Vapes Down
Virtual Event Guide

TEXAS
Health and Human Services

Texas Department of State Health Services

VIRTUAL EVENT GUIDE
Ten Steps to a Great Virtual *Vapes Down* Event

Hosting an event tailored to your community is one of the most effective ways to increase awareness about the dangers of vaping. In today's world of COVID-19 precautions, virtual events can be an excellent way to leverage the benefits of an in-person event without taking unnecessary risks. A virtual event also can provide unique opportunities to connect directly with audiences in ways that aren't possible with an in-person event.

You may already have coordinated virtual events to bring attention to the dangers of vaping or other community concerns. This guide will help you no matter what level of virtual event planning experience you have. Here is a step-by-step process to help you plan a virtual event about the dangers of vaping that is right for your school, organization, or community.

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 technology platform.
6. Identify and confirm speakers and create your agenda.
7. Invite VIPs and partners, such as elected officials.
8. Notify media if desired.
9. Revisit your checklist and consider event logistics.
10. Enjoy, evaluate—and say thank you!

Are you ready to dig deeper into each of these steps? Set up a video call with your team, grab the event planning worksheets and plan your best virtual event yet!

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

The event planning worksheet, "Steps 1 and 2: Virtual Audience and Purpose Planning Worksheet," helps you think through this section.

Identify Your Audience
The first steps in planning for any event—virtual or in-person—are to define your audience and purpose:
- Who are you trying to reach with your event?
- What do you know about your audience?
- What would you like your audience to do?
- What's your goal?
- What do you hope to accomplish by holding an event?

A general list of potential audiences for your virtual events might include:
- Students
- Parents (elementary/middle/high school age children)
- Community leaders (business, faith-based, elected)
- Policy makers (e.g., mayor, city council member, state representative, U.S. representative)
- District leadership (principals, superintendent, school board)
- Agents of change/influential people (PTA president, key faculty)
- Existing and potential partners (e.g., community organizations, coaches, health professionals, etc.)

Briefly describing each of your audiences will help you design an event that accomplishes your goals and resonates with them. Prioritizing these audiences also will be helpful as you continue through the event planning process.

Define your purpose.
Before you begin planning the details, think about what you want to accomplish with your virtual Vapes Down event. There's no point in planning an event until you and your partners agree on what a successful one looks like. This will help you determine the types of event activities that best suit your school and/or your community's needs.

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 virtual event that will best serve your purpose.

The event planning worksheet, "Steps 1 and 2: Virtual Audience and Purpose Planning Worksheet," helps you think through this section. Extra details for planning a virtual event can be found in the "Step 2: Virtual Event Planning" document.

Once you know your purpose and your audience, determine what type of virtual event will best serve your needs. This starts with asking yourself how you want to communicate your anti-vaping message and how you want participants to engage with each other (if at all). Building a virtual event is like putting together a puzzle. Once you know which pieces you need, you can decide on the technology that best delivers them to meet your vision and budget. (*See Step 5.*)

There are many types of virtual events to choose from. Here are just a few options:

Webinar. This is an informational presentation, typically centered around a slide deck with presenters speaking over the slides. A webinar can feature multiple presenters on a single topic. Some webinar technology options allow for chat, moderated Q&A, or real-time participant surveys.

Small group chat. This is a typical interactive video call that enables face-to-face, real-time conversation led by a host. It's best for individual classes and campus groups, and you are probably very familiar with using this format during the last several months. This format would typically use a familiar technology such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, or whatever platform you have at your school or organization.

Remote event. This uses a regular event agenda, but all the speakers are remote. You coordinate them from a central location and control which screen is activated at any one time. This allows for a series of presentations with different, flexible formats to include speakers, panels, video presentations, etc. You would develop an agenda that includes the specific session types you want, and participants can view whenever they are interested and able. This works well for situations in which you have multiple stakeholders who want to be included but it isn't practical to host an event that accommodates everyone.

Live stream. This is the same as in-person event, but without the audience. Your agenda would be the same as for an in-person event, and you run a live video feed of your podium and speaker lineup. Some live stream platforms allow for optional audience live chat or Q&A that can be moderated. Facebook Live is a standard platform for live streaming an event.

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

The event planning worksheets, "Step 3: Virtual Event Planning Committee Worksheet" and "Step 3: Virtual Event Calendar and Timeline Planning Worksheet," help you think through this section and create a timeline for activities leading up to your event.

