

# PROMOTING SHARED USE



## A Resource Guide for Improving Physical Activity Opportunities in Your Community



Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods  
at Case Western Reserve University





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## Introduction

Shared use – also called “open use” or “community use”—is a powerful tool that public and private property owners can use to fill a need in their community for recreational facilities and increase opportunities for physical activity and programming. Shared use occurs when government entities, schools, private, or nonprofit organizations agree to open or broaden access to their facilities for community use. If you are reading this guide, you are likely affiliated with an organization that has a shared use policy and are ready to move on to the next steps of recruiting program providers and community members to take advantage of your shared use space. Note: if you are not at this stage yet, see the “Shared Use Policy and Agreement Resources” box for resources to help you get a shared use policy in place.

In order for your shared use space to be effective, you need people to activate the space. It is highly unlikely that program providers and community members will stumble upon your shared use opportunity on their own. This is where promotion comes into play. This guide covers two types of promotion: promoting your shared use space to program providers, and then promoting the activities and programs (including open use) to community members. This guide begins with a discussion on creating a promotions plan, and then provides guidance on strategies and best practices for promoting your space to program providers and to community members. Resources including templates and examples are linked throughout the document and are provided in an appendix.

### Shared Use Policy and Agreement Resources

Organizations supporting shared use in Cuyahoga County have included shared use in their policies, manuals, and other governing and operational documents to open their doors to other community members and uses. The next step is to enter into a shared use agreement. Shared use agreements offer ways for schools, faith-based organizations, libraries, and others to open their facilities to community use. A shared use agreement refers to a written agreement between entities setting forth the terms and conditions for sharing the use of the facilities. Information and resources on shared use policy and agreements can be found on the [HIP-Cuyahoga website](#).



## Before You Start: Planning for Community-Based Programs

Before you begin promoting your shared use opportunity, you should have a sense of what types of activity you want to see happen on your property or in your facility. This way you will know what kind of program providers you will want to recruit. The activities and programs offered need to reflect community values and interests in order to generate and maintain participation. Consider the different cultural preferences your community members may have. For example, some groups prefer group or family fitness activities versus individual-oriented activities. Some ways to identify the community interests that your shared use program could fulfill include:

- **Surveys.** These could include online surveys (Google forms, SurveyMonkey, and polling using Facebook and other social media are free or low-cost) or simple polls using dot stickers or questionnaires at community events or places with a lot of foot traffic.
- **Community Partners.** Contact your city's parks and recreation or community services department to see if there is unserved or underserved demand for certain types of programs. Check with schools and other community organizations to see what is popular. If there are always waiting lists for specific activities, it is a sign that your shared use space could fill a gap.
- **Community Health Ambassadors.** Community Health Ambassadors are active members of the communities that they live in, and help determine which facilities could benefit the community to develop a shared use agreement. They also assist with identifying neighbor interests to see which activities would have good participation. Visit the [Health Improvement Partnership-Cuyahoga \(HIP-Cuyahoga\) website](#) or contact Briana McIntosh from the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at [bxm285@case.edu](mailto:bxm285@case.edu) to connect with a local Community Health Ambassador.

# 1 Developing a Promotions Plan

Having a plan in place before you jump into promotions is a good idea, and can be very simple. Because you will be promoting your shared use opportunity to two different audiences (program providers and community members) with different objectives, it is best to have two promotions plans. Most likely, you will put the promotions plan for program providers in motion first, and then work with the program providers to develop and implement the promotions to community members. For both plans, here are some key components. A promotions planning worksheet is provided in the Resources Appendix to guide you in developing your plan. Here is information about the key components of a promotions plan.

## Audience Assessment

First, identify who you want to recruit to participate in your program. Break your audience down into sub-audiences. For community members, who are the specific groups you are targeting – children, families, older adults? Are you looking to attract residents from the immediate neighborhood, or do you want participation from across the city? The audience likely includes those people who weighed in on the types of programs and activities through surveys, community partners, and Community Health Ambassadors. What types of activities did people say they would like to participate in? This will drive the program provider audience. Use the Audience Assessment Template to record information about different audiences and strategies.

