

How to Plan Your Hike for Hearing and Speech Event

A Timeline and Practical Tips

Planning your Hike for Hearing and Speech is easier than you think! Use this guide to brainstorm creative ideas, organize your event and rally your community around a great cause. Whether it's big or small, every Hike makes a difference. Follow the steps below to bring your vision to life and lead a purpose-filled event that everyone will remember!

4-6 Months Before the Event

- **Define Your Purpose & Goals**
 - Your mission: Raise awareness and funds to support hearing and speech.
 - Set a fundraising goal and/or number of participants you'd like to engage.
 - Think about how you'll share the "why" — highlight personal stories, community impact, share facts and statistics, feature our national partner organizations to inspire support.
 - Decide where proceeds will go – 80% will go to national partners, 10% to Delta Zeta Foundation, *10% to a local nonprofit partner of your choosing. Ideally one focused on hearing and speech.*
- **Choose a Date and Time**
 - Choose a date that doesn't conflict with major local events.
 - Consider scheduling your hike in the morning or around sunset for optimal comfort and ambiance.



- You may also want to align your event with national days related to hearing and speech.
- **Select a Location & Plan the Course**
 - Reserve your venue or course early.
 - Ensure there's space for registration, water stations and post-race activities.
 - Be sure to review any required permits, rules, or regulations for your chosen location.
 - Coordinate with police or safety personnel if street closures or crossing guards are needed.
 - When planning a hike for a hearing and speech event, it's important to consider how outdoor environments may impact communication, accessibility and overall participant experience compared to indoor settings.
 - *Potential Location Ideas:*
 - Local Park or Trail
 - Mountain Trail
 - Shopping Mall
 - University Campus
 - Beach
 - Zoo
- **Create a Planning Committee**
 - Assign key roles: logistics lead, volunteer coordinator, marketing chair, sponsorships, etc.
 - Schedule regular check-in meetings leading up to race day.
- **Create your CrowdChange Page**

- All chapters and members are encouraged to utilize CrowdChange as the official fundraising platform for Hike for Hearing and Speech.
- CrowdChange ensures consistency in fundraising efforts and offers a secure, easy-to-use portal that integrates directly with Delta Zeta’s national giving systems. It enables real-time tracking, personalized pages and donor transparency. Using CrowdChange also streamlines donation collection and reporting, making it easier to focus on the event experience.
 - Collegiate Chapter Event Pages - <https://dz.crowdchange.co/>
 - Alumnae Member Event Pages - <https://dzalumnae.crowdchange.co/>
 - [How To Use CrowdChange](#)
- Build out CrowdChange page to include event details and the purpose and goal of the event.
- Set a registration fee (consider early bird pricing and team pricing).
- Include waivers and collect participant info such as t-shirt sizes.
- Think about the option to include virtual or hybrid participants.
 - Allow supporters to “Hike from Home” and share photos using your event hashtag.
 - Provide a virtual registration tier that includes a digital toolkit or mailed goodie bag.
 - Highlight virtual participants in your post-event social media recap.

3 Months Before the Event

- **Start Promotion of your Event**
 - Utilize the official Hike for Hearing and Speech Logo and review the brand guidelines found in the Hike for Hearing and Speech Toolkit.
 - Share our CrowdChange page — have members share this out to friends, family, professors, coworkers, etc.
 - Use email, flyers and social media to build excitement — include a countdown, team challenges and stories tied to our cause.
 - Utilize the pre-written social media templates in the Hike for Hearing and Speech Toolkit.
 - Think about what can be shared day of the event to promote hearing and speech — maybe a specific booth, videos playing, banners or handouts with facts about hearing and speech, could you hand out pink ear plugs and encourage participants to protect their hearing, could someone be there that is testing hearing, could someone share their personal testimony?

- **Begin Reaching Out to Potential Business Partners**
 - Sample business and sponsorship letters are available through the Delta Zeta Hike for Hearing and Speech Toolkit to help you get started.
 - When contacting businesses, consider asking about opportunities such as:
 - Event sponsorship
 - In-kind donations (*ex. items for raffles or giveaways*)
 - Donation to event
 - Percentage night opportunity leading up to event or during event
 - Examples:

- If your event is held at a mall, participating stores could offer a 10% discount to attendees and donate a percentage of sales during a set time period to the event.
- Host a percentage night at a local restaurant (e.g., Chipotle) two weeks before the event to build awareness and receive a portion of that evening's sales as a donation.
- **Potential Brands to Contact** *(we have seen these companies partner with chapters):*
 - *Clothing and Lifestyle Brands:*
 - Kendra Scott
 - Fabletics
 - Lululemon
 - Levi's
 - Anthropologie
 - Lush
 - Local Boutiques/Clothing Stores
 - *Hydration/Beverages:*
 - Alani Nu
 - Celcius
 - Liquid I.V.
 - Poppi
 - *Food/Catering:*
 - Chick-fil-A
 - Raising Cane's
 - Jersey Mike's

- Kona Ice
- Panda Express
- Panera
- Chipotle

1-2 Months Before the Event

- **Solidify Collaborations and Begin Mapping the Route.**
 - Once partnerships are confirmed, begin planning the event route and identifying key stops along the way. Tailor your setup based on whether the event is held outdoors or indoors.
 - *If at an outdoor location, plan designated stops, such as:*
 - Hydration stations
 - Merchandise table
 - Partner business booths or sponsor tables
 - Clearly marked starting and finishing lines
 - *If at an indoor location, plan designated stops, such as:*
 - Partner stores (e.g., those offering discounts or participating in fundraising)
 - Restrooms
 - Hydration stations or vending machines
 - Merchandise table
 - Clearly marked starting and ending points



- **Brainstorm and Prepare Goodie Bags for Attendees**
 - Begin planning the goodie bags early to allow time for ordering and assembly.
 - Choose a bag style that fits your event's vibe and budget — options include canvas totes, paper gift bags, or drawstring backpacks.
 - **Be sure to use the official Hike for Hearing and Speech logo** and follow the branding guidelines available in the Delta Zeta Hike for Hearing and Speech Toolkit.
 - Goodie Bag Item Ideas:
 - Stickers
 - Buttons or pins
 - Bracelets
 - Branded chapstick
 - Water bottles
 - Energy drinks
 - Foam earplugs
 - Info cards (include event details, route map, sponsor recognition, etc.)
 - Handheld fans
 - Hats
 - Sunglasses
 - T-shirts
- **Secure Volunteers**
 - Create a detailed volunteer plan outlining each role and responsibility.
 - Assign volunteers to key areas such as:
 - Setup and registration

- Guiding participants along the route
- Hydration stations
- Merchandise tables or sponsor booths
- Raffle tables
- Any additional support tasks
- Develop a timeline indicating when and where each volunteer is needed throughout the event.

1 Week Before the Event

- **Volunteer Orientation/Touch Base**
 - Connect with volunteers to make sure they know where to be and answer any of their questions.
- **Plan Communications and Content**
 - Determine how you'll communicate with volunteers, participants and sponsors (e.g., group chats, email, printed handouts, signage).
 - Begin a social media countdown leading up to the event to build excitement.
 - Refer to the *Public Relations for a Successful Philanthropy Event* document in the Delta Zeta Member Portal for additional guidance on communications and public relations.
- **Solidify the Day-of Plan**
 - Consider including the following elements:
 - **Opening ceremony:** Welcome attendees, thank sponsors and volunteers.

- **Video presentation:** Check out Delta Zeta’s Philanthropy and Service videos on the official [Vimeo page](#).
 - **Guest speaker:** Invite a Delta Zeta Global Ambassador or a member who has been personally impacted by the organization’s philanthropic efforts. Their story can help highlight the real impact of your chapter’s support and deepen the connection to the cause.
 - **Ending ceremony:** Celebrate participants, announce raffle winners and thank supporters.
 - **Hashtag:** Create and promote an event hashtag for social sharing.
 - **Photo opportunities:** Set up photo booths or scenic spots with branded backdrops and props.
 - **Decorations:** Keep it on-brand and festive.
- **Review Set-Up and Day of Preparation**
 - Identify and gather all setup materials needed (tents, speakers, tables, signs, etc.).
 - Connect with vendors and ensure they are settled in designated areas.
 - Delegate tasks to volunteers (setup, signage, hydration stations, etc.).
 - Prep decorations and branded materials throughout the venue.
 - Walk the full route to confirm that all checkpoints and designated stops are correctly set up and clearly marked.
 - **Create a Contingency Plan for Weather Issues**
 - If outdoors, consider an indoor backup location or a rain date.
 - Communicate changes clearly via email, text, or social media.
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Day of Event

- **Set-Up and Preparation**
 - Set up early with signage, start/finish lines, tables and sound equipment.
 - Have a check-in station with waivers, bibs and T-shirts.
 - Ensure there's a first-aid kit, water stations and a clear communication plan.
 - Cue music, energy and a welcoming tone!
- **Registration**
 - Have participants check in upon arrival.
 - Distribute goodie bags and provide an event map or info card.
 - Set up a clearly marked space where attendees can ask questions or get assistance.
- **Greeters and Route Support**
 - Station volunteer greeters at the starting point to welcome participants, offer encouragement and answer questions.
 - Place greeters or volunteers at key checkpoints along the route to guide participants, provide motivation and ensure smooth flow.
- **Social Media Coverage**
 - Capture and post live content throughout the event — use both stories and main feed posts.
 - Share photos of the hike, volunteers, sponsors and participants.
 - Encourage attendees to use the official event hashtag and tag your chapter's social media accounts.

Post-Event



- **Social Media Recap**
 - Consider posting a recap of the event on social media to thank participants and highlight key moments.
- **Thank Yous**
 - Send thank you letters or emails to business partners, sponsors and volunteers to express appreciation for their support.
- **Reporting the Event**
 - All collegiate philanthropic events must be reported within two weeks via ChapterInc.
 - Follow the **80/10/10 rule** for donations:
 - 80% to National Philanthropy Partners
 - 10% to the Delta Zeta Foundation
 - 10% to a Local Partner of your choice
 - For detailed reporting instructions, refer to the *How to Report Philanthropy Events* document in the Delta Zeta Member Portal.
- **Submitting Donations**
 - Donations should be submitted within two weeks after the event.
 - Delta Zeta National Headquarters can process donations based on your ChapterInc report, or your chapter may submit donations directly via BillHighway.
 - Donations must align with the 80/10/10 rule as reported.
 - For detailed submission instructions, see the *How to Turn in Philanthropy Event Donations* document under the Vice President of Finance resources in the Member Portal.



- **Event Evaluations**

- Document what worked well, what didn't and what could be improved for future events.
- Consider providing participants with an anonymous feedback opportunity to gather their insights.

Optional Add-Ons:

- Costume contest, kids' dash, or themed run (e.g. color run, glow run)
- Team fundraising competition
- Raffle or silent auction
- Custom medals or finish line swag

Planning a successful and fun event doesn't happen overnight — it takes preparation, teamwork and a clear vision. Taking time to organize the details in advance will help everything run smoothly on event day and allows you to focus on what matters most: engaging your community and supporting our cause.

Don't be afraid to lean on others! Involving your sisters, volunteers, sponsors, and committee members not only lightens the load but also brings new ideas and energy to your event. With a little planning and the right support, you can create an unforgettable experience that raises awareness and funds for hearing and speech, and brings people together in the process.