



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

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Guide to Planning Your Community Baby Shower

A **community baby shower** is an event organized by local community groups to distribute essential maternal and baby supplies to expecting parents, and to celebrate the miracle of new life. It provides a village for those who may not necessarily have one. It may also be an opportunity to share maternal health resources and to collect donations. The following guide offers information on how to host your own community baby shower. This guide is developed through the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President's Maternal Health Initiatives as a part of the goal to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity in Brooklyn and to make Brooklyn one of the safest places to give birth.

Potential Community Baby Shower Activities

Community baby showers come in various forms and is often scaled to the space, budget and resources. Some activities and resources that you can consider for your baby shower include:

- Maternity and baby supplies distribution via giveaways or raffles
 - Diaper Bags
 - Baby supplies: Diapers, wipes, clothing, sippy cups, baby toys, blankets, baby bottles, breast pumps
 - Maternity supplies: Perineal spray, nipple cream, aromatherapy (stress relief), postpartum underwear/pads, books on pregnancy and postpartum
- Resource tabling and workshops from organizations and agencies focusing on maternal health, mental health such as post-partum depression, SNAP/WIC, safe sleep, breastfeeding, housing security, financial security, healthy eating, car safety, self-care, and self-advocacy
- Client conversations at nonprofit resource tables on benefits eligibility
- Healthy and nutritious food bag distributions appropriate for pregnant and postpartum women
- Pampering for mothers: hair styling, haircuts, massages
- Health screenings for blood pressure and diabetes
- Vision boarding parents' birthing journey
- Exercise demonstrations, e.g. stretches, yoga for stress reduction, belly-dancing
- Baby shower trivia

Baby Shower Models

The majority of Community Baby Showers are held in-person to facilitate community well-being, activities such as games and creative projects, and resource referral; however, some events are online or have a hybrid option. College groups, churches, professional groups, city agencies, and businesses often hold Community Baby Showers.

Below are a few models of successful in-person community baby showers:

Case Study 1

A national organization held a community baby shower as a part of the organization's larger Day of Caring, where they distributed donations to attendees. They solicited donations from community members by having collection bins at Wegmans and other grocery stores and pharmacies. They listed the most needed items in social media posts, which included diapers, baby wipes, baby books, digital thermometers, and clothing (NB – 12 months), and baby blankets. Community members were also able to provide monetary and in-kind donations online through designated links and a registry.

Case Study 2

A local NYC agency hosted a community baby shower at a NYCHA house in collaboration with sorority groups, maternal health organizations, and other corporate sponsors, targeting pregnant mothers and mothers who had given birth in the past month. The event featured maternity and baby supplies giveaways in diaper bags, resource tabling, and art activities like scrapbook-making for children and parents. There were also games, workshops on Safe Sleep and mental health, and raffles. Partner organizations recruited attendees through a digital registration process with a 100-person cap and supply donations were collected through an online registry. Attendees were encouraged to bring guests to support with carrying giveaways and rideshare codes were also provided to attendees to support with transportation.

Case Study 3

A local library coordinated a community baby shower with community partners. The event was free and open to pregnant mothers and families with children six months and older, capped at the first 20 expectant parents. It focused on the needs of newborns as well as infants and toddlers, and featured parenting workshop, story time, giveaways, and parenting-related resources.

Case Study 4

A local community organization hosted a community baby shower at a church, targeting 15-20 pregnant mothers. The organization provided a maternity pantry that distributed maternity and baby supplies including diapers and diaper bags, as well as grocery food bags in collaboration with a local pantry. It featured belly painting, vision-boarding, dinner and photobooth.

Planning Your Community Baby Shower

Here are some recommended steps for planning your community baby shower! Appendix A includes a project planning tool that you can use to organize your tasks leading up the event.

Step 1: Identify your goals and target community.

- Where would you like to hold your event?
- Who would you like to serve? How many people do you plan to target?
- What would you like to achieve? What would you like participants to walk away with?

Step 2: Identify your budget.

- What is your budget for the event? Consider costs for space, food, personnel, and activities.
- Refer to the sample budget provided for reference in Appendix B.

Step 3: Identify a date/time and community space to hold the event.

- Start planning early, at least three months in advance.
- Consider a space at your local libraries, recreational centers, faith-based organizations, and other community centers.

Step 4: Gather partners and sponsors.

- What kind of resources will you be able to tap into? Think of other community partners, faith-based organizations, food pantries, diaper banks, corporate donors (e.g. your local Target store, health insurance company, etc.), and other elected partners. For example, a local food pantry may be able to provide healthy food bags; a diaper bank may offer a one-time diaper donation; a corporate donor may offer a financial contribution or a gift card to their store.
- If you are interested in inviting community-based partners for resource tabling, refer to hitesite.org for community groups in your neighborhood. Some may also be able to donate supplies, bring volunteers, provide speakