

# **FIX-IT FAIR EVENT EVALUATIONS**

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THREE COMMUNITY REPAIR  
EVENTS PRESENTED BY THE CITY OF EUGENE

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# Overview

From July to December 2017, the City of Eugene offered a series of community repair events, branded as "Fix-It Fairs," to the local community. The community's response was overwhelming. Over 400 participants came to have their household items repaired by a crew of repair volunteers, called "fixers." Ten City of Eugene staff and contractors coordinated and presented the events. More than fifty volunteers shared their repair, event coordination, data collection, customer service and other skills, contributing to the community's overwhelmingly positive response to the events.

Products serviced included small electronics and appliances, textiles, tools, jewelry, furniture and other household items. With few exceptions, as long as a participant could carry their item in by hand, fixers attempted to repair those items. The overall repair rate for the three Fix-It Fairs was 74%, just above the 70% average repair rate reported by Repair Cafes internationally. Some items that could not be repaired at the Fix-It Fairs needed specific parts that were unavailable at the events. In those cases, fixers gave instruction about what to purchase and how to perform the repair. Some items that went unfixed were diagnosed and the participant was referred to a repair professional.

The table below shows a comparative breakdown of volunteer and staffing levels, locations, and number of items and participants served at each event.

<b>Event date and location</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Volunteers and staff</b>	<b>Fixers</b>
July 16, 2017 Amazon Community Center	166	180+	21 volunteers 9 staff	8 hobbyist 8 professional
September 23, 2017 Eugene Public Library	100	100	24 volunteers 9 staff	8 hobbyist 7 professional
December 2, 2017 Lane County Farmers Market at the Lane Event Center	132	132	37 volunteers 9 staff	8 hobbyist 14 professional

The Fix-It Fair project was purposefully experimental in nature and execution. The team tested a variety of approaches to planning and presenting the events to optimize participant experience and repair outcomes and to improve the overall quality of the events.

This document describes some of the key organizational elements that event organizers considered in developing and improving the Fix-It Fairs including:

- Partnerships and donations;
- Venue selection
- Event promotion;
- Volunteer coordination;
- Participant registration

While this is not an exhaustive how-to guide for creating a community repair event, this document includes lessons learned and suggestions for other repair event coordinators.

## Partnerships and donations

Community partnerships helped to leverage efforts of City of Eugene staff, making the Fix-It Fairs a success. Partner organizations included:

- Local nonprofit organizations;
- Neighborhood associations;
- Lane County government;
- Other City of Eugene departments; and
- Local businesses

These partners provided assistance in the form of event promotion (see *Event Promotion* section below); venues; volunteer recruitment; provision of tools; refreshments for volunteers; and day-of support for the events.

## Refreshments

Two local pizza parlors and coffee shops provided food donations for the first two Fix-It Fairs but were unable to provide donations for the third event. For those first two events, the pizza parlors provided half of the pizzas and the City of Eugene purchased the other half from them. With more foresight and outreach to local businesses, all food costs could have been covered by donations but the project budget allowed the Fix-It Fair team to be relieved of some of the time commitment needed to seek food donations.

## Provision of Tools

The ToolBox Project, Lane County's non-profit tool library, provided over 100 tools for each of the Fix-It Fairs and 3 hours of volunteer time per event to reserve and assemble, check out, and check in those tools.

## Partnership Donation Recommendations

*Planting the seeds for partnerships with plenty of lead time before events is strongly recommended.* Partnership efforts take energy and time to cultivate at the outset but also reap considerable

benefits in the long-term. Because the Fix-It Fair team was able to start conversations with partners more than four months before the events, partners had time to figure out what they could contribute without pressure from tight deadlines. The table below suggests some types of organizations to approach for assistance with donations and volunteer recruitment.