Once you've decided it's time to host a virtual event, quickly form your planning committee. This committee is responsible for all aspects of planning and execution from this point forward. Depending on the purpose, size and scope of your event, you may need to select a chairperson and assign members to sub-committees that are responsible for different aspects of planning. Your committee could include students, teachers, parents, community health experts and any community partners. Your sub-committees could cover anything from activities to partner outreach and day-of logistics.

Whenever possible, give yourselves more time than you think you'll need. Identify your target event date and, as you proceed through these subsequent steps, work backward to create a timeline that shows you're really giving yourselves all the time you need to successfully plan the event. Develop a checklist with deadlines for each detail. Assign someone from your planning committee to be responsible for the completion of each item on the checklist.

Remember that your event isn't happening in a vacuum; there will surely be several other events happening concurrently in your community. To the best of your ability, take this into consideration when choosing a target date for your event. For example, if you know of annual area events that might pull potential participants away from yours, change your date.

If you plan to invite community leaders or school officials, don't pick a date until you've done a little homework first. Contact them, let them know you would be honored by their participation at your virtual event, and ask them if they know of any conflicts on the target date you're considering. Have some backup dates ready to go. You can make your case stronger if you let them know up front what level of participation you're hoping for. Are you asking them to deliver remarks? What level of technology would they be responsible for managing? Would you like them to be available to do interviews with media?

High visibility and the possibility of media coverage will make your invitation more appealing. And while you may still not get a full commitment from them months in advance, you will at least be on their radar. As plans move forward, stay in close touch with their offices and remind them that you'd like their attendance.

STEP 4: Set a realistic budget.
The event planning worksheet, "Step 4: Virtual Event Brainstorming Your Budget Planning Worksheet," helps you think through this section. List all your expected expenses on this worksheet with the estimated amount for each. Use this information to create a budget for your event. Consider whether you might be able to secure a sponsor/donor for any expenses and note this on the worksheet.

How much money do you realistically have to host your event? Many great events can be planned on a shoestring budget, but your planning committee needs to brainstorm about the kinds of expenses you might encounter along the way—and how to offset them.

- Can your school district supply the appropriate technology for free?
- Do any of your partners have access to the technologies you need?
- Can you find sponsors to pay for marketing? How can you assure them that their sponsorship is acknowledged?
- Consider the time of day for your event. Events targeting students may be scheduled during the school day or in the evening, if in conjunction with another online, school-sponsored event.
- Consider the time of year for your event. For instance, you may have difficulty getting participants during holiday periods, and students and teachers may not be available to participate if an event is scheduled on a school holiday.
- Consider piggybacking your event with another planned online event in your community or partnering with like-minded organizations. This can have the added benefit of creating new partnerships.
- Consider the little things that can cost money and add up over time:
  - Technology costs
  - Invitations or promotional flyers/posters
  - Digital advertising
  - Audio/video requirements for speakers; for example, lighting and microphones
- After estimating your budget, add at least 10 percent to cover unanticipated costs.

Assessing your virtual event budget needs could dampen your enthusiasm. If it appears your wishes are not aligned with fiscal reality, don't despair—and keep brainstorming!

Your planning committee should keep track of every expense. You'll also want to keep track of any dollars or services coming in from outside sources—especially so you can say a big THANK YOU to everyone out there supporting your initiative's work.

STEP 5: Choose a technology platform for your event.

The event planning worksheet, "Steps 5 and 6: Virtual Event Technology and Speakers Planning Worksheet," helps you think through this section.

Your answers to Steps 1, 2 and 4 will guide your decision here. Your technology needs to be appropriate, available, accessible and affordable.

Questions to consider about how you'll use the platform:

- How many participants do you anticipate?
- How many speakers and/or presenters do you anticipate?
- How interactive will your participants be?
- Will you be sharing documents, videos or other visual elements?
- How familiar is your audience with operating technology? How user-friendly does it need to be?

Questions to consider about the specific platform:

- What kinds of technical support does the platform offer?
- What kinds of archiving capabilities does the platform have?
- Is the technology user-friendly? Is it media-friendly?
- Will your speakers and audience members be able to easily access your virtual event or will they need to download special software ahead of time?
- Will people need a computer or device with specific programs to access the event?

