Holding a 5K

Before you Begin

- Research other 5Ks in your area:
    - What is their entry fee?
    - Where is their course?

Fundamentals

- Pick a date, location, and course. Is your course going to be a loop or out-and-back where runners will end at the same place they started? Or, will it be a point-to-point race where runners start at point A and end at point B? The type of course makes a difference in the race experience so think about the scenery and what your runners would enjoy most.
  Important: Contact city officials to confirm availability and complete any necessary permits.

- Make sure there aren't other races being held on the same day that might compete with yours.

- Set a goal for how much you would like to raise. This will help you determine your entry fee.

- Set SMART goals. Your goals need to be specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and timely to help guide your efforts. Examples of good SMART goals for your race are:
    - Certain number of registrants
    - Certain amount of money raised
    - Certain number of post-race surveys returned

- Assemble a planning committee to help with PR & marketing, recruiting, hospitality, volunteers, etc..

    - Rotate members of the committee through the years so that people don't burn out and others can bring fresh ideas to the event.

    - MP support is the lynchpin, they need to be onboard to get others onboard.

- Choose a theme and race name. Check locally and even nationally to see which race names are taken and consider what the name conveys about the race itself. For example, NM [office name] Lemon Race to End Childhood Cancer.

- Build a budget. Set a budget and keep careful track of it so you know what the race is costing you as planning progresses. The last thing you want to do is get to post-race stage and learn that the race has cost your nonprofit money.

- Obtain sponsors for snacks, beverages, decorations, and gift bag.

    o   Update the Northwestern Mutual Sponsorship Package template to fit your event.

- Map out and practice welcoming guests to ensure the check-in process, check-out process, food, and service are not confusing or disappointing.

Promote Your event

- Put race details on your ALSF fundraising page.

- Use Northwestern Mutual's EventBrite account to create registration for race participants. Contact Jodi Nolte at jodinolte@northwesternmutual.com to request access.

- Promote your 5K via social media using Hearsay, Northwestern Mutual email template, and posters/flyers at running stores.

Race Details

- Decide how you'll time your race. It's best to hire a professional race timer for this. The timer will likely be the largest part of your budget but for many runners, it's all about the time so make sure you choose a competent, experienced timer.

- Design and order bibs, shirts, and medals/awards. While you can order simple, generic race bibs online for a relatively low cost, keep in mind that many runners collect their race bibs and enjoy adding unique ones to their collection. A generic bib may discourage people from running your race again in the future. Your race timer may be able to recommend a company for custom race bibs, or you can find one with a quick internet search.

    Not every race gives all participants medals so you'll need to decide if each participant will get a medal or if only the top three will receive one. People do expect a race shirt in their race packet, though. Many races provide athletic shirts made of polyester or other tech fabric but for a smaller or inaugural race, cotton is perfectly acceptable.

- Get race signs printed. You'll need mile-marker and directional signs for the course, as well as signs for parking, registration tables, first aid tents, and anything else you want participants to be able to find easily.
- Plan aid stations, portable restrooms, and trash cans. To keep runners hydrated, plan to have at least one aid station with water and/or electrolyte drinks about halfway through the course. You should also have portable restrooms at the starting/finish lines and halfway through the course. The number of restrooms you'll need will depend on the number of participants you have. Place trash cans at the starting/finish lines and near the aid stations so people have places to put their water cups once they're done with them.

Race Day

- Recruit volunteers for race day. Race day will be an all-hands-on-deck day and you'll need volunteers to help you and your team make sure everything runs smoothly. Interns are a great source for volunteers. Have them recruit their friends who aren't interns to help.

- Coordinate security/police presence and medical professionals for race day. Police and security help keep runners safe by controlling the flow of traffic and keeping the crowds under control. When you check for course availability and fill out your permits, city officials will be able to tell you what kind of police presence or security you should have at the event. If not, ask them and they should be able to point you in the right direction.

  Most 5Ks don't require a lot of medical professionals so it's a good idea to contact a local sports medicine professional to see what similar events have had in the way of first aid. Still, plan on having a first-aid tent with a basic first-aid kit.

- Hand out awards. Announce the winners with the fastest times. You can have silly awards too to make it more fun. Give an award for the best outfit for the theme, and/or last runner for crossing the finish line.

- Clean up the course. Once the race is over, you and your volunteers will need to make sure the course is clean. If you leave it better than you found it, your city will be happy to host your event again.

Post-event

- Thank participants and send out surveys. During the week after the race, email all of your participants thanking them for taking part in your event, inviting them back next year, and letting them know when

registration will be open. You should also include a link to a post-run survey to get feedback about what they liked, disliked, and what they'd like to see done differently. This feedback is crucial, especially for a new race!