This document will cover the logistic elements of walk planning. Logistics includes the planning and execution of your NEDA Walk event – from reserving the venue, day-of-event planning and programming and everything in between.

Walk Date and Venue

Event Budget

Event Essentials

Event Programming and Activities

Day of Event Set-Up
Walk Date and Venue

The walk date and venue depend on each other. All NEDA Walks are held on either a Saturday or Sunday to maximize participation. NEDA Walks typically operate from February to May and September to November. Please consider the weather when deciding on which month to host the walk.

We recommend searching through local community calendars and the local colleges’ academic calendars as a great way to start to avoid other event conflicts. Since the walk date will depend on the venue availability, you will want to get started on the venue reservation process right away.

Venue Requirements

We recommend that the walk venue is in a central location that is easy to travel to, offers visibility, and meets all our listed venue requirements:

- Within Budget
- Space for setting up registration, tables, activities and exhibitor tables/booths
- Accessible and adequate parking, preferably at no cost to participants
- Accessible 1-2 mile walk route
- Space available appropriate for expected number of attendees

Considerations:

- Public restrooms
- Availability of electrical power
- Shelter in case of rain – indoor space, overhead cover
- Raised platform, amphitheater or stage

Common NEDA Walk Venues:

- Public Parks
- College Campus
- High Schools
- Stadium Parking Lots

Securing the Location

Processes for securing the walk venue will vary by city, and even venue to venue within that city. Most venues will require you to submit an event application and then a venue staff member will provide you with a venue contract once the event is approved. Visit the venue’s website to determine the steps, you need to take to reserve your desired walk location. Parks and recreation departments and event venues usually have a special events section on their websites with an email or phone number you can use to request additional information.
When contacting the venue, you will need to request information regarding availability, the reservation process, venue amenities, and venue fees.

**Permits**

While working with the venue staff to reserve the event location, you will need to determine if the event requires additional permits. Depending on the event logistics, the city or venue may require you to obtain permits from city departments.

Examples of permits that may be required include permits for sound, food, sidewalk and/or road use. The venue contact will be able to point you in the right direction.

**Insurance**

Many venues will ask for a certificate of insurance (or COI) to be submitted at the time of application or prior to the event date. When required, NEDA provides commercial liability coverage for all walks that safeguard against many known and unknown risks. In order for NEDA to provide the insurance, you will need to send us the venue’s insurance requirements. These requirements are usually found within the venue contract.
**Event Budget**

Best practice for nonprofits is to cap event expenses at 20% of the event’s gross revenue. This means that if a walk is expected to raise $10,000, target a maximum of $2,000 for event expenses. Venue fees, equipment rentals, insurance, shipping, refreshments, and all other event necessities are within the 20%.

While 20% of each walk’s gross revenue is budgeted for event expenses, many NEDA Walks are able to operate on a lower budget. To minimize expenses, try to secure in-kind donations for items like water and snacks, and always ask rental companies if they offer a nonprofit discount as well as tax exemption. By reducing our expenses, we can increase the amount of funds that will support NEDA’s programs and services.

**Tracking Expenses**

To help you track your event expenses, we have created a budget tracking spreadsheet with your walk’s fundraising goal and formulas to calculate expense total and expense ratio. The expenses will automatically total and your current expense ratio will be displayed.

**Event Essentials**

**Tables & Chairs**

All NEDA Walks require tables and chairs for registration/check-in, activities, sponsors, etc. If the venue does not provide tables and chairs for you (in most cases they don’t) and you are unable to borrow, you may need to rent them from a party/event rental company. Do an online search for rental companies in your area and request a quote from a few vendors to compare equipment prices and delivery fees. A 6ft banquet table ranges from $6 to around $10, and folding chairs average $1-$2.50. Always ask if the company offers a nonprofit discount and let them know we are a tax-exempt organization.

**How many do I need?** The quantity of tables and chairs needed for the NEDA Walk will vary from walk-to-walk, but you will want to make sure you have tables with chairs for all of the following:

- Registration/Participant Check-in
- Refreshments
- Activities

**Sound**

Music and informational speakers add to the community aspect of your walk. Dependent on how many people attend your walk, you may want to have a DJ with a sound system. Smaller events often use music from a phone and a portable speaker. A DJ will supply the equipment we need, as well as a form of entertainment! A DJ will also handle the set-up, operation, and breakdown of their equipment. When booking a DJ, be sure to communicate all event details, including that you will need access to 1-2 microphones. In many cases, you will find a DJ who will donate their time.
**Electricity**

The DJ’s sound system will require power to operate. Contact the venue staff to determine if there is electricity at the walk location. Make sure you know how many outlets are at the venue and where they are specifically located, and if there are any special requirements needed to access them.