<b>Table 1. Potential sources for volunteer recruitment and donations</b>				
	<b>Food</b>	<b>Tools</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Venues</b>
<b>Private Sector</b>	*Local restaurants *Grocery stores	*Hardware stores	*Banks *Repair businesses *Construction and contracting businesses	
<b>Non-profits</b>	*Churches	*Tool libraries	*Churches *Tool libraries *Material reuse centers *Makers spaces	*Churches *Indoor farmers markets *Tool libraries *Material reuse centers *Makers spaces
<b>Government</b>	*Local government may be willing to cover food costs		*Local government may be willing to share volunteer recruitment materials	*Libraries *Local parks and recreation department

*When approaching these partners to request help with event promotion and volunteer recruitment, provide ready-made, plug-and-play text and images for them to use.* All professionals seem stretched thin these days, especially those working in the non-profit and government sectors. Providing promotional materials has the double positive of making promotion easy for partners while also giving the event coordinator control over the messaging that is shared with the public.

*Having a standard letter for cold calls is useful but reaching out to personal and professional networks as a starting point is the easiest way to make an ask.* Because the Fix-It Fair project budget was generous, the team did not need to rely on partners to provide consumable parts or repair materials for the events. The same held true for refreshments. Event coordinators with more modest budgets should reach out to partners to provide these items as well.

*Depending on the number of volunteers that need to be fed, coordinators may consider asking several vendors to provide food donations for each events.* Many restaurants have a two-month lead time needed to accommodate donations so event coordinators should make requests at least eight weeks before their event date.

Local reuse non-profits and tool libraries as well as hardware stores can be asked to provide consumables and tools at discounts or no-cost. Event coordinators can make initial contacts two or more months before the events to gauge interest. Four weeks before their event, coordinators should share wishlists with willing donors and ask them to let coordinators know what they will provide two weeks before the event. This timeline will allow coordinators to create their final shopping list with plenty of time.

## Event Venues

Each Fix-It Fair was offered at a different venue to test the feasibility and desirability of different types of spaces. The first event was at the Amazon Community Center in South Eugene; the second at the downtown Eugene Public Library; and the final event was at the Lane Events Center in conjunction with the Lane County Farmers Market. The management at each venue helped the Fix-It Fair team to promote the events. Below is a brief description of each venue and its amenities.

<b>Characteristics and Amenities</b>	<b>Amazon Community Center</b>	<b>Eugene Public Library</b>	<b>Lane Events Center/Lane County Farmers Market</b>
<b>Cost</b>	Free	Free	\$1 per square foot
<b>Electrical Outlets</b>	Ample	Ample	Few - necessitating a network of extension cables
<b>Kitchen</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Layout</b>	Large multi-purpose room, small lobby, ample outdoor green space	Large multi-purpose room, medium lobby, minimum outdoor space	Very large common space in which to conduct registration, repair, and education
<b>Lighting</b>	Ample daylight	Electric light	Electric light
<b>Registration Space</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Restrooms</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Running Water</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Square Footage</b>	1,600	1,600	2,400
<b>Wifi</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Waiting Area</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Amazon Community Center

The Amazon Community Center's Fix-It Fair event space included a 1,600 square foot multi-purpose room with an attached community kitchen and lobby area. Restrooms were also nearby. The event space had excellent daylight, requiring no use of electric lights during the event and ample access to electrical outlets. Additionally there was ample covered outdoor space for registration tables, activity tables and a lawn for participants to enjoy while waiting for their turn. The Amazon Center is located between a residential neighborhood and large (99-acre) city park with a popular public pool. This space was offered free of charge for the Fix-It Fair. These qualities made this a good choice for an event scheduled in the summer.

## Eugene Public Library

At the Eugene Public Library, the Fix-It Fair took place in the 1,600 square foot Bascom-Tykeson room. In the event space, electrical outlets were readily available but daylight was lacking. Electric light was sufficient for completing repair tasks although daylight would have been ideal. The library's entry atrium was used for registration and activity tables were on the sidewalk in front of the library, raising the event's profile. Bathrooms were near the fixer's area and a small kitchenette was attached to the event room. A lobby area between the main event space and the atrium was used as a waiting area for participants after registering for the event. This space was offered free of charge for the Fix-It Fair.

## Lane Events Center/Lane County Farmers Market

The final Fix-It Fair was offered at the Lane Events Center alongside the Lane County Farmers Market. The event hall where the event took place is 10,000 square feet and the Fix-It Fair rented 2,400 square feet of space from the Farmers Market to hold the event. Electrical outlets were available in limited locations and no daylight was available in the space. The space has an open plan that allowed the entire event to take place in one open area instead of a hard separation between registration, waiting and event areas. No kitchen or running water was available nearby and participants and volunteers had a farther distance to travel to use restrooms than at prior events. The Lane County Farmers Market rented the space at a cost of \$1 per square foot.

## Evaluation of Event Venues

Each space had both advantages and drawbacks. Overall, the Lane Events Center site offered the Fix-It Fair the easiest-to-use space because of its open floor plan. This open plan allowed participants who were waiting in line the opportunity to see the event in action and allowed volunteers and staff to easily communicate with one another. Sharing the venue with the Lane County Farmers Market kept the event feeling energetic and provided participants with another fun diversion while waiting their turn. The space also had a public address (PA) system that allowed us to page participants, which shortened wait times and also helped to activate the space. The



centralized location of electrical outlets created logistical challenges. Staff spent several hours developing and laying out the scheme to ensure that each table had electricity available.

For the size of the crowd that the Fix-It Fairs attracted, the spaces used at the Amazon Center and the Eugene Public Library felt cramped and overcrowded. Problems also emerged with the flow of traffic and communication between volunteers and staff because the different areas (registration, waiting, event space, exit area) were so segmented. For smaller events with either more focused repair options or smaller participant groups, these venues could serve very well.

Event venues were provided at no-cost by City of Eugene departments. The Lane County Farmers Market shared space for the Fix-It Fair for a fee. All of these partners also provided assistance with event promotion and staff to assist with day-of needs at the Fix-It Fair. In fact, staff from the Eugene Public Library's Makerspace provided waiting area activities and demonstrations at both the event they hosted and then again at the December Fix-It Fair.

## Event Venue Recommendations

While finding the "perfect" event venue may not be possible, there are several characteristics that event coordinators should take into consideration when evaluating a venue's potential.

Characteristics of an ideal community repair event venue include:

1. Sufficient room: The amount of space you need will depend on how many participants you serve and how many fixer stations you have at your fair. The important things to keep in mind and map out are:
  - Space for participants to line up to get into the fair;
  - A registration area for determining which fixers can best help each participant and where volunteers can weigh broken items for waste diversion statistics;
  - A waiting area for participants to relax, enjoy activities or learn about repair techniques while they wait to be seen;
  - A repair area where fixers will have their repair stations;
  - An exit area where volunteers can weigh fixed items and record any other desired data;
  - For large crowds, a large venue with an open floor plan is ideal. For any size crowd, it is recommended that a space budget of 100-150 square feet per fixer table is allowed and that each table has easy access to a power source, including registration and activity tables in the waiting area.
2. Beneficial lay-out: Large gatherings of people can get unwieldy fairly quickly. The ideal space for a community repair event allows coordinators to easily direct traffic. Problems can pop up if a single doorway is used as both the primary entrance and exit.
3. Plenty of electrical outlets: The more fixer, the more easily accessible electrical outlets must be. A good deal of the tools used in repair (like sewing machines, power tools, and bright lights) need electricity.
4. High speed wifi internet access sufficient to support several streaming videos on separate devices simultaneously. Fixers are very resourceful and will use the internet to quickly figure out how to do a repair they've never done before.

5. Durable, easy-to-clean work surfaces.
6. Nearby access to water for testing and clean-up.
7. Tables & chairs provided by the venue.
8. Flipcharts and/or whiteboards: Drawings are one of the best instructional tools. Flipcharts and whiteboards will be helpful for anyone providing repair instruction.

When seeking out partnerships with venue providers, event coordinators may also evaluate what other resources host sites can provide. At a minimum, venue managers should be willing to provide help with event promotion to the audiences they regularly serve and their staff's personal and professional networks. Ideally, venues can provide staff and volunteers to help the day of the event and have them pitch in other event coordination efforts.

## Event Promotion

Event promotion took many forms including the following:

- Newspaper advertisements;
- Facebook and Instagram posts;
- Printed publications from the City of Eugene including the summer recreation guide and the City's cultural services summer event calendar called "Eug Fun";
- Flyers;
- Radio advertisements;
- Event listings on the City of Eugene website;
- Listings in neighborhood association newsletters; and
- Information shared through partner organizations.