You have likely already been using a virtual technology platform from your school; this platform typically makes a great starting point. Brainstorm with your planning committee on any other options that fit your criteria. If you're unfamiliar with a suggested technology, do a little research and ask as many questions as you need to. When you and your planning committee believe you've got the right option for your event—go ahead and book it!

Some common technology platforms include Skype, Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, and Google Hangouts.

Whichever platform you use, you should always plan on recording the event and making the video available for individuals to watch after the fact. This allows you to reach individuals whose schedules didn't allow them to attend, and your event's message can extend beyond the actual date of your event.

STEP 6: Identify and confirm speakers and create your agenda.
The event planning worksheet, "Steps 5 and 6: Virtual Event Technology and Speakers Planning Worksheet," helps you think through this section. See the "Step 6: Virtual Community Meeting Sample Agenda" for help structuring your virtual event.

Brainstorm with your committee to determine whether you would like speakers to deliver remarks. If so, create a list of potential speakers for your event. Speakers should focus on a limited number of main points. Topics to cover could include educational information about the dangers of vaping and facts about the use of vaping products.

A suggested list of speakers might include:
- Health experts
- Student leaders
- Someone to share a personal story about how vaping impacted them
- Someone to cover how to talk about vaping with peers, children, students
- A speaker to offer tips on how to quit vaping
- A representative from a student group supporting the Vapes Down campaign, possibly Say What! or Peers Against Tobacco.

Look at the target audience(s) and goals you identified in previous steps. What will (or won't) resonate with your target audiences? Consider the story you want to tell with your event. What are the pieces of that story and who would be the best person to talk about each of those pieces? Think about speaker order. Make sure each part of the story flows into the next.

You will want to contact anyone by phone who you would like to deliver remarks at your event. It is important to have a conversation with them about the event and not rely on email. Describe the purpose of your event, date, time commitment, technology platform you'll use, how long you would like her/him to speak, what topic(s) the speaker should cover and whether you will provide suggested remarks in advance.

Create Your Agenda
Whether planning a small group online discussion for 10 classmates or a virtual schoolwide event for 500 students, create an agenda that serves the goals you outlined in Step 1.

Your agenda will cover the event's timeline and general content, including:
- What time will you start and end?
- When will speakers take the microphone?
- How long will each speaker be allowed to speak?
- What's the subject for the keynote address?
- Will students be providing entertainment?
- Who is moderating the Q&A?

For a virtual event, it's also important to review all content before sharing or presenting. You want to know beforehand what the speakers are going to address, because this will help ensure there's a variety of content and that everything being shared by you and your organization is appropriate for your audience and message objective.

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

See the "Step 7: Virtual Event Template Flyer" worksheet for help promoting your event to participants and partners via email.

You've determined the why, what, how, where and when. With those details in place, you're ready to promote your event to your target audience(s).

What should your invitations say?
If you build it, there's no guarantee they'll come. In other words, it's not enough to announce that you're hosting an event on a specific time and date. It's not even enough to tell the world *why* you're holding your event. That's because everyone's time is precious.

To encourage a good turnout for your event, consider this: for each target audience you wish to invite, ask "What's in it for them?" If you're asking families to give up the better part of a Saturday to attend your event, are you sure you're providing an agenda with enough fun, or educational information, built in to make it worth their while? If you're asking city officials to give up an evening to support your event, are you able to explain why you share common goals that would make their attendance mutually beneficial?

When you can answer "what's in it" for your target audiences, you'll have a key part of your invitation figured out. In addition to giving your audience the logistical details of your event, be sure your invitations and announcements prominently feature those compelling reasons why your audience would benefit from giving up their time to attend.

Finally, bear in mind that your wording needs to be culturally sensitive to your target audiences and may need to be delivered in other languages.

What kind of invitations and/or announcements are right?
Individually contact and invite any VIPs or special guests. For example, your key community leaders (especially those who might want to deliver remarks at a press event) would probably appreciate a personal phone call with event specifics and whatever appropriate follow-up is needed to get an RSVP.

The other consideration, of course, is budget. If you're trying to reach your entire parent population, formal invitations and personal phone calls would be far too time- and budget-consuming. Other options include:

- Announcements in school newsletters
- District website events page
- Evites
- Email blasts
- Social media pages
- Flyers (assuming they make it home with students—and they often don't!)
- Word of mouth

- Posters placed in supermarkets, laundromats—anywhere this population is likely to visit
- Local media (use calendar listings, media advisories, press releases)
- School sign marquees
- Cable access channel
- Partner communications outlets

When reaching out to large populations, consider using as many outlets as possible to promote your event. One announcement won't have nearly as much impact as several announcements delivered in a variety of ways. When you've finalized your list, you need to find out whom to contact—and when—to make sure your event is promoted in a timely way.

