newspaper or Station _____

Address _____

Phone and Fax Numbers _____

Notes _____

Name _____

Newspaper or Station _____

Address _____

Phone and Fax Numbers _____

Notes _____

Name _____

Newspaper or Station _____

Address _____

Phone and Fax Numbers _____

Notes _____

Name _____

Newspaper or Station _____

Address _____

Phone and Fax Numbers _____

Notes _____

Adapted from *Playing the Policy Game*, California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

Sample Media Advisory

For more information, contact:
[Contact name and phone number]

Media Advisory

Who: [Your program and other participants]

What: Community Walk-a-Thon, an opportunity for all ages to experience how walking can be a fun and easy way to get daily physical activity.

When: [Date, time of event]

Where: [Location of route]

Interview

Opportunities: [List school principal, teacher, organization or agency director, event coordinator, and all distinguished guests who will participate.]

Photo

Opportunities: [List activities that would make good pictures.]
Some examples include:

- Local celebrities participating in the event
- Young and old people participating together
- Exhibits
- Supporters

Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release
[Date]

For more information, contact:
[Contact name and phone number]

[Program youth] are taking strides to increase community participation in regular physical activity

Youth participating in the [program name] are organizing a walk-a-thon to take place on [date, time, location]. The goal of the event is to promote walking as an easy and fun way for [community name] members of all ages to stay active. Proceeds from the event will help to support [describe program activities here].

[Program name] student and teachers will be joined by [name distinguished guests and supporters]. People of all ages are encouraged to participate. The day's activities will include [brief description of route and special attractions].

The day's activities will include a 3-mile scenic walk through the [community name]. Upon completion, all participants will receive [list prizes and refreshments] courtesy of [list supporters]. Information on healthy eating and opportunities to be physically active for [community members] will be available at booths staffed by [local nutrition and physical activity organizations].

[Insert quote from supporter—sample] “[Walk-a-thon supporter] has a strong interest in supporting activities that empower youth to make a difference in the lives of [community name] members. We are pleased to be a part of today's event and will continue to reinforce and support the community's efforts to increase participation in safe and enjoyable physical activity.”

[Insert quote from program spokesperson—sample] “So many chronic diseases in our community (diabetes, high blood pressure) can be prevented through a healthful diet that does not exceed an individual's caloric need in conjunction with regular physical activity. We realize that regular physical activity is also an important part of leadership development. We want our youth to be role models for the community by engaging in health-promoting activities. Walking is a safe, fun, and affordable activity that can be enjoyed by all.”

Sample Backgrounder

[Your program's name]

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone

School principal, teacher, organization or agency director:

Event Coordinator:

[Other pertinent participants]

Program enrollment:

Age groups:

Brief description of your program and its commitment to nutrition and physical activity issues as related to your event.

Description of the theme and goal of the event.

List activities to take place.

Give location, date, and time of event.

List everyone who will participate.

Other Facts:

[This is a good place to list other interesting facts about your program, including any prominent people who are members or who have supported any of your activities, other special programs or partnerships, etc.]

Sample Fact Sheet

Fact Sheet

[Program name] Community Walk-a-thon

- In 2002, 696,947 people died of heart disease (51 percent of them women), accounting for 29 percent of all U.S. deaths.
- 20.8 million people in the United States have diabetes.
- 65 percent of the population is overweight or obese.
- Regular physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases, including high blood pressure, stroke, coronary artery disease, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, and osteoporosis.
- Over half of U.S. adults do not engage in physical activity at levels consistent with public health recommendations.
- Less than 50 percent of American children engage in physical activity that promotes long-term health and cardiovascular benefits.
- [School or program name] has made the promotion of physical activity an important part of our program, through role modeling and actively engaging youth participants in sharing these messages with their families and community.
- The goal of our walk-a-thon is to engage our youth through creating opportunities for physical activity that are enjoyable, meet the needs of the community, and involve and encourage participation of friends, peers, parents, and community members.
- The walk-a-thon will include [list activities]
- The walk-a-thon will take place [give location, date, and time]
- Participants include [list other participants]