## Strategies

For each audience, identify the strategy or strategies you will use to promote your program. You may have a primary strategy (such as flyers at community destinations) as well as a secondary strategy (like social media). A discussion of specific strategies is provided in the following sections. Use the audience assessment template to capture the different audiences you are looking to reach and the types of strategies you will use to reach them.

## Budget

What is your budget for promotions? This will affect what strategies you use. It is good (and may be required by your organization) to have a defined budget so you have a plan for how to allocate resources. Divide the budget amongst the promotion strategies.

## Implementers

Who is going to be responsible for implementing each strategy? Depending on the complexity of your promotions plan and who is responsible overall, this can become very detailed. Identify who is responsible for individual steps.

## Schedule/Timing

When do things need to be done? Are there deadlines for community publications? If one of your strategies involves messaging through the local school, how much advance notice do they need and are there holiday and other school breaks to plan around? Develop a schedule for the specific implementation steps.

## Evaluation Steps

Evaluation does not have to be complicated, but it will be good to have ideas around how you will evaluate your promotions to identify success as well as things that could be changed or improved. This can be as simple as asking participants how they heard about the program so you can track which strategies have been most successful, and eliminate or change any strategies that have reached very few people.



*Zumba class held in a school library.*

## 2 Promoting Shared Use Opportunities to Program Providers

Once you have an idea of the types of activities and programs you would like to have in your facility, you are ready to start thinking about the program providers you are looking to attract and how to reach them. This section describes the different audiences you might be looking to target and how they receive information, and best practices for promoting your shared use opportunity to program providers. Links to sample language and templates are provided for specific strategies and ideas.

### A. Reaching Your Audience

Your target audience is going to depend on how you are looking to activate your space. Are you looking to have fitness classes? You will be looking for instructors who are trained to lead fitness classes, either professionally or as volunteers. Do you have a kitchen space and are looking to offer healthy cooking classes? Your target audience will obviously be people with cooking skills, but you will also want to make sure they are trained in proper food handling and can integrate nutrition education into their classes. There are two main audiences you will want to reach: neighborhood residents and community members, and professional instructors.

#### Neighborhood Residents and Community Members

Potential program providers may be amongst local neighborhood residents and community members. These people might already be part of your network. Get the word out by providing information about your shared use opportunity in your organization's newsletters, social media, and on bulletin boards in your facility. Tap into neighborhood communications channels such as neighborhood newsletters, Facebook groups, and flyers at neighborhood gathering places like coffee shops and libraries.

#### Professional Instructors

Professional instructors are formally trained or certified to provide programming and often provide classes and activities as a source of employment. They may be looking to use your space to expand their programming and may or may not want to charge participants. Note: it is important to let this group know any policies or requirements

Do you have staff, volunteers, or other community members in your network interested in becoming trained to offer classes or programs? The following organizations provide instruction:

- [Cleveland Yoga Teacher Training](#)
- [ACE Personal Trainer or Group Fitness Certification at Cleveland State](#)
- [Zumba Teacher Training](#)

around charging (or not charging) for participation. While professional instructors might already live in the neighborhood and hear about your opportunity through local channels, you are probably looking to expand your reach. Facility use should be offered for free or at a low cost to instructors, but approach promoting your shared use opportunity to instructors like you would be advertising a space for lease.

Some ways that professional instructors receive information are:

- Health events and expos. Look for events in your area geared towards providing information to professionals and community members on health. Potential program providers may be attending these events, or even working at them. Contact the event organizers to see if you can provide informational flyers or brochures to hand out, or if there are other advertising opportunities.
- Training and certification organizations. These can include local colleges and trade schools and certification providers, such as the [Zumba network](#). Outreaching through these organizations can be especially beneficial to reach program providers who are just starting out and may be looking for low-cost or free facilities to use as they build their business and following.
- Word of mouth. Often the best way to reach professional instructors is through other instructors. Once you connect with one instructor, let them know if there are more or different opportunities and encourage them to share the information with colleagues.
- Message them. Another way to get information out to professional instructors is to post on or message them through their social media accounts. Health-related instructors like personal trainers and mental health professionals often have business pages on Facebook and their own Twitter handles. It does not hurt to message them directly about opportunities to use their skills, possibly make more money, and gain more potential clients.

