

TRADES DAY STARTING YOUR OWN EVENT FAQ

WHAT IS A TRADES DAY EVENT?

Trades Day is a hands-on, career-connected learning event designed to introduce students—often high school or community college level—to careers in construction, engineering, architecture, and other skilled trades. The goal is to spark interest, build awareness, and bridge the gap between education and the workforce.

WHO CAN ORGANIZE A TRADES DAY EVENT?

Any organization, nonprofit, educational institution, industry association, or company passionate about workforce development, career exploration, or community engagement can host a Trades Day event.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS TO PLANNING A TRADES DAY

1. Form a planning committee with educators, industry professionals, and community leaders.
2. Secure a venue large enough to host exhibitors and accommodate students. This can be a parking lot (about 15,000+ square feet), Expo Room with an adjacent parking lot for outdoor exhibitors. We can be creative with the venue!
3. Begin recruiting industry partners, sponsors, and students. For first year Trades Day a goal could be 300 students to 10-15 hands on exhibitors.

HOW MANY EXHIBITORS OR INDUSTRY PARTNERS DO I NEED?

This varies based on your event size and venue. A good rule of thumb is for every 25 students we would want 1 hand on exhibitor. Focus on variety so students can explore a range of careers.

WHAT MAKES TRADES DAY DIFFERENT FROM A TRADITIONAL CAREER FAIR?

Trades Day focuses on interactive, hands-on learning rather than just informational booths. Exhibitors are encouraged to bring tools, equipment, and small projects that allow students to experience what working in their trade is like. Students are required to attend a safety talk before entering the venue to ensure a safe experience.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PLAN A TRADES DAY?

Planning typically starts 6–12 months in advance, depending on the event scale. Early planning helps secure funding, confirm exhibitors, and coordinate with schools and transportation.

HOW DO I GET STUDENTS TO ATTEND?

Partner directly with local school districts, high schools, career technical education (CTE) programs, and community colleges. Teachers and counselors can help identify interested students and coordinate group attendance. Schools are scheduled to arrive in two-hour time increments. Bags are provided for students to collect swag

IS THERE A COST TO HOST A TRADES DAY?

Costs vary based on venue, materials, marketing, and staffing needs. Many organizers offset expenses by securing sponsorships, in-kind donations, and exhibitor fees.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE OR GET GUIDANCE TO START?

We're here to help! Contact Brittany Albaugh at balbaugh@cie.foundation or (214) 241-1090 for resources, planning templates, and to connect with others who have successfully hosted Trades Day events