



Vapes Down Event Planning Guide



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

Ten Steps to a Great Vapes Down Event

Hosting a community event is an effective way to raise awareness about the dangers of vaping. An event enables direct connection and communication with your audience in order to bring the issue of vaping to the forefront. It's a time to share key messages and to provide an opportunity to find solutions to reduce and stop vaping in your community.

This guide will assist you regardless of your event planning experience. It provides a step-by-step process that you can follow or adjust depending on your needs.

Ten Steps to a Great Event

1. Identify your audience(s) and define your purpose.
2. Choose the type of event that best serves your purpose.
3. Give your planning committee ample time to plan.
4. Set a realistic budget.
5. Choose a location.
6. Identify and confirm speakers and create your agenda.
7. Invite VIPs and partners, such as elected officials and sponsors.
8. Notify media if desired.
9. Revisit your checklist and consider event logistics.
10. Enjoy, evaluate—and say thank you!

STEP 1: Identify your audience(s) and define your purpose.

Describing and prioritizing your audiences and goals are crucial for directing the planning process and achieving desired outcomes.

Identify Your Audience

The first step in planning for any event is to decide who you are trying to reach. Potential audiences include:

- Students (note, their participation will depend on your event goals)
- All school staff and personnel
- Parents (elementary/middle/high school age children)
- Community leaders (business, faith-based, elected)
- Policymakers (e.g., mayor, city council member, state and federal officials)
- District leadership (principals, superintendent, school board)
- Agents of change/influential people (Parent-Teacher Association president, key faculty)
- Existing and potential partners (e.g., local pizza parlor donating food, community organizations, coaches, health professionals, etc.)

Define your purpose.

Decide what you want to accomplish with your *Vapes Down* event. Do not skip this important step. Be as clear as possible about the outcomes you'd like to see, and use your goals to direct the work of each subsequent step in the planning process.

STEP 2: Choose the type of event that will best serve your purpose.

Below are a few options for types of events to consider. See the *Virtual Event Planning Guide* in the appendix if you are holding an online event instead.

Community Meeting

- A great way to bring a variety of people together to share information and brainstorm ways to support an initiative.
- Kick off the meeting with background on the topic(s) to be discussed and then invite broader conversation with attendees.

In-School Outreach Event

- Often feature a fun activity that engages students.
- Typically scheduled on school days, such as during lunch, PE, or in conjunction with a school-sponsored activity like a sporting event.

Press Conference

- Typically less than 30 minutes and designed to share information with the public via local media.
- Location usually visually represents the story it's trying to convey.

Event Planning Worksheet

This worksheet helps you think strategically and create a roadmap for your event planning and implementation.

Audience

Who are you trying to reach with your event? What do you know about your audience?

What's important to them? What do they know—or not know—about vaping? When are they typically available to attend an event?

Are you trying to reach students? If so, what age—middle-schoolers, high school students?

Are you trying to reach parents or educators? How will you reach them with your event? What do you want them to know?

Define Your Purpose

Do you want to inform and educate? Increase awareness and build support? Encourage specific actions? A combination of these?

Do you want to:

- Inform students and parents about the dangers of vaping?
- Encourage parents to talk to their child about the health hazards of vaping?
- Ask students to share with their peers how vaping can adversely affect their health?
- Request students to pledge not to vape?
- Other goals?

Type of Event

What type of event will best serve your goals? Community meeting? In-school outreach event? Press conference?

Why did you choose this type of event?

Are there interactive ways you'd like to engage with your audience and deliver your messages at your event? (e.g. quizzes, spinning wheel that lands on different facts or figures, other interactive games that can be tied to facts, etc.)

STEP 3: Give your planning committee ample time to plan.

Create a Planning Committee

After deciding to host a special event, quickly form a planning committee responsible for all aspects of planning and execution. Depending on the event's size and scope, select a chairperson and assign subcommittees or workgroups for different aspects of planning, such as activities, partner outreach and day-of logistics. Include students, teachers, parents, health experts, and community partners.

Identify and Save the Date

Allow more time than you think you'll need. Identify your target event date; then work backward to create a timeline with a checklist and deadlines. Assign committee members to each checklist item.

Consider other community events when choosing a date to avoid conflicts. If inviting community leaders or school officials, contact them to check for date conflicts and have backup dates ready. Inform them of the level of participation you desire, like delivering remarks or giving interviews. High visibility and media coverage make your invitation more appealing. Stay in close touch with their offices for reminders and updates.