## B. Tips and Best Practices

Keep in mind these tips and best practices for successfully promoting your shared use opportunity to potential program providers.

- Include key information in your initial promotions. Keep in mind you will likely have limited space on a flyer or ad to catch a provider's attention. You will want to include the basics of Who, What, When Where, Why and How.
  - **Who** – who is your organization that is offering the shared use space?
  - **What** – what type of space are you offering? Be specific – is the space suitable for fitness, cooking, or other community programs? Include a well-lit, high resolution (300 dpi or higher) picture.
  - **When** – when is your space available? Evenings, weekends?
  - **Where** – where is your space located?
  - **Why** – if you have specific community goals or organizational priorities driving your shared use program, let people know. Also, convey any specific benefits to the program provider (i.e. a free space, central location in a neighborhood).
  - **How** – provide your contact information in the initial promotions.
  
- Keep key information on hand to quickly follow up on inquiries.
  - How big the space is (in terms of square footage or capacity), and if there are any unique features like full-length mirrors for a dance class. Be prepared to provide more detailed information such as flooring type, audio equipment availability, and cooking appliances availability.
  - Be prepared to talk about how your shared use policy and agreement work, any policies around charging for participation or provider compensation, and parameters or restrictions around use.
  - If the provider has not worked in this specific community or shared space before, mention the opportunity to meet new potential clients.
  
- Collect information about potential program providers so you can reach out directly to them in the future. You may receive referrals from other program providers or inquiries that are not the right fit now, but may be in the future. Keep their contact information and notes on their interests, abilities, and certifications.



### Partnering to Promote Shared Use to Program Providers

Are there other nearby facilities in your area that want to share a program provider? For example, maybe they are able to offer space on alternating days. This will provide more opportunities for the program provider in your area. Work with other shared use space providers to promote this joint opportunity and benefit.



## 3 Promoting Activities and Programs to Community Members

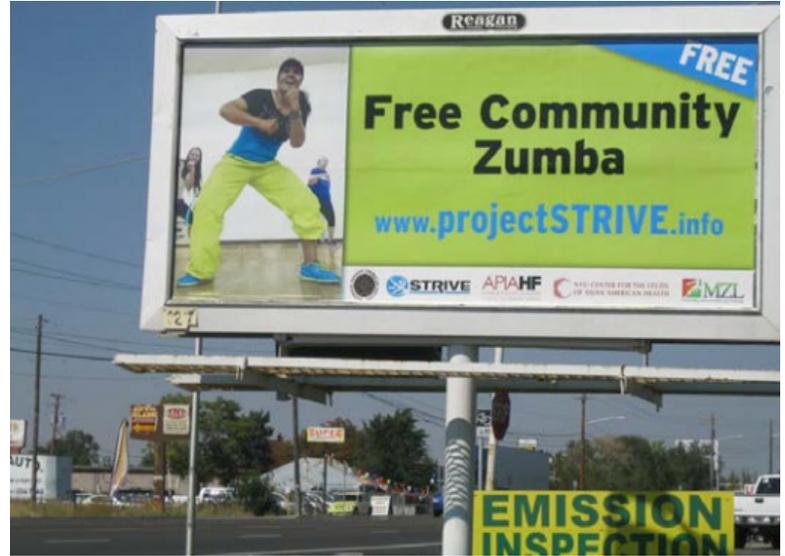
Once your programming is lined up, you will be ready to promote the activities to community members and recruit participants. You may be looking to open up your programs to the whole community – neighborhood residents and others of all ages and abilities. Or, the programming in your space may be targeted to specific groups such as school age children or older adults. This section describes different strategies for reaching your audience and best practices for promoting the activities that will be happening in your shared use space. Sample language and templates are provided in the appendix.

