

Prevention Levy – Sample Timeline of Events

Early February

- Meet with County Commissioners to petition ballot issue.

This is your first meeting with your commissioner(s) to make them aware of your plans and ask for assistance. A commissioner will assist in getting the prevention levy onto the meeting agenda as well as ensuring the ballot itself is written correctly and legally.

Mid February

- Establish Levy committee

Forming your committee and determining who will be working on this project is key. The timeline is fairly rigid and the committee should be composed of invested partners who can contribute time or valuable efforts, as well as increase buy-in and drum up support. Members may include; school affiliates, child welfare representatives, substance abuse preventionist, law enforcement, parents, etc. In building your “coalition” community leaders and agency directors should be seated at your “table.”

- Develop budget for the campaign

Important and unavoidable, the budget is for campaigning and media distribution and the campaign cannot run without first identifying fiscal needs.

Late February

- Secure committed major donors

Once donors are determined they need to be locked in. Funds must be recorded and sent to the Political Practices Commissioner.

Missoula County example: small business owners such as “Denny’s Copy Shop,” Flannigan’s Motors, a realtor, private donors and small donations from community members. Potential donors are everywhere!

- Research Political Action Committee(PAC) options

PAC’s are organizations that raise money privately to influence elections or legislation, there are most likely a couple existing already in your community. This piece requires research on your part, it is important to be educated on the legal process and the federal laws involving PAC funds. A PAC may be focused; for instance on educational ballots or youth-targeted initiatives

Early March

- Prepare for public hearing (speakers, talking points, etc.,)

It goes without saying that your committee needs time to prepare. Speakers and their parts should be organized, planned and practiced. Remember that almost nobody wants to see an increase in their taxes, establishing your levy will require convincing your community the extra taxes are worthwhile and necessary. A well-presented campaign from confident speakers helps to ease the public's concerns.

- File Papers

In filing papers the county commissioners will be very helpful, but it is up to the committee to adhere to dates and requirements.

- Elect Officers

Assigning general duties and responsibilities of your committee members means no one gets surprised later on.

- Organize Public hearing speakers from your levy committee

Mid-March

- Public hearing with County Commissioners

This represents your first real chance to speak to members of local government as well as the community. Introduce yourself, your team members, and share your vision for the future with prevention tax dollars.

- Press interviews

Media coverage is a necessity for this endeavor; your committee must make an excellent and pressing case to the public. By utilizing available media, the public has their chance to respond, via letters to the editor or opinion pieces. This allows you to see if your county is on the same page. Familiarizing the public with your taglines or key phrases, as well as relevant data points, will make a difference when it comes to voting.

Late March

- Advertising/literature pieces and message developed

Develop core components of your campaign for distribution. Reference the success in Missoula County, highlight your community's greatest issues and paint the picture of what your prevention tax dollars can do. These pieces should be tailored to your community and local atmosphere.

Follow through on speaking opportunities, to prevention coalitions, church organizations, women's organizations, civic organizations like Kiwanis and Rotary, and parent organizations at local schools.

- Recruit volunteers

Your committee is most likely made up of professionals and the chances are extra hands will be needed. Volunteers are also an excellent way to drum up support and get the word out.

- Meetings scheduled with Neighborhood Councils

Because of your shared vision, safer and healthier communities, these councils will be great allies. They can assist with remaining pieces of the campaign and have a valuable sphere of reference.

- Map out upcoming family/kids events for literature drop

Make your committee visible, be present when your target population is available and always have materials to distribute. Disseminate your information.

- Set up speaking engagements

If there are events seeking keynote speakers or local representatives

- Develop op-ed and Letter's to the Editor (LTE's)

Again utilize media, by submitting opinion editorials and letters to the editor. State your case and explain the need while highlighting positive outcomes.

Late April

- Print advertising pieces (yard signage, one piece flyers)

This includes yard signs and flyers for businesses around town, and this is why you have a budget developed early on in the process.

- Secure yard-sign's post/ identify sites for signs

Like any campaign, utilize street corners, businesses and front lawns.

May

- Mail three pieces of your media throughout the month,

Use a city wide registry approach mailing to every registered address, with one coinciding with mail-out of absentee ballots. This will require you know when the absentee ballots are distributed, and making sure you get at least one piece of your materials out simultaneously.

- Radio ads towards end of May (if budget allows)

Continue being present and speaking at community engagements when opportunity arises.

- Submit LTE's

At this time, the letters you wrote up or collected early should start trickling in to local newspapers.

Early June

- Get Out The Vote Calls

Using volunteers and all the human resources available, remind your community once more what they need to do (vote yes on the prevention levy) to keep their homes healthy and progressive. You can dictate calls based on a phonebook or by your coalition registry or via any method you see fit. Calls are difficult in that we live in a cell phone world, so for efficiency it may be easier to have a physical presence in town at busy public spots to give final reminders.

- Election Day and Victory Party! (Election day varies county to county)