Suggested Event Planning Timeline

Start early to ensure that you and your committee have ample planning time! It's important for your event committee to set a timeline to stay organized and on task. Here's a general timeline that you can use to help organize.

THREE MONTHS OUT

- Form your event committee.
- Form teams and assign specific duties to each.
- Hold a kickoff brainstorming and planning meeting.
- Draft a budget.
- Create the event timeline.
- Research possible event dates and locations.
- Set the event date and time.
- Set the location.
- Determine any visuals/signage needed for the event.
- Submit requests for necessary permits/permissions.

TWO MONTHS OUT

- Identify speakers for the press event and create a tentative event agenda.
- Invite and confirm event speakers.
- Invite partners and community groups to participate.
- Initiate the production of event signage/visuals.
- Determine how many volunteers will be needed the day of the event.
- Create an event coordination, staffing, and volunteer plan.
- Create an emergency plan, including a communications process.
- Create a detailed supplies list.

- Create media advisories and press releases.
- Create an evaluation plan.

MONTH OF EVENT

- Send out reminder invitations; post reminders on community event calendars, websites, and social media networks; and post flyers in supportive businesses.
- Send out media advisories and press releases.
- Arrange for any special audio/visual needs.

WEEK OF EVENT

- Hold a meeting to finalize any logistics.
- Confirm all logistical arrangements with outside partners, vendors, etc.
- Follow up with media to confirm attendance and any special needs.

MONTH AFTER EVENT

- Make thank-you calls and write thank-you letters and notes.
- Submit articles and photos from the event to local newspapers and media.
- Send survey to attendees and participants.
- Hold a meeting after your event to review what went right, what to do next time.

Event Planning Committee Worksheet

This template includes some action items you may need to follow to plan an event. It is by no means a comprehensive list of possible tasks. You and your planning committee can customize a checklist that's fully suited to your event. The template enables you to remove tasks that aren't applicable and create new tasks as needed. To add a blank row, just hit "tab" in the last cell.

EVENT: _____

GOAL: _____

Planning Committee Members

Name	Organization	Phone Number	Email

Planning Committee Assignments

Task	Committee Member	Due Date	Status
Select planning committee and chair			
Assign subcommittee tasks			
Set target date for event			
Assess available budget			
List potential event sponsors and contact potential event sponsors			
Evaluate possible event locations			
Book location for event			
Set agenda			
Coordinate food/beverage sponsors			
Invite speakers and VIPs			
Write media advisory/pull press kits together			
Contact media to request coverage			
Review event logistics			
Follow up on important RSVPs still TBD			
Follow up with speakers to finalize schedule/needs			
Follow up with location coordinator for details on pre- and post-event access			
Coordinate volunteers for day of event			
Create name tags for staff/volunteers			
Hold day-of coordination meeting			
Send thank you notes			
Hold internal recap meeting			

STEP 4: Set a realistic budget.

Determine your realistic budget for the event. Brainstorm potential expenses and ways to offset them:

- Can your school district provide a free location or technology for an online event?
- Do partners have facilities you can use?
- Can you find sponsors for food, promotion, etc., and ensure their sponsorship is acknowledged?
- Can the school district's food service cater at reduced costs, or can you schedule the event when food isn't needed?

Consider the timing and scheduling:

- Schedule events targeting students during the school day or in the evening.
- Schedule events targeting parents during the evening to reach as many as possible.
- Avoid holiday periods when booking spaces.
- Partner with other events or organizations for additional support.

Account for smaller expenses like:

- Invitations, promotional materials, mailing costs, transportation, signage, audio/video needs, and a photographer.

Estimate your budget and add 10% for unexpected costs. Keep track of all expenses and incoming support, and thank your supporters.

Sample Budget Brainstorming Worksheet

List all expected expenses on this worksheet with the estimated amount for each. Use this information to then create a budget for your event. Consider whether you might be able to secure a sponsor/donor for any of your expected expenses and note this below.

EVENT: _____ GOAL: _____

Possible Expenses

Name of Expense	Type of Expense	Donated/Sponsored (Yes/No)	Estimated Cost

STEP 5: Choose an event location.

Use answers from previous steps to guide your location choice, ensuring it's appropriate, available, accessible, and affordable. Consider these questions:

- How much space is needed for attendees and media?
- Indoor or outdoor?
- Does time of year, day, or weather affect your choice?
- Is the location comfortable for the audience and easily accessible for media?
- Does it provide visuals for media coverage?
- Are there restroom facilities, parking, and accessibility for people with disabilities?
- Is A/V setup needed, and are there electrical outlets?

Brainstorm local options with your committee, visit unfamiliar locations, ask questions, and book the best option to meet your needs and be as accessible as possible for your participants.

STEP 6: Identify and confirm speakers and create your agenda.

**** Note:** If you don't intend to have speakers, skip to Step 7.

Decide if you want speakers at your event and list potential candidates. Speakers should focus on key points about vaping dangers and facts. Potential speakers include:

- Health experts
- Student leaders
- Someone sharing a personal vaping story
- Someone discussing how to talk about vaping
- A speaker offering quitting tips
- A representative from a student group supporting the *Vapes Down* campaign

Consider your target audience and event goals. Determine the story you want to tell and the best speakers for each part. Plan the speaker order for a smooth flow.

Contact potential speakers by phone to discuss the event details, including date, time, speaking duration, topics, and if you'll provide suggested remarks.

Create an agenda that aligns with your goals, covering:

- Event start and end times
- Speaker schedule
- Breaks or networking time
- Keynote subject
- Student entertainment
- Press conference announcements

Event Location and Speakers Event Planning Worksheet

This worksheet helps you think strategically about key areas of your event, including the location, time, and potential featured speakers.

Location and Time

What is the most appropriate and accessible location for your event? Does the location offer visuals that can help support your messages?

Does the location require a deposit? Security?

If the event is outdoors, is there a plan in case of rain?

Are there adequate restroom facilities and parking? Is it accessible? Is electricity available? What kind of A/V setup do you need?

What kind of refreshments should be offered based on the event time selected?

Speakers

Who will speak at your event? What topic(s) will each speaker cover?

Suggested speakers:

- *Health experts*
- *Student leaders*
- *Someone to share a personal story about how vaping impacted him/her*
- *Someone covering how to talk about vaping with peers, children, students*
- *A speaker offering tips on how to quit vaping*
- *A representative from a student group supporting the Vapes Down campaign*

Sample Agenda: Community Meeting

Welcome and Opening Remarks (10 minutes)

- Welcome participants and recognize sponsors and panel participants.
- Review the purpose and goals for the event's activities.

Panel Discussion: Overview of *Vaping and Its Impact* (30 minutes)

- Local community leader/school official: *Status of Vaping in the Community and Schools* (local data, activities, etc.)
- Health expert: *Myths vs. Facts – How to Identify the Signs and Intervene*
- Student spokesperson: Personal story
- School district/university representative (optional): Available resources and the importance of working together
- Panelists may vary from community to community. Other potential speakers could include coaches, student leaders, parents, cessation experts, Students, Adults, and Youth Working Hard Against Tobacco (Say What) representatives, Peers Against Tobacco representatives, Texas Department of State Health Services tobacco control staff, etc.

Question and Answer (15 minutes)

Panelists take questions from the audience.

Closing Remarks (5 minutes)

The meeting closes with the local organizer/emcee thanking participants and panelists for their work. Participants are reminded to sign up for email updates regarding ongoing activities and resources, if available.

STEP 7: Promote your event and invite VIPs and community partners.

You're ready to promote your event. Ensure your invitations clearly state the benefits for each target audience.

Crafting Invitations

- Address "What's in it for them?" to ensure a good turnout.
- Include logistical details and compelling reasons to attend.
- Use appropriate wording and multiple languages if needed.
- Plan and schedule event promotion ahead of time to ensure attendees have adequate time to mark their calendars.

Invitation Methods

- Personally contact VIPs and special guests for RSVPs.
- Use various methods to reach broader audiences:
 - School newsletters
 - District website events page
 - Evites and email blasts
 - Social media
 - Flyers and posters
 - Word of mouth
 - Local media
 - School sign marquees
 - Cable access channel
 - Partner communications

Enhance Event Promotion with Free Online Tools

- Manage RSVPs with easy event registration web sites. For example, [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) offers free accounts and helpful tutorials on how to create and manage your event.
- Use online templates to design promotional materials. For example, [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) makes graphic design approachable and offers templates for social media posts and printed flyers. Or even easier, use the flyer template below as an example to get you started.