### A. Reaching Your Audience

Your target audience is going to depend on the programming in your space. Ideally, the program provider will be involved in helping you develop your messaging and promoting the program as their success depends on promotion as well. Program providers, especially professional ones who have been leading classes or other activities for an extended period, have a wealth of knowledge and experience in how to attract participants. This section provides information if you need additional guidance, are working with a program provider with less promotions experience, or are providing programming yourself and program promotions is new. This section describes strategies intended to get the word out about your program broadly, reaching large numbers of residents and other community members. Strategies that are particularly successful in reaching children and families, teens and young adults, and older adults are highlighted in a sidebar. Your budget may drive the strategies – web-based promotion can be inexpensive or free, small printing such as flyers can also be inexpensive. Ads on buses, radio, and other traditional media can be more costly, but check with providers to see about rates and any discounts that your organization may be eligible for because you are providing a community service.

#### Tools for Creating Attractive Materials

- Customizable Word document templates are provided in the appendix of this guide. Simply swap out the placeholder information and photos with your event details!
- Canva is an online graphic design tool that allows users to create flyers, social media ads, and graphics easily and effectively with templates, stock images, and filters. Many features are available for free.



Examples of large billboards

## Print Media

Print media, when used in places where they are visible to large numbers of community members, can be very effective in generating broad interest. Print media can be inexpensive (for example, posting flyers in community gathering places), or more costly (like ads on buses). Print media like signs and flyers can also be targeted toward specific groups like students or a particular neighborhood.

### Billboards, banners, signs, and posters

Post banners, signs, or posters in places that are highly visible to people passing by. This may be on your facility building or gate, at community advertising areas (sometimes designated street corners or walls), and at other places community members frequent such as grocery stores, libraries, and the post office. For larger communities or communities with major roads, look for opportunities to include information on a billboard. Sometimes businesses like auto dealerships are willing to place messaging on electronic marquees

for community organizations and programs. Because people may be passing by these quickly, make sure the text is large and easy to understand, the sign is eye-catching, and a way to get more detailed information (a website, email address, or phone number) is provided.

### Bus ads

In communities where transit is heavily used, ads on buses (or trains or subways) can be effective in reaching many potential participants. Work with your transit provider to place ads on the buses, or at bus shelters or transit hubs.

### Ads in community newspapers or on local radio stations

Some communities receive their local news through community/neighborhood newspapers or local radio. Consider running an ad that describes the basics of your programming.

**FROM cafeteria  
TO Zumba studio.**

**OPENING DOORS AND SHARING  
SPACE TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY  
HEALTHY.**

➤ **New partnerships between organizations are popping up across Cleveland to create opportunities to be healthy.**

Visit [hipcuyahoga.org](http://hipcuyahoga.org) to find out what's available in your neighborhood.

(216) 309-2447 #healthmattershere

Example bus ad

## Digital Media

Digital media can be an inexpensive way to disseminate information to the community.

### Email lists and newsletters

This may include sending out emails or providing information in electronic newsletters to your own network, as well as a network of interested participants that builds once you start promoting your program and get sign ups. Keep an ongoing list of emails so that you can contact community members to let them know of future programming.

### Social media

Provide information through your own social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.). Also post on social media pages or groups that your target audience follows such as Nextdoor or a neighborhood Facebook page. You can create your own page or group and ask people to join or follow. Or create events for people to show interest and sign up for. Check out [19 Tips to Promote Your Recreation Activities Using Social](#) and [Using Social Media Marketing to Promote Physical Activity and Health and Wellness in Parks](#) for detailed descriptions of social media platforms and tips on how to use them effectively.

### Website

Provide information on your organization or facilities website. But more importantly, find out what websites your community or audience uses and post information there. Be sure to keep the information up to date.



*Event listings on Facebook are free and allow community members to RSVP or indicate interest in the event.*

## Successful Strategies for Reaching Specific Groups

### Children and Families

Children and families often pay attention to information received through their schools. This can include flyers that are sent home, information in newsletters or emails from principals or the parent teacher association, or signs on the school campus. See if you can have a table or provide handouts during back to school night or open house. School marquees can display quick messages. Check with your local school to see how information is typically sent home and find out if you can include your program promotions. Also provide information at other community spaces frequented by families such as the children or family section of the neighborhood library.