According to pre-event surveys taken by participants as they entered the Fix-It Fairs, several advertising methods reached participants. The top five included:

- Newspaper advertisements (37.9%);
- Facebook (24.7%),
- City of Eugene print publications (17.4%),
- Word-of-mouth (14.6%); and
- Flyers posted around town (11.4%)

Local television and newspaper coverage were also cited by several survey-takers. The overwhelming attendance, impressive levels of volunteerism and general popularity of the Fix-It Fairs was due in large part to the generosity of partners in helping with promotion. To make event promotion and volunteer recruitment easy for community partners, City of Eugene staff provided partners with the following:

- Plug-and-play Facebook posts;
- Tags in Facebook posts on the Fix-It Fairs' event pages;
- Short newsletter articles;
- Event flyers

A local bike courier service was hired to deliver flyers to partner organizations and to post flyers around town two weeks before each event. The couriers shared 400 flyers per event and provided a generous discount on their service because of the events' community orientation.

## Event Promotion Recommendations

*Facebook, word-of-mouth, municipal publications and flyering offer cost-effective methods for outreach and also require dedicated effort from staff and volunteers for maximum efficacy. While newspaper advertisements proved to be very effective, they can be cost-prohibitive for smaller budgets. Municipal government publications can vary from community to community and standards for inclusion in those publications may also vary.*

*For events reaching out to the general public, using newspaper advertising, sending press releases to local news outlets and utilizing connections through organizations that serve a range of community members (like local government agencies and larger nonprofits that provide direct services), can be well worth the effort. Social media, flyers and word-of mouth advertising are also valuable. For smaller events with a narrow population (ie- a local church congregation) flyers posted in high-traffic places, a Facebook event, and word-of-mouth advertising may suffice.*

## Volunteer Coordination

### Recruitment

Several strategies were used to recruit Fix-It Fair volunteers. The most effective strategies were:

- News stories;
- Social media
- Email newsletters;
- Cold calls to repair professionals; and
- Word-of-mouth outreach to the coordination teams' personal and professional contacts.

*Partners' willingness to help with outreach was instrumental in recruiting volunteers. The Facebook events and related posts, including posts specific to volunteer recruitment originating from the City of Eugene's Waste Prevention and Green Building Program went viral, with hundreds of shares.*

*Early news coverage was another factor in the success of recruiting volunteers. The Fix-It Fair program received a grant from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to support the project. Seven months before the first event City staff sent a press release to local news outlets and the story was picked up by the local daily paper. This was an excellent first touch with potential volunteers (and partners) and in the following month, about twelve potential volunteers approached the City about contributing to the events, months before volunteer recruitment efforts began.*

*Taking a multi-pronged approach to volunteer recruitment helps to net volunteers with various skill sets and interests, making for a strong volunteer corps and a more inclusive event.* The power of personal networks in recruiting volunteers cannot be underestimated. Start by reaching out to personal and professional networks for help with volunteer recruitment. This can also help you find volunteers who are willing to help with overall event coordination and not just day-of volunteers, although both are necessary.

*Social media, especially Facebook, is an effective tool for volunteer recruitment and may be especially helpful if a coordinator can get information re-posted by other local organizations with large followings.* Reaching out to allied local government agencies and non-profit organizations to help get the word out is also an important step to combine with recruitment through social media. Organizations with missions to support environmental causes (especially waste prevention), social equity, self-sufficiency, community cohesion and household cost savings are likely to be interested partners. Finally, press releases meant to help with volunteer recruitment should be sent out two months prior to the event and should include event coordinator contacts to whom potential volunteers can reach out.

## Training

With the expectation of a small participant group at the first two events, the Fix-It Fair team decided formal training around the registration and hosting positions was not necessary and opted only to do a quick round of introductions and a safety talk 20 minutes before the start of the events. Because of the numerous participants, this approach was unsuccessful. At the second event, registration volunteers were provided with a training manual, which helped to improve their understanding of the expected event flow but learning their jobs on the spot still proved to be hectic and frustrating.

*Offering advance training for volunteers was a very successful approach, ensuring that volunteers felt more confident in their jobs and making for a much smoother flow to the event in general.* For the third Fix-It Fair, the team took lessons learned from the shortcomings in the approaches to the first two events to volunteer training and offered a one-hour training two days before the event. Twenty-five of 37 volunteers attended the training, including most returning volunteers. The training covered event flow, dealing with challenging individuals, included opportunities for volunteers to ask questions, and also provided time to orient registration staff to the paging software we used. Those who could not attend were provided with training materials via email, including specific instructions for their volunteer job one week prior to the event, which helped them to understand how it would work.

*Make training materials available for volunteers before the event either via a digital format or through an in-person training.* The in-person training is optimal because it allows volunteers to meet on another and build camaraderie and also to have questions clarified.

## Retention

*Taking care of volunteers' basic needs, giving them useful gifts (if financially feasible), soliciting and integrating volunteer feedback and finding many opportunities to thank volunteers are essential for retaining great volunteers.* The first and foremost priority in any volunteer-driven event or organization should be making volunteers feel appreciated and that their time was well-spent. City of Eugene Fix-It Fair staff and volunteers worked to ensure that volunteers had fun and that their contributions were appreciated in several ways:

- Event swag- Each volunteer was offered "Fix-It" stickers with a stylish logo and was gifted an apron with an embroidered "Fix-It" patch. The aprons served the dual purposes of protecting volunteers' clothing and also showing a team affiliation, which helped to build camaraderie amongst volunteers and staff while making distinguishing between event staff and participants. Event t-shirts were avoided because community partners at St. Vincent de Paul Society who recycle a large amount of clothing see large numbers of event t-shirts donated that are almost unused.
- Food and drink- At each event there was ample food and beverages available for volunteers, including a range of healthy snack options in addition to pizza for lunch.
- Requests for feedback-After the event, Fix-It Fair staff followed up with thank you emails to volunteers and a brief survey requesting volunteer feedback to improve future events. Feedback was actually incorporated to improve future events, which also reinforced that requests for feedback were more than lip service.
- Event follow up- The week following the events City of Eugene staff emailed all event staff and volunteers, enthusiastically thanking them for their service and sharing some initial statistics about the event, including repair rates and number of participants served.

Expressing appreciation and listening to and acting upon volunteer input resulted in over 50% of volunteers participating in two or more Fix-It Fairs. Think of these events as not just a way to serve the public and increase a community repair ethic but also an opportunity to honor the value of volunteerism.

## Professional and hobbyist fixers

*Inviting local repair professionals to participate in events is ideal as it creates opportunities for volunteers and professionals to learn from one another and it can stimulate conversation about how to build a repair ethic in the community. If possible, pay repair professionals for their time at initial events. This could lead to those same professionals choosing to volunteer in the future.*

For the City of Eugene's Fix-It Fairs both paid repair professionals and repair hobbyists served as "fixers" for the events. Recruitment of the paid fixers was quite a bit more work involving development and delivery of memorandums of understanding. Likewise, rendering payment required a full day of staff time after the event. Evaluating comparative quality of services provided and repair rates between paid and volunteer fixers was challenging because of the events' collaborative nature. Professionals and volunteers often collaborated on diagnosing problems and

performing repairs. However, the cross-pollination of volunteers and professionals made for a rich experience for the fixers with new ideas and approaches shared between those who worked together. The repair rate for the events averaged 74%, which tracks with what other community repair events have seen nationally.

The Fix-It Fairs have also started a growing conversation amongst many of the events' volunteers, who have expressed a strong interest in building a local "culture of repair." Since the 2018 Fix-It Fairs, the City of Eugene has begun hosting quarterly "fixer mixers" where City of Eugene staff have facilitated conversations around what this culture of repair can and should look like in Eugene and how the City of Eugene can help drive the conversation. As a result of the positive experience at the 2018 events, several of the paid repair professionals have since offered to donate time to future Fix-It Fairs.

## Participant Registration Logistics

*Identify the target audience and number of participants so the registration process can be tailored accordingly.* For smaller events with a focused audience or a small number of fixers and participants, a less formal registration process without technology may work well. Pre-registration may also work for a smaller group of participants that has internet access if the option is properly promoted. For a larger event with a broad audience, having more structure, using paging software and avoiding pre-registration is recommended. Most paging software gives the option of a free trial period, which allows organizers to test software without risk ahead of the event.