Sample Flyer



LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Vaping can have negative consequences on students' futures, causing brain fog, dependency, and poor athletic performance. There are more than 31 chemicals in a vape pod, plus enough nicotine to equal 30 cigarettes. People may know that nicotine is addicting but likely don't realize it can rewire the teenage brain.

Join us to learn about its dangers, available resources for quitting, and what you can do to help reduce the number of teens who vape.

Presented by [Name of Hosting Organization]

[Date]

[Time]-[Time] [a.m./p.m.]

[Location]

[Address]

[City], Texas [ZIP Code]

STEP 8: Invite the media to your event and get them to deliver your message.

**** Note:** If you don't intend to invite media, skip to Step 9.

Notify media about an event 7 to 10 days before the event. Prepare background and media materials tailored to a reporter's needs, including:

- A one-page media advisory with event details (see example template below).
- A press release with background on *Vapes Down*, the dangers of vaping, local supporters, and direct quote(s) from your organization leader and possibly a key community partner.
- Contact information for your media spokesperson.

Interview and Presentation Tips, Press Materials

Your Event Presentation

- To prepare for your presentation, practice, practice, practice your talking points.
- When speaking, be dynamic. Vary your tone and inflection. Convey commitment and passion. If you're not committed to what you're talking about, your audience won't be either.
- Make your message memorable. The average sound bite is seven seconds.
- Remember the K.I.S.S. principle—keep it short and simple!

Print Interview

- To prepare for your interview, practice, practice, practice using your talking points.
- Relax, but stay focused on why you're there and the story that you want to tell.
- If your interview is in-person, your nonverbal communication is as important as your verbal communication.
- Remember, the journalist is your messenger, but not your friend. Keep it short and simple. Stay on message.

Radio Interview

- To prepare for the interview, practice, practice, practice your talking points.
- Be as dynamic as if you were visible to the audience. Vary your tone and inflection.
- Be excited. If you're not excited about what you're talking about, your listeners won't be either.
- Point the microphone to your chin. This technique will keep you from popping your p's and gives you direct eye contact with your host.
- Have a conversation with your host.
- If it is a call-in show (where people call in to ask you questions), keep your responses short and simple. Respond to questions but stay on message as much as possible.

Television Interview

- To prepare for the interview, practice, practice, practice your talking points.
- Choose clothes that are comfortable but appropriate. Look at what other guests of the show wear. Avoid clothes that are green, very bright, or have complex patterns—they do not work well on television. Avoid heavy jewelry and accessories.
- Sit up straight, and speak clearly. Avoid sitting back in your chair. On television, this posture can look like you are slouching.
- During the interview, don't look directly at the camera. Instead, look at the interviewer, so the interview doesn't appear staged.
- Try to limit big hand and facial gestures. They can appear bigger on television.

--- [SAMPLE] MEDIA ADVISORY ---

[DATE]

[LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION(S)] TO HOLD COMMUNITY MEETING ON VAPING ISSUES AFFECTING LOCAL TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Public is invited to attend community meeting with [City/Town] community leaders, health professionals as part of “Vapes Down” campaign

WHEN: [Day of Week], [Date], [Time]

WHERE: [Location of Event], [Physical Address]

WHO: [Speaker, Organization]
[Speaker, Organization]
[Speaker, Organization]

VISUAL: *Vapes Down* campaign materials

[YOUR CITY] — [Names of local community organizations] is/are hosting a community meeting on [Day of Week], [date] to discuss vaping issues affecting [Town/City] residents, particularly teens and young adults. Vaping can have negative consequences on students’ futures, causing brain fog, dependency, and poor athletic performance. People may realize that nicotine in vapes is addicting but they likely don’t realize it can rewire the teenage brain. The nicotine in most vape pods is equal to 30 cigarettes.

Everyone is welcome to attend. The forum-style event will feature a panel discussion that includes leaders from teen and young adult support systems, health professionals, and school personnel.

For more information, contact [Name] at [Email] or [Phone Number].

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STEP 9: Revisit your checklist and consider event logistics.

Logistical Checklist

Revisit your timeline and checklist to ensure all logistical needs are met as new details are confirmed, such as:

- Speakers' logistical needs
- Food delivery coordination
- Staff access for setup
- Media needs
- Accessibility for guests
- Contingency plans for bad weather
- Parking availability
- Placement of directional signs
- Event displays and signage
- Facility deposit
- Event photography
- Seating chart
- Name tags for staff and registrants
- Promotional materials ordered with a timely delivery
- Cleanup responsibilities

Discuss these details with the planning committee. Regularly review the agenda and checklist to anticipate and resolve potential issues.

Attendee Experience

A helpful way to think through the event details is to mentally role play the entire event experience to confirm:

- Parking arrangements
- Directional signage
- Greeting and orientation
- Food and drink setup
- Event engagement
- Information access

Sample Event Checklist

Whether you're holding a contained press conference or a large community event, this sample checklist covers the essential requirements for guaranteeing that events involving the media will go smoothly. Feel free to add to the list based on your specific event. *To add a blank row, just hit "tab" in the last cell.*

BEFORE THE EVENT					
☐	Location reserved	☐	Press kits prepared	☐	Statements approved
☐	Parking reserved	☐	Visuals prepared	☐	Timed agenda prepared
☐	A/V equipment ordered	☐	On-site photographer ready	☐	Media follow-up done
☐	Speakers chosen	☐	Media sign-in sheet	☐	Refreshments
☐	Media advisory sent	☐	Other guests invited	☐	Speaker name cards made

DAY OF THE EVENT					
☐	Podium, seating arranged	☐	All A/V checked	☐	Photo assignments made
☐	Displays, decorations done	☐	Moderator briefed	☐	Refreshments displayed
☐	Logo placed on podium	☐	Media table ready	☐	Security in place if needed

AFTER THE EVENT					
☐	Restore conference room	☐	Compile evaluation surveys	☐	Debrief to assess success
☐	Follow up with media	☐	Thank participants/speakers	☐	Follow up with attendees

STEP 10: Enjoy, evaluate—and say thank you!

Enjoy.

After going through these steps to plan your event, focus on enjoying the moment. Minor issues are inevitable, but if you and your team have planned well, your guests likely won't notice. Relax and savor the experience!

Evaluate.

Use this opportunity to assess your event's success. Use the survey template below to follow up with attendees on issues related to the *Vapes Down* campaign and interest in learning more. If speaking to reporters, gauge their interest in covering vaping more extensively. Provide additional resources if requested, such as referring people to dshs.texas.gov/vapedown.

Say thank you.

Express gratitude to everyone who contributed to the event's success, including staff, volunteers, and guests. A personal note, call, or event photo can make a big difference.

Review.

Meet with your team to discuss the event's outcomes. Consider if goals were met, how the planning process went, what worked well, areas for improvement, attendance, budget adherence, and any insights gained. Use this feedback to strengthen future events.

Good luck with your events!

Sample Vapes Down Event Survey

1. As a result of attending this event, I have a better understanding of the dangers of vaping, particularly among youth and young adults.
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
2. As a result of attending this event, I am more committed to helping teens and young adults get help and support to help them quit vaping.
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
3. As a result of attending this event, I understand that buying vaping products while under the age of 21 is illegal in Texas.
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
4. What did you find most beneficial from attending this event?
5. Do you have any additional feedback that you would like to share?
6. Are you interested in learning more about the campaign?
 - Yes
 - No

If yes, please provide your email address:

APPENDIX

Tips for Successful Virtual Events

1. **Test Technology:** Check all tech with your team and speakers beforehand.
2. **Pre-Event Details:** Send an overview, agenda and tech instructions to participants. Will participants need to download special software ahead of time?
3. **Record and Share:** Record the event for later access.
4. **Tech Walkthrough:** Start with a guide on using tech features.
5. **Microphone Management:** Mute all or control mute options from a central host.
6. **Start Time:** Plan to start 10 minutes late, with activities to engage attendees.
7. **Tech Support:** Assign someone to handle tech issues.
8. **Breaks:** If the event is longer than an hour, schedule screen time breaks, so attendees can use the restroom or grab water.
9. **Pre-Record Segments:** Play recorded content with a live host for Q&A to stay on schedule.
10. **Small Group Interaction:** Use a moderator for discussions and encourage participant interaction. If using a platform, like Zoom or Teams that enables breakout rooms, consider splitting the group up for a portion of the agenda to allow for more engagement.
11. **Variety:** Mix in videos and games to break up long listening periods. Use platform available voting and chat options to encourage participation.
12. **Slide Presentation:** Use bullet points for main points and add storytelling. Note: Virtual meetings allow for more text on slides than a traditional, in-person meeting.