### Teens and Young Adults

Digital communications and word of mouth are popular with teens and young adults (as well as other age groups). Social media is free or low cost and effective way to reach teens and young adults with access to the internet. Be sure to include photos or even videos to promote your activities.

### Older Adults

Older adults receive information through a number of different avenues. Some may be very tech-savvy and use social media. Others prefer more traditional media and may be more likely to see something about your program in a community newspaper ad or hear about it on the radio. Post information at gathering places like churches, senior centers, and libraries. Newsletters through senior programs or other community organizations are a good avenue as well.

## Community Events and Networks

Passing out information at in-person events is another effective way to promote activities to the public.

### Community events

Provide information at other community events such as farmer's markets, community recreation fairs, back to school BBQs, and neighborhood events. This may include passing out flyers or brochures, hanging posters with information, or staffing a booth with information and sign up sheets. You can also use these events to gauge interest in new activities. Print out pictures of different activities and ask community members to vote for which activity they would like to see offered.

### Other community organizations

Provide information to community partner organizations and ask them to announce activities to their members or networks during meetings and other events or through emails or newsletters. Check with your city to see if they can send out information or include it in their publications. To make it easy for community organizations and partners to share information, be sure to provide sample newsletter blurbs, social media messages, and promotional pictures or graphics. It can be helpful to offer a few different messaging options so the organization can choose the one that best resonates with their audience.

## Example Case Study: Partnering for a Community Event

HIP-Cuyahoga partnered with a local radio station to host a Zumba event at a school for students and their families. The event promoted the school, Zumba events, and health and wellness. The event was captured in [a video](#) that was posted on Facebook for additional promotion.



## Promoting Open Use

If you are opening up your facility for open use (i.e. a school playground on weekends and in the evenings), you will likely want to use one or more of the strategies described in this section to get the word out, in addition to providing signage on your facility that is visible to the public. Signage should be welcoming and make it clear when the facility is open to the public.



*Sign outside an open use facility*

## B. Tips and Best Practices for Promoting Your Event

Keep in mind these tips and best practices for successfully promoting your programming to community members.

- Provide relevant information. How much information you include will depend on the specific strategy. Large banners aimed at people driving in the neighborhood only have space for a short description or title and contact information while a brochure can include many more details. Ultimately you will want to make sure people know Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.
  - Who is the program intended for?
  - What are you offering?
  - When is it offered?
  - Where is it offered?
  - Why? Tell people the benefits of your program. While time, location, duration and cost are important, benefits will motivate community members to participate because they respond to the “why” rather than the “what.”
  - How does one sign up or participate? How much does it cost?
    - Note: if the program is free, tell people!
- Materials need to be clear and easy to understand. This includes providing materials in the languages spoken by community members. Avoid jargon (like “shared use,” which community members are not likely to be familiar with).
- Your organization may serve people of all abilities and cultures, but unless you clearly communicate to the public that your program welcomes people of all abilities and cultures, some people will assume your program is not for them. Be explicit and welcoming.
- Make sure your promotional materials are culturally relevant and appropriate. Ask one or more local residents in your network to review materials and provide feedback.

### Get to Know the Community Culture

Are you working in a community where you are less familiar with the neighborhood, residents, and what their language or cultural preferences are? You may be able to find out more information about the community members by looking at languages spoken at home from the [Census Bureau](#), looking at data about student demographics at the local school, or talking with community organizations or neighborhood groups.

**The Weekend Community Open Space Program**

**Southeast Fresno Sites:**  
 Vang Pao Elementary 4100 Heaton Ave  
 Roosevelt High 4250 E Tulare Ave  
 Sunnyside High 1019 S Peach Ave

**Other Sites:**  
 Yokomi Elementary 2323 E McKenzie Ave  
 Wilson Elementary 2131 W Ashlan Ave  
 Addams Elementary 2117 W McKinley Ave  
 Terronez Middle 2300 S Willow Ave  
 Scandinavian Middle 3216 N Sierra Vista Ave  
 Bullard High 5445 N Palm Ave  
 Edison High 540 E California Ave  
 Hoover High 5550 N First Street  
 McLane High 2727 N Cedar Ave  
 Fresno High 1839 N Echo Ave

**Come Out & Be Active!**

**OPEN EVERY SATURDAY & SUNDAY  
9AM - 6PM**

**2017**

**AMBERLY**  
*inspiring beauty in strength.*

**& Trinity A.M.E. Church Senior Saints**  
Present

**60+ Senior Fitness**

**Trinity A.M.E. Church | 3500 W. Holmes Rd. | Lansing, MI**

Have fun and move to the music through a variety of exercises designed to increase muscular strength, range of movement and activities for daily living. A chair is used for seated or standing support, and hand held weights are used to tone and tighten the body.