**Signage**

You will need ample signage to mark the event location, parking areas, walk route, registration and check-in areas, activities, etc. Be sure to mark all venue entry points with directional signs - walkers should be able to easily find the event! Consult venue staff for rules regarding signage (i.e., some venues will not permit signs to be staked into the ground).

*Examples of signs include:*
- Directional signage (to start location)
- Parking
- Registration
- Check-In
- Walk route markers
- Activity descriptions
- Refreshment stations

**Refreshments**

All NEDA Walks are required to have water and snacks available to walkers. If you are unable to get water and snacks donated, you will need to purchase bottled water and pre-packaged snacks, such as granola bars.

**Decorations**

The NEDA Walk should look fun and festive. NEDA’s primary colors are blue and green. You can incorporate our colors through balloons, tablecloths, streamers, and through any other creative ideas you might have for decorations. We love your creativity!
Walk Day Supplies

Below is a comprehensive list of miscellaneous supplies you will need to purchase or borrow for the walk. These supplies are for your functional, organizational, and decorative needs. Think about all your activity tables to determine if you need any additional supplies (like sidewalk chalk or photo booth props). As always, be mindful of your event’s budget when purchasing walk supplies. Worried about finding a time to pick up supplies? **Do a one-stop shop at the Dollar Store or other discount stores.** Most of these items are in your house already.

- Cashbox or money pouches or a large manilla envelope
- File folders or large document envelopes
- Pens for registration tables and activities
- Posters for making signs
- Markers for activities and signage
- Scissors, tape, paperclips, etc.
- Spray bottles or sponges for tattoo application
- Plastic sign holders for table signage
- Green & blue decorative supplies – party tablecloths, balloons, etc.
- Organizational baskets/bins for displaying materials or activity supplies
- Trash bags and other clean-up supplies

Items to Print

Create a list of all the forms and documents you will need to print and bring with you to the walk. The below checklist will help you get started. Make multiple copies of all schedules and lists and be sure to print plenty of registration and donation forms.

- Registration and Offline Donation forms
  - Quantity is dependent on walk size - check with NEDA staff for suggestions
- The NEDA Walk program outline and schedule for key volunteers and speakers
- Copy of the event permit
- Table labels (to assign table purposes ahead of time)
- Any last-minute signage needs
**Event Programming**

NEDA Walks are largely centered on the walk program, rather than the physical walk. The walk program is intended to inspire hope, celebrate strength, crush stigma, and spread the message that recovery is possible. It’s also an important opportunity to share NEDA’s mission of supporting individuals and families and inform the community of the impact of their donation and fundraising efforts.

The walk program will include opening remarks, one to two guest speakers, and fundraising awards. The program may also include entertainment (such as a singer or dance group), and/or a light warm-up before kicking off the walk (like yoga!).

**Emcee**

Walk Coordinators most often emcee the event by giving the opening remarks, introducing the speakers, announcing the top fundraiser awards, and giving the final “thank you” at the end of the walk. This is an opportunity for the community to get to know you as the superstar advocate you really are. NEDA will provide you with sample opening and closing remarks. If you are uncomfortable in this role, you are welcome to share it with a committee member.

**Entertainment**

NEDA Walks are fun, spirited community events! All NEDA Walks should have upbeat, family-friendly music playing during the registration/check-in period, this can be provided by a DJ or through AV equipment or your phone. You may also choose to have entertainment during the walk program. If a performance is going to be included in the main program, it should be limited to around five minutes. The performance should be professional and upbeat. Before deciding on an entertainer, you should ask for a video of their performance. Performance ideas include a local band or singer, an acapella group, or dance group.
**Warm-Up**

Most of our walks have a warm-up before the physical walk takes place. A warm-up is not required, but it can be a fun addition to the event. Warm-ups should be very low-intensity and led by a professional. Examples include yoga, meditation, gentle stretching, or somatic movement (think dancing!).

**Walk Kick-Off!**

Play a pump-up song, take a group photo or giant NEDA Walk selfie, and get everyone excited to walk.

**Create an Event Schedule/Run of Show**

Walk schedules will vary from city to city, but the basic structure outlined below should be followed as closely as possible. The program schedule must be approved by the National Walks Team in advance.

- **Event set-up** (1-2 hours)
- **Registration/Check-in/Sponsor Expo/Pre-walk Activities** (60 minutes)
  - The time frame allotted for registration/check-in is decided at the start of the walk planning process, based on the anticipated number of walkers
- **Performer** (5 minutes)
- **Introduction**
  - Usually done by the walk coordinator, should include information about NEDA as an organization
- **One-to-two guest speakers** (10-15 minutes)
  - Guest speakers should speak for no longer than 5 minutes each
- **Fundraising Awards** (5 minutes)
- **Warm-up** (5 minutes)
- **Walk** (20 minutes)
- **Closing remarks and final “thank you”** (5 minutes)
- **Clean-up** (1 hour)
**Activities**

After people check in or register at the walk, they will be looking for things to do while they wait for the walk program to begin. During the first 30-60 minutes of the event (depending on the length designated for registration), we will want music playing, sponsors exhibiting, and walkers participating in various activities. **All walks should have a minimum of three activity stations, one of which should be a fundraising activity.** Our goal is to create a fun and festive walk experience!

**Easy Activity Ideas for Creating a Fun & Festive Walk Event**

**Give Aways** – Everyone loves a good give away, plus this is a great way to raise extra funds at the walk. Find local businesses to donate gift certificates, products, or experiences.

**Chair or hand massages** – If you can find a local massage school, sometimes students need practice hours and can come as a group to do chair massages. They bring the equipment. Self-care for the win!

**Warrior Flow Yoga Warm-Up** – It’s not too hard to find a local yoga instructor to donate some of their time. You can have an ongoing yoga stretch during the registration/check-in period, and a quick warmup right before the walk kicks off!

**Tree of Hope** - Get a small tree (like a 3ft towering Ficus) donated or even use a tree when your event is and create blank hang tags on which people can write messages of hope to hang on the tree. You can also construct a paper tree out of cardboard! Get creative!
Eating Disorders Succ – Find a local nursery that will donate mini succulents. You can sell succulents to plant or decorate for a $5 donation!

Faux Photo Booth - Find an artsy friend to help you make a backdrop and get some blue and green props at your local party store. You can also inexpensively make or purchase an “Instagram” photo frame!

“I Walk For” Signs – Make printouts or get some poster boards (or a white board) and some markers so people can share why they NEDA Walk!

Dog bandanna decorating – Super dog-friendly walk? Get some puffy paint and fabric markers so pet owners can decorate their pup’s new dog bandanna (provided at the NEDA table).

Face painting or henna tattoos, or balloon twisting – Try to find a local artist who can donate their services.

Bracelet Making – Get some string, scissors, and letter beads. People can make bracelets with inspirational words like, “warrior” or “strength.”
**Walk Day Set-Up**

You and your core volunteers should arrive at the walk location a minimum of 1.5 to 2 hours before event start time. Your set-up time will depend on the demands of your event – plan accordingly. You will want ample time to set up all tables, signage, etc. Designate an “on-call volunteer” who can make a quick run to the store in case of any last-minute needs.

**Expert Tips for Working Event Set-Up like a Pro:**
- Label boxes and pack your car the night before the walk
- Ask the equipment delivery team to unload the tables and chairs first before other equipment like tents and stage that require a more intensive setup. You won’t want to have to wait to get started on your part
- Print out a volunteer sign-in sheet and assign one of your committee members to check-in and direct volunteers as they arrive
- Assign two volunteers to get started with signage/balloons to mark the walk path and event entry
- Line up tables and chairs and mark each table with its purpose (specific activity, specific sponsor, registration, etc.) to make it clear what supplies belong where. This will make it easier to direct volunteers to drop off/unload supplies at specific tables
  - Print or write labels for each table before the walk, label boxes to match
- Assign at least two volunteers to arrange T-shirt table(s) by size
- Assign at least two volunteers to set up refreshment tables
- Set up your NEDA Resource Table with all NEDA informational brochures and materials. This is required at all NEDA Walks
- Do a final walkthrough to make sure registration, check-in, and all activity tables are set up properly and have all necessary supplies
- Greet sponsor representatives enthusiastically and professionally, and escort them to their tables. Remember, you want your sponsors to have a positive, memorable experience so they return next year –you are also acting as a representative of NEDA
- Assign sponsor table location in order of sponsor support – higher paying sponsors should receive a preferred table location (easily visible, high traffic area)
- Designate a volunteer clean-up crew so that you have a team to stay behind to help after the event
Registration and Check-In Area Set-Up

The registration and check-in area will be walkers’ first impression of the event, so it is important to make sure you and your registration/check-in volunteers are well organized. Make sure each station is adequately staffed with volunteers who are well-trained, and that lines are moving along quickly.

Best Practices

- Create or order signage that stands out, so day-of registrants and pre-registered participants know which line they need to enter
- If people show up early, it’s okay to let them know that registration is not open yet

Materials Needed at the Registration and Check-In Tables:

Day-of Registration Table Materials

- Registration forms
- Pens, clipboards
- Cashbox
- Folder(s) for collecting forms

Check-In Table Materials

- Copies of pre-registered participant list
- Offline Donation forms
- Pens and highlighters
- Folder(s) for collecting forms
- Cashbox for collecting money