You might consider using an event planning platform such as Eventbrite to manage RSVPs. It's a great way to create and manage registration for events, meetings, seminars, etc. for free or at low cost. Many nonprofits, associations and companies use Eventbrite to manage registrations for their events. The site is easy to use. Visit https://www.eventbrite.com to create a free account and get started on creating a registration page for your event. The site guides you through the process and offers helpful tutorials if you get stuck.

STEP 8: Invite the media—they can deliver your message to a larger audience.
** Note: If you don't intend to invite media, skip to Step 9.
See "Step 8: Virtual Event Interview and Presentation Tips and Press Materials" for support as you plan your press event and reach out to the media. The *Press Event Materials document includes a Media Advisory Template and Interview/Presentation Tips.*

A good rule of thumb for notifying media about an event is a week to 10 days ahead of the event. But, before you are ready to let them know about an event, you first need to prepare background materials and media materials tailored to a reporter's unique needs.

These media materials should include:
- A one-page media advisory with the who, what, when and where of the event to let media know your event topic plus details on how to access the platform to cover it.
- A press release that provides background on Vapes Down and the dangers of vaping. It should mention local support and include at least one direct quote from the leader of your organization and possibly a second from a key community partner.
- Contact information for your media spokesperson.

Whichever platform you use, you should always record and edit a video of the event to offer to media who can't attend as it happens. Identify someone who can edit the recording for media. Ask the editor to pull a few 15- to 20-second sound bites of key speakers covering important points. This video can be saved online and the link provided to reporters for their radio or TV coverage. You can also provide media with a few high-resolution pictures of speakers and a screen capture or two of the virtual meeting, if desired.

STEP 9: Revisit your checklist and consider event logistics.
The event planning worksheet, "Step 9: Virtual Event Checklist," helps you think through this section.

With so many details having been put in place since you originally developed your timeline and checklist, it's time to go back and incorporate the new logistics that will have undoubtedly arisen since planning began.

Open the discussion with members of the planning committee. Review your agenda and checklist at every meeting from this point forward. This simple reality check will help you anticipate problems and find solutions *before* anything goes wrong.

A helpful tip for thinking through details of the event is to mentally role play as an event attendee. Go through every step of their journey to see if logistics have been planned for:
- When they sign on, what screen do they see first?
- Will they know what to do, or will they need directions explained?
- What will it look like for them to engage with the event?
- How can they ask questions or make comments?
- Who can they ask for technical assistance during the presentation?
- How can they get more information afterward?

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

See "Step 10: Virtual Event Survey" for sample evaluation questions and/or information that can be gathered from attendees.

Enjoy. There comes a point where you can no longer worry about the details. Last-minute glitches—big and small—are inevitable. If you and your planning committee have done your best to foresee potential problems and consider last minute solutions, you'll be good to go. So let go and enjoy!

Evaluate. You've got a fantastic opportunity to gauge your event's success. Survey attendees about issues related to the Vapes Down campaign. Some of the kinds of questions that you might want to ask include:

- Are they more aware of the campaign and the dangers of vaping?
- Would they be interested in learning more about the campaign?
- What questions do they have about the campaign or vaping in general?
- If you're addressing a reporter, has their outlet done many stories about vaping? Would they be interested in covering the topic in more depth?
- Would they like to receive more information on vaping? If so, refer them to dshs.texas.gov/vapesdown.

There are many technology platforms that come with their own built-in survey option. Others, such as Survey Monkey, can be sent to participants afterward.

Say thank you. Take time to thank everyone who helped make your event a success—your staff, volunteers, speakers and invited guests. Pick up the phone, write a note, send a photo (or screenshot!) from the event. Your attention to this important detail will be enormously appreciated by all.

Finally, you and your partners will want to meet to review the event. Ask:
- Did it meet your goals?
- How did the planning process go?
- What went well?
- What could have gone better?
- Was the event well-attended?
- Were you able to stay within budget?
- Do your evaluation results offer new or important information?
- Would you do it again?

