

Fun Run Planning Checklist

The Fire Up Your Feet fundraising program provides a healthy and fun alternative to traditional school fundraisers -- and, more importantly, can help you raise more money with 75 percent of the proceeds going directly to your school. The remaining 25 percent supports the Safe Routes to School National Partnership's efforts to ensure continued funding for schools and communities to create new sidewalks, pathways, and safe traffic crossings.

Planning a Fired Up Fun Run is easy! Use our resources and materials to raise and collect funds both in person and online. You can host a School Day Fun Run for students during the school day, or an After School Family Fun Run so the whole family can participate. Here's your how-to guide for planning and getting Fired Up! We recommend that you start planning two to three months prior to your event.

1. Recruit Volunteers

Start early in gathering a group of take-charge volunteers to help plan and coordinate race day activities.

Tip: don't forget to invite your principal, physical education teachers, Wellness Committee, PTA/PTO, students, student council, school board, staff, families, and the surrounding community to help volunteer and set goals.

2. Communicate Your Goals

Set the dollar amount you hope to raise. (Make sure you've read the Fired Up Your Feet Fundraising 101 guide on this website!) How will you use the money raised through your fundraiser? Whether it's playground expansions, physical education program improvements, or literacy efforts, your goal should be clearly messaged and promoted.

3. Save the Date

Spring or fall runs are common, but wintertime "polar runs" can also be successful. Be sure to check with your principal or secretary to see which dates work best for students. Family Fun Run events are often held on Saturday mornings, but you can choose any time that works best for your audience.

4. Pick a Location

School grounds will probably be the most convenient and familiar. Nearby parks or accessible trails are also an option for after-school or weekend runs.

5. Map the Route

Consider the participants' goals: time running, distance, number of laps. Consider having two or three different routes/distances so that participants of all ages can enjoy the event. A 5-K distance is common for adults, while a half mile, 1-mile, or even a 100-yard dash are fun for younger runners. You can also use your school's track for a lap-counting run, giving rubber bands, stickers, or colored tape

6. Obtain Permits

If your route goes off of school grounds, check with your city municipality to see if a “parade route” permit is required. Contact your local police department to see if extra police presence will be necessary. (Note: holding a run on school grounds will usually alleviate some of these requirements.)

7. Promote the Event

Starting three months prior until the day before the event, spread the word weekly with flyers, emails, social media, posters, banners, public address announcements, website listings, local media stories, and more! Start with Save-the-Dates and move on to messages about registration, logistics, and encouragement.

Tip: Be sure to include a link to this Fire Up Your Feet page in all your communications for everyone to access the below section for training tips, warm up exercises, pacing pointers, and proper running technique.

8. Registration

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9. Day-Of Logistics

Tee shirts and/or numbers

Both kids and adults like the official feeling of a race number. If budgets are tight, print out your own numbers or use body paint to write numbers on arms and legs. You can order event-specific or school-themed tee shirts, or encourage participants to wear a certain color tee shirt.

Warm Up

Have a parent or school staff person lead warm-up exercises and fun music to create enthusiasm.

Food & Drink

Water is a must. Make sure to have it in the main staging area and even along the route. After the race, offer healthy snacks such as yogurt, fruit, and power bars. You may be able to procure donated snacks from local grocery stores in exchange for a Thank You sign at the event.

Start & Finish Crew

Designate an official starting judge at the starting line and timekeepers at the finish line. Make sure timekeepers know to record winners’ names and numbers at the end of the race.

Clean Up

Do you need custodians or groundskeepers? Will there be accessible garbage cans and recycling?

10. Have fun!

With an event like this, you are modeling and encouraging healthy lifestyles for families, students, and educators in a friendly, fun and safe way. Plus, the funds you raise for both your school and Fire Up Your Feet will advance the mission of creating smart, fit, and livable communities.