**Donations are welcome.**

**New Day & Time!** **Mondays at 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

| August:          | September:                  | October:             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 7   14   21   28 | 4 (no Class)   11   18   25 | 2   9   16   23   30 |

*Examples of flyers promoting shared use programs*

- Be consistent. This includes being consistent in the imagery (colors, graphics, etc.) so that people begin to recognize your program, as well as consistency in the amount and timing of information. For example, if you email neighborhood lists about the program at the start of a season, be sure to send information to this group when the program or other details change so they know to what to expect.
- Use imagery. Photos can help catch a person's eye and also build legitimacy in a community. Use high resolution (300 dpi or higher) photos on print materials. If you are purchasing bus ad space or printing large posters, check to see what resolution is needed. Community members often react positively to seeing themselves or other people who reflect their neighborhood in pictures. Try to take photos early on that can be used in future promotional materials. Be sure to get permission from the people you are taking pictures of.
- Provide testimonials, success stories, and positive reviews. Send an email asking participants to review your program or facility on Yelp or Facebook. These can help encourage more community members to participate. These can be included in promotional flyers and brochures, in social media, and through word of mouth.
- Promoting your program can be akin to promoting a new product or service from a business. Check out [17 Marketing Campaigns to Boost Parks & Rec Participation](#) for additional if you want to delve in deeper.
- Collect contact information for your current and potential program participants. This can include collecting email addresses on program sign-in sheets, or on sign-up sheets or online forms. This will help you track participation as well as have a means to communicate changes or additional opportunities later on.
- Promotion does not stop after the programs are underway! Continue to draw attention to them through social media or local news outlets and encourage more participation.

## Connecting on the National Level

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership maintains a [Shared Use Google Group](#). Join this group to be connected with others work on shared use, post questions to the group, and get input from others.

Shared use comes in many shapes and sizes in communities of all shapes and sizes! We would love to hear how you did it! Please tell us about your success story [here](#).

The Friends of Symphony Park present

# Tai Chi at Symphony Park 2017

With Sifu Huan Zhang

Supported by Community Arts Advocates

Part of the Boston Parks Summer Fitness Series

**2017 Dates**  
Thursdays  
10:00–11:00 a.m.

- June 8
- June 15
- June 22
- June 29
- July 6
- July 13
- July 20
- July 27

**FREE FITNESS AT SYMPHONY PARK ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Symphony Park is located at Edgerly Road and Norway Street in the East Fenway

In event of rain, classes will be held indoors at 100 Norway Street

Wear comfortable clothing

Special thanks to:  
The Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Mission Hill/Fenway Neighborhood Trust, The Boston Public Health Commission, and Blue Cross Blue Shield for their support of this free series.

Build and maintain your

# MALL-mentum

**ZUMBA FITNESS FREE CLASS**

Every Wednesday  
6:30PM - 7:30PM

Every Saturday  
9AM - 10AM  
Center Court

\*Schedule may change without notice.  
Special events may require a fee. For the most updated schedule and info please visit [southbaypavilion.com](#).

**SOUTHBAY PAVILION**  
SouthBayPavilion.com / #ShopSBP

20700 Avalon Blvd. Caron, CA 90746 | Guest Services: 310-366-6629

Examples of flyers promoting shared use programs



## 4 Conclusion

Promoting your shared use opportunity and the programs that are happening in your space are key components for successfully opening your doors to community members and supporting community goals. Remember that promotion does not stop after the programs are underway! Ongoing promotion is important to sustain programming. By using the resources in this guide, you will be on your way to developing and implementing a successful promotions strategy.