By allowing all participants to honestly assess the event, your partnership will be in an even stronger position to mount a great one next time around.

Good luck with all your virtual events, large and small!

Steps 1 and 2: Audience and Purpose
Virtual Event Planning Worksheet

This worksheet helps you think strategically about your event, capture the main ideas and decisions, and create a roadmap to the planning and implementation of a great event.

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 online?
Are you trying to reach students? If so, what age—middle-schoolers, high school students? Are these students attending classes in person or are they attending classes online because of the COVID virus? If attending classes online, what technology are these students using to attend online events?
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 student about the health hazards of vaping?   - Ask students to share with their peers how vaping can adversely affect one's health?   - Request students pledge not to vape?   - Other goals?

Step 2: Virtual Event Planning

This overview helps you think through the details of planning a virtual event. Use this to guide the conversation with the planning committee.

1. Secure permission to hold your virtual event. In researching when to conduct it, check the calendar for other events that might pose a conflict. Once you've set your date and time, begin planning the details.

2. Think through how you want to engage students in learning the risks of vaping. Remember that putting together a virtual event is like building a puzzle. Ask yourselves a series of questions to determine the right pieces for your event:

   A. **How do you want participants to interact?**
      - Do you want them to just watch and listen? Ask questions? Through a moderator, an open chat feature or on-screen?
      - Do you want them to have direct dialogue with the presenter and/or each other?
      - Do you want them to see each other or just read comments?

   B. **How do you want to convey information?** Do you want live speaker/s or presenters? How about pre-recorded presentations, videos, a slide deck presentation, or a combination of these?

   C. **If you feature speakers, where will they be?** Will each speaker be in their own remote location or will there be a centralized location for speakers to gather and take turns speaking?

   D. **Will there be some form of entertainment?** Will you have a contest with prizes, a skit or video, or something else interactive and fun?

      Examples of fun ways to virtually engage with students:
      - Online quiz
      - Raffle tickets for participation
      - Other interactive games that can be tied to facts

   E. **How can you extend the reach of your event?**
      - Do you want to follow up with participants to share additional information or take a survey?
      - Do you want to make the event available for people who couldn't watch live?
      - Can you use parts of your event to gain media attention?

3. Once you select the puzzle pieces, start focusing on the messaging and content.
      - Do you want to talk about the dangerous chemicals in vape products?
      - Do you want to focus on health risks? Statistics and personal stories? All of the above?

4. Based on the outline of your event, make a list of all the props you might need, such as a table, tablecloth, podium, microphone, and other visual elements.

5. If needed, secure permission from the school principal to hold your outreach event in that location.

6. Design small information cards or digital flyers with key bullet points about the dangers of vaping plus websites that provide more resources, either for in-person or digital distribution on campus.

7. Write a short script promoting your outreach activity to be read during school announcements; secure permission to include it.

8. If your school has video announcements, you might develop a very short (15- to 30-second) video to be aired on the school news channel.

9. Create your own Vapes Down social media content on TikTok, Instagram, Twitter or Facebook to help promote your event and share information with other students.

Tips for Successful Virtual Events

1. Test all your technology with your internal team ahead of time. If speakers will be presenting live, test it with them, too.

2. Prior to the event, send the participants an event overview with the agenda and details on the technology you'll be using. This is especially helpful if you'll be using a form of technology that is unfamiliar to some of your audience. Encourage them to download and test the technology prior to the actual event.

3. If the event is held live, record as much of it as possible and make each segment available to watch or download afterward. This lets your message carry on beyond the actual event date.

4. Allow time at the start of the agenda to walk participants through the technology features. Explain how to ask a question, make a comment, get technical assistance, etc.

5. Request that everyone mute their microphones. Or better yet, have the microphones controlled from a central host computer.

6. Plan to get started 10 minutes late but do your best to start on time. Have activities or interesting low-tech visuals to keep folks engaged and entertained while waiting on others to work out technology issues.

7. Make sure you have one person who is not presenting content designated to handle technology.

8. Don't forget to include bathroom breaks!

Virtual Event—Bonus Tips

1. Record presentations ahead of time, so you're just playing video with a live host in between segments. The speaker can be available for live Q&A, but this helps keep everyone on schedule.

2. For small groups, have a moderator ask questions and allow participants to interact directly with each other. These types of conversations can be especially useful for getting individuals to open up and join the conversation.

