

EVALUATING THE NEED FOR YOUR EVENT

When deciding to sponsor a program, it is important to consider why you are choosing this particular event. There are a number of questions you can ask yourself to assist you in appropriately planning and marketing your event!

- Is it an event your organization/department sponsors annually?**
- Does the event coincide with your organization's missions and goals?**
- Is it in response to a specific need you perceive on the campus?**
- Is it in response to an event that occurred?**

Here is how the different questions can shape your planning:

1. **Annual Events:** *example- club dances, founders' day activities, etc.*
 - The general format is probably established. What will be important for the planners is to look at the evaluations from the previous year and see if there are ways to improve the event. If there are no evaluations, call people you know were there and ask them what they recall most about your event. This will give you a jump on what things were memorable. You will also want to make adjustments according to any shifts in themes.
2. **Reflective of Organization's Mission & Goals:** *example- you are a community service organization therefore; you plan a program with Habitat for Humanity and open it to the university community.*
 - Determine what you want to achieve through this event. How will this event contribute to the success of your organization?
 - Your organization may have standard guidelines for particular programs. Be sure to check before you begin planning. If you are working with an outside agency, be cognizant of deadlines and time constraints they may implement.
3. **Response to Campus Needs:** *example: no one attends the basketball games and your organization wants to have a program that would get everyone together before the game so you can walk over together.*
 - In this case you want to see if there is any one else planning a similar event. Since there is a commonly perceived need, this is a real possibility. If you find out that another organization is planning a similar event, investigate co-sponsoring the event with them. *(See the co-sponsorship form included in this resource guide for further assistance.)*
 - You will also want to see what resources are available on the campus to respond to the need you have identified. This is a great opportunity to use campus resources to assist in the planning of your event.
4. **Response to a larger community issue:** *example- you plan a program to assist with the fight against breast cancer or heart disease*
 - There are typically numerous events in the city occurring throughout the year to help with these causes. It would probably be beneficial to see when local events are planned and use those well publicized events as part of your effort. For example, instead of planning a walk for breast cancer research, you could organize a group to participate in the Relay For Life walk.

How do you know what the community needs?

It is important to realize that there are two primary types of needs.

1. Those needs that are **identified by the students** as needs, *example- learning how to use the new registration system.*
2. Those needs that are **not recognized by the students**, *example- a program on responsible drinking.* As expected, programming for unrecognized needs could be more challenging, but just as successful.

What resources can I use to determine these needs?

1. Your perceptions
2. Students' perceptions
3. Formalized questionnaires
4. University demographic and statistical data

Adapted from models used at The College of New Jersey