Creating a smooth registration process was the biggest logistical challenge faced by the Fix-It Fair team, and the team did not come up with a good process until the third event. The fairs proved to be far more popular than was imagined. At the first fair, the City planned to host at most 60 participants, and instead ended up hosting 171. The large turn out showed how strongly the community embraced repair, but seriously taxed the staff and volunteers. While most of those who registered that day were seen by the volunteers providing repair services (or "fixers"), many were frustrated by the long wait time and the unpolished registration process. A simple paper based register process proved no match for the high number of participants and their varied repair needs. With only one paper copy of the registration log, hosts became confused by sheets filled in at different times and participants were seen out of the order in which they registered and sometimes were skipped completely.

At the second event, the team added a diagnostics table, where repairs that were out of the scope of the Fix-It Fair were screened out prior to registration. Items deemed out-of-scope included large appliances, gas-powered tools, and a huge speaker system. For those that were within the scope of the Fix-It Fair, participants were given a "diagnostics sheet," with an overview of the item's issues, which was then given to the registration team to assign a fixer to the participant. However, the registrars were not well-acquainted with the particular talents and preferences of the fixers so the assignments were not always ideal. Communication issues similar to the first event emerged between the registrars, hosts and fixers. However, all participants who came to the event with a single item within the Fix-It Fair's scope were seen that day.

## Pre-registration Caused Equity and Fairness Concerns

The first two events also offered pre-registration, but with the large number of participants, pre-registration proved to be very disruptive to the registration process. Pre-registration was offered through a short google form. In an ideal world, pre-registration would have worked like concert-goers picking up tickets at will call, but because of the unpredictable timing of each repair and the large crowds drawn to the Fix-It Fairs, pre-registration created more logistical challenges than benefits to the events.

At the first event, pre-registered was meant to guarantee a spot for the participant but not a particular time slot, so those who pre-registered still had to cope with the wait times and confusion caused by the unexpected crowds. At the second Fix-It Fair, pre-registrants were assigned a particular time and ideally they would have been seen at that time. However, because repair times were hard to predict and the fixers did not want to have large gaps between participants, volunteers needed to "plug in" other repairs, resulting in lags in seeing pre-registered participants. Likewise, not all pre-registered participants showed up on time or at all, which added more unpredictability for staff and volunteers.

Pre-registration brought up concerns about social equity and access to technology. Pre-registration was offered exclusively online. Although computer and phone access may seem ubiquitous in this digital age, many members of the public do not have regular internet or phone access and therefore missed out on the opportunity to pre-register online. Likewise, pre-registration was closed one week before the event to allow staff to check that all pre-registered items fit within the Fix-It Fair scope. Newspaper advertisements were placed the last week and did not include information about pre-registration and many event participants complained that they were unaware of the pre-registration option.

## Solutions Developed for the Third Fix-It Fair

In preparation for the third event, Fix-It Fair staff took stock of the shortcomings identified in the registration process from the first two events and, expecting another large crowd, decided to eliminate pre-registration and employ a technology, in the form of paging software used at restaurants, to smooth the registration process. Learning from previous fumbles and upgrading previous ideas, led to real improvements in the flow of repairs and satisfaction of participants and volunteers at the third event.

Each registration table was dedicated to a different product category and was staffed by two volunteers. One volunteer, the registrar, inputted the participant's information into a paper spreadsheet, while the other volunteer, the diagnostics expert, determined if we could work on it and assigned the participant to a fixer. The diagnostics experts had information about the fixers' preferred repair categories and many were able to speak with fixers before the event to get a deeper understanding than the print information they were provided. The team then added the participant's information (name, item, assigned fixer and number in their queue) to the paging

software used, TablesReady.com. This cloud-based software allowed what was inputted at the registration table to immediately update the repair queues on tablets used by hosts. The hosts kept track of when fixers were ready for another participant and looked up who was next in the fixer's queue on TablesReady.com. Hosts then paged participants using the software, which sent a text message and auto-called the participant to let them know it was their turn, and also called their names over a public address system. This dramatically decreased wait times and confusion in the registration process and led to a much better experience for participants and volunteers.

## Conclusions

The City of Eugene's three Fix-it Fairs demonstrated strong community demand for repair services and education. The evidence of that demand includes the 400 participants that came to the events to learn how to repair broken items and the fifty volunteers that donated their time and expertise to assist and educate the public. Not only did the three events succeed in increasing community knowledge of how to fix broken items and access the community's talented repair professionals, they also provided valuable insight on how to better share repair knowledge.

The various strategies tested at the fairs highlighted better ways of carrying out the following tasks:

- Partnerships and donations;
- Venue selection
- Event promotion;
- Volunteer coordination;
- Participant registration;

For each task, the insights gained from the fairs are summarized below.

## Partnerships and Donations

Many organizations, including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses support repair education and are more than willing to donate space, materials, and personnel to fix-it fairs. *Providing potential partners with a request for assistance months in advance will give them plenty of time to determine how they can best help.*

## Venue Selection

Choice of venue can have a major impact on the efficacy of a community repair event. If it is too small, it might squeeze a large number of participants. If it lacks the right amenities, repair professionals won't be able to use their equipment and provide instruction. *Regardless of the number of participants, the venue will need to provide: affordable space, sufficient room, beneficial layout, easy access to enough electrical outlets, high speed Wi-Fi, durable and easy to clean work surfaces, water, tables and chairs, kitchen space, good lighting, space to register participants, restrooms, and a waiting area.*



## Event Promotion

Promotion can be accomplished with no or little funding. *While newspaper ads are very effective, they can be pricey and so it is worthwhile to explore promotion through social media and those of your partner organizations. Additionally, both print and radio public service announcements (PSA) are highly effective. Local newspapers and radio stations typically provide PSAs for Fix-It Fair-like events if asked well in advance of the event. Printed fliers strategically placed at high foot traffic places are effective as well. A catchy social media post that is reposted by partner organizations and Fix-It Fair supporters can reach a large number of community members. For social media to be effective, it is key to have partner organizations and other supporters ready to repost your original posts.*

## Volunteer Coordination

Volunteer coordination involves four parts: recruitment, training, retention, and a mix of professional and hobbyist fixers.

*Word-of-mouth and print, radio, and social media are all effective ways of recruiting enthusiastic and skilled volunteers.*

The City of Eugene hired professional fixers and solicited volunteer hobbyists to serve as fixers and found both groups to be excellent resources for the Fix-It Fairs. They tended to complement one another as well. *Using one or the other or both should depend on the budget and goals of the fix-it fair and the administrative capacity of the organization in charge of the fair. In addition to the cost of paying repair professionals, the administrative oversight required to execute contracts can be expensive and time consuming.*

Volunteer retention efforts save time in future recruitment. *Providing volunteers with repair event swag, food and drink, the opportunity to give feedback on how to improve future fairs, and by following up with them after each fair to thank them for their contribution are all ways to show appreciation to event volunteers. Providing training for volunteers increases their enjoyment of community repair events and also makes the events run more smoothly, especially when crowds are large.*

## Participant Registration

The success of the registration process depends on three elements: 1) determining how participants' items are broken, 2) determining whether those items can be fixed at the event in a timely manner, and 3) smoothly transitioning participants from the registration line to a qualified fixer.

It took the City of Eugene's team three Fix-It Fairs to create a participant registration process that efficiently and effectively accomplished these three steps. *The team learned that:*

- *Pre-registration should only be used for fairs with a small number of participants if at all,*

- *Item repair needs should be diagnosed by a volunteer that is well acquainted with the capabilities of the fixers, and*
- *Paging software can significantly simplify and speed the process of ferrying participants to fixers.*

## Closing

In summary, this evaluation of the three Fix-It Fairs hosted by the City of Eugene sheds light on the lessons learned that proved most helpful in hosting a successful community repair event. Fix-It Fairs proved to be very popular events and show promise for shifting participants' behavior and attitudes towards repair options and, more broadly, towards their purchasing and consumption decisions. The lessons shared in this document can help local event organizers shape their events to respond best to local needs and also to the resources available in their community.