3. Break up the long blocks of just listening with either pre-recorded videos or games.

4. If you're presenting slides, feature your main points as bullet points while creating the opportunity for storytelling.

Step 3: Suggested Virtual Event Calendar/Timeline Planning Worksheet

Start early to ensure that you and your committee have ample planning time! It's important for your event committee to set a timeline in order to stay organized and on task. This is 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.
- Select your technology.
- Create the event planning timeline.
- Research possible event dates.
- Set event date and time.
- Determine any visuals/props needed for the event.
- Submit requests for necessary permissions.

TWO MONTHS OUT
- Identify speakers and create tentative event agenda.
- Invite and confirm event speakers.
- Invite partners and community groups to participate.
- Initiate the production of marketing and event materials.
- Determine how many volunteers will be needed the day of the event.
- Create an event coordination, staffing and volunteer plan.
- Create a plan and communications process for emergencies or unforeseen technology failures.
- 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 email flyers to supportive businesses.
- Send out media advisories and press releases.
- Set deadline for receipt of any prerecorded segments or videos.
- Walk through the technology with organizers/hosts/moderators and arrange for any special audio/visual needs.
- Walk through technology and agenda with speakers.
- Do a dry run of the full program with the hosts/moderators.

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.
- Write lessons learned and thoughts about ways to improve event.
- Submit articles and photos from the event to local newspapers and media.
- Send survey link to participants.
- Post video/s of the event online for download.
- Hold a meeting after your event to review what went right, what to do next time.

Step 3: Virtual Event Planning Committee Worksheet

This template includes some action items you may need to follow in order to plan a virtual 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	Responsible 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			
Contact potential event sponsors			
Evaluate possible technology platforms			
Book technology platform for event			
Set agenda			
Invite speakers and moderator/host			
Send V.I.P. invitations			
Write media advisory/pull press kits together			
Contact media to request coverage			
Create and distribute marketing materials			
Review event logistics			
Follow up on important RSVPs still TBD			
Walk through technology with moderators/hosts			
Walk through technology with speakers			
Conduct a dry run of full program with organizers			
Collect any pre-recorded segments			
Post event video for viewing after the event			
Send thank yous			
Hold internal recap meeting			

Step 4: Brainstorming Your Budget
Virtual Event Planning Worksheet

List your 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 ($)

Steps 5 and 6: Technology and Speakers
Virtual Event Planning Worksheet

This worksheet helps you think strategically about your virtual event, capture the main functions and content you want to present and create a roadmap to the planning and implementation of a great event.

Technology – Event Requirements

How many participants do you anticipate?

How many speakers and/or presenters do you want to have?

How interactive will your participants be? Will they ask questions, engage in conversations, be visible or just type comments?

Will you be sharing documents, videos or other visual elements?

Will you have your own IT support? Or will you need the platform to provide support to you during the event?

Do you want to record and share the event, or specific segments of it, after it's over?

Technology – Platform Requirements

Does your school have a standard technology it already uses to engage in online classes, disucssions or events?

Do you want to coordinate the event from a central location, or do you want individual hosts to be able to control their segments?

Will you have your own IT support? Or will you need the platform to provide support to you during the event?

Will participants need to download special software ahead of time?

Will people need a computer or device meeting particular specifications to access the platform?

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.*

Speaker – Tips and Suggestions

- *Make sure a speaker's web camera is at eye level. Speakers may need to put their web cameras or laptops on a short shelf or a stack of books to properly elevate the webcam.*

- *Encourage speakers to have light shining towards their face, not behind them. Avoid windows and lights in the background. These can cause backlighting and make it difficult for viewers to see a speaker's face.*

- *Look at or above the webcam when talking. Some people put a sticky note next to the webcam lens to remind them to look at the camera while talking.*

- *Consider the background. A speaker's background should be clean, professional, and free from any viewer distractions.*

- *Encourage speakers to use headphones and a wired microphone when speaking. The wired earbuds that come with most smartphones should work fine.*

Community Meeting
VIRTUAL EVENT SAMPLE AGENDA

Welcome and Opening Remarks – 10 min.
Single host onscreen
- Welcome participants and recognize sponsors, speakers and panel participants.
- Review the purpose and goals for the event's activities.

Speaker: *Overview of Vaping and its Impact* – 20 min.
Single speaker onscreen
- Local Community Leader/School Official: *Status of Vaping in the Community and Schools* (local data, activities, etc.)

