



— NATIONAL —
POSTDOCTORAL
— ASSOCIATION —

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NATIONAL
POSTDOC
APPRECIATION
WEEK (NPAW)
TOOLKIT

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I. Introduction

Prepared by the NPA Outreach Committee, the **National Postdoc Appreciation Week (NPAW) Toolkit** is designed to help you decide what kind of event you would like to hold, be it a coffee hour, a happy hour, or a combined event with other institutions in your city or region. There are suggestions for different types of events, how to advertise the event, and getting sponsorship for your event. We have also provided fliers for you to download, customize, print out, and/or post on social media outlets. To maximize your results, be sure to have sign-up sheets at your event and ask people to join your postdoc association and the NPA!

Start planning early and identify your NPAW event coordinator. This is a critical person for organizing a successful event. S/he will need to be a person that is detail-oriented, well-organized, with exceptional communication skills. This person can assist you with multiple aspects of planning the event including the following: getting access to the useful listservs including those specifically for postdocs, sending emails to interested parties, arranging catering for the event, and confirming speaker(s) if you are having any. Planning a successful event can often take six to nine months to secure everything you will need.

Identify other postdocs who are willing to donate their time and effort. You will likely need help throughout the planning process, so it is wise to identify a group of dependable volunteers early. As the date of your event approaches, there will be many things to complete beforehand and there will be many “day-of” tasks like check in, event set-up and break-down, etc. for which you will need additional volunteers.

II. Suggested Events

Daytime Events

- BBQ
- Picnic
- Coffee hour
- Sporting events
- Wellness events
- Ice cream social
- A regular postdoctoral office (PDO) or postdoctoral association (PDA) event designated in honor of this day

Evening Events

- Happy hour
- Dinner
- Live concert/music
- BBQ
- Improv
- Karaoke night

III. Choosing a Location

When deciding on where to hold an event, talk with the management of the desired location. Let them know the details of your event and how many people you expect to attend; they may help you to promote the event or offer some freebies. If you anticipate a large crowd, it will be especially important to talk to the management in advance. When considering off-campus locations make sure it is easily accessible, as well as handicap-accessible. Consider mid-way points if you have more than one campus at different locations.

III. Regional/City-wide Events

If you are interested in combining your event with another institution, get in touch with that institution as soon as possible. Identify the PDO or PDA contacts at other institutions and send an invite to them to discuss the feasibility of a joint event. If you need help, [contact the NPA staff](#), who will put you in touch with other institutions by sharing your contact information and request with them via email or a phone call.

IV. Maximize Your Results

Sign-up postdocs as members of your PDA and/or the NPA onsite. It is a great way to recruit new members! There are sign-up sheets and other downloadable resources for your event on the [NPA's NPAW events page](#). Let people at your institution know that they are entitled to a free, Affiliate membership if their institution is a Sustaining Member of the NPA. You can also make them aware of the Full Individual membership category.

Schedule PDO- or PDA-run seminars on the same day (e.g. monthly career seminar) to publicize the event to larger audiences.

V. Publicizing the Event

Consider using any/all of the media below to promote and advertise your event:

- Email the NPA staff information about your event, and they will post it on NPA's website.
- Consider creating institutional social media accounts and tagging the NPA in event posts.
 - Links to NPA social media ([Facebook](#)/[LinkedIn](#)/[Twitter](#)/[Instagram](#)).
- Publicize the event in your institution with emails, fliers, and the NPAW logo (available on the [NPA's NPAW events page](#)).
- The rule of thumb is that a person needs to see or hear about an event about seven times before they might decide to attend; what will your seven points of contact be?
- On the day of the event take high-resolution photographs and/or videos of the event and use them to highlight the success of the event.
- Contact the media and let them know about your event.
- Use the campus press office as a means to release it to the media.
- Identify local TV stations/newspapers that might be interested in covering the event.
- Two to three weeks before the event, download the press release template (available on the [NPA's NPAW events page](#)), customize it, and fax or email it to the media.
- Be prepared to explain who a postdoc is to the media!

VI. Invite Faculty and Administrators

Email the faculty and other research staff to advertise your event. Depending on your institution this email may need to be sent through your PDO or the Public Relations/Affairs office. Talk to faculty one-on-one and ask them to support the day by encouraging their postdocs to attend the event. Send formal letters of invitation to the president/chancellor of your institution, the dean of the research office, and other administrators. Including everyone in your institution helps raise awareness about the great work all postdocs are doing!

VII. Sponsorships

Sponsorship is not vital but might be useful in holding some of the events listed above. Be prepared to tell sponsors how many persons you are expecting and how it will benefit them to sponsor this event. Use any existing methods you have for obtaining sponsorship at your institution. Sponsors may include departments that encourage their postdocs to participate in the symposium. Seek out other strong supporters of postdocs, such as, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs/Graduate Studies/Career Development and/or the alumni association. Work with your institution's offices to find out what sponsors have participated before, and if they will allow you or help you to contact them. In addition, it may be possible to inquire whether local companies would be willing to sponsor the symposium. Please note that many institutions have regulations preventing sponsorship by outside companies. Please check your individual institution's policies. If contacting outside companies is an option, you can possibly invite companies to bring a table and sit and show their products in return for sponsorship. You can also invite them to give a seminar on the day in return for sponsorship. Another method is to ask sponsors for small gifts for a drawing at your event.

VIII. Have fun!

Remember to have fun and realize that your fellow postdocs appreciate all the hard work that has gone into making your symposium a successful one. Organizing events not only brings the community together, but also teaches you new skills and helps you broaden your network.

Best of luck from the NPA!