Question and Answer – 10 min.
Two speakers together onscreen
Audience asks questions via the private chat function and Host reads questions to speaker.

Video: *Personal Story* – 5 min.
Pre-recorded video of someone talking about their experience with vaping.

Panel Discussion: *What Can We Do to Reduce Vaping in Our Community?* – 25 min.
Multiple speakers onscreen
- Host: Organizer to lead discussion and ask questions
- School Official: *What Schools Can Do*
- Health Expert: *Myths vs. Facts – How to Identify the Signs and Intervene*
- Student spokesperson: *What Schools Can Do*
- 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, Say What! representatives, Peers Against Tobacco representatives, DSHS, etc.

Question and Answer – 15 min.
Multiple speakers onscreen
Audience asks questions via private chat function and Host reads questions to panelists.

Closing Remarks – 5 min.
Single speaker onscreen
The meeting closes with the host thanking participants and panelists for their work. Participants are reminded to fill out the survey they will be receiving in their email, and to check out the host/speaker/panelists' websites for more information regarding ongoing activities and resources.

More Texas students are vaping than ever. Learn about the dangers of vaping, available resources for quitting, and what you can do to help reduce the number of teens who vape.

Vapes Down
Learn the Facts
about the Dangers of Vaping

Presented by [Name of Hosting Organization]

[Date], 2020

[Time]-[Time] [a.m./p.m.]
Virtual Event via [Technology Platform]

Registration is free and open to all community members.
Register today at [Eventbrite or other registration website]

QUESTIONS?
Contact:
[Name]
[Email]
[Phone]

Step 8 – Virtual Event Interview and Presentation Tips, Press Materials

Presentation at Your Virtual Event

- To prepare for the presentation, practice, practice, practice using your talking points.
- When speaking, be dynamic. Vary your tone and inflection. Convey commitment. 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 via phone

- To prepare for the 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.
- Remember, the journalist is your messenger, but not your friend. Keep it short and simple. Stay on message.

Radio Interview via phone

- To prepare for the interview, practice, practice, practice using 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.
- 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 via Zoom or other video platform

- To prepare for the interview, practice, practice, practice using your talking points.
- Choose clothes that are comfortable but appropriate. Look at other Zoom interviews to see what other guests 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 video, this posture can look like you are slouching.
- Create a remote "studio space" in your home or classroom.
  - Make sure your background is neat and clean and that you are not seated directly in front of a window.
  - Invest in a halo light to position in front of you to light your face or gather lamps from around the house.
  - Do a practice run prior to the interview so you can see what your space looks like on camera.
- Try to limit big hand and facial gestures. They can appear "bigger" on television.
- Practice using Zoom or other platform controls prior to the interview. You don't want to be learning the technology during the interview.

--- [SAMPLE] MEDIA ADVISORY ---

[DATE]

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

The public is invited to attend an online Community Meeting with [City/Town] community leaders, health professionals as part of 'Vapes Down' campaign

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

WHERE: Meeting to be held via [Technology Platform]
Contact [Media point of contact's name] at [Media point of contact's email]
for event link

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

VISUAL: Vapes Down campaign materials

YOUR CITY — {Names of local community organizations] is/are hosting a virtual Community Meeting on [Day of Week], [(date)] to discuss vaping issues affecting the [Town/City] community, particularly among teens and young adults. Everyone is welcome to register and 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].

###

Step 9: Virtual Event Checklist

Whether you're holding a virtual press conference or a large online community event, this 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				
	Technology reserved		Digital press kits prepared		Statements approved
	Technology walk-through done		Visuals prepared		Timed agenda prepared
	A/V equipment ordered		Program dry-run done		Media followup done
	Speakers chosen		Pre-recorded materials received		Pre-recorded videos uploaded
	Media advisory sent		Other guests invited		

	DAY OF THE EVENT				
	Podium, seating arranged		Moderator briefed		All speakers' mics checked
	Video conference background ready		Pre-recorded videos checked		
	All audiovisual checked		Photo assignments made		

	AFTER THE EVENT				
	Evaluation surveys sent		Compile evaluation surveys		Debrief to assess success
	Follow up with media		Thank participants/speakers		Follow up with attendees
	Event video posted online				

Step 10: Evaluation
Vapes Down Virtual Event Survey

1. As a result of participating in 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 participating in 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 participating in 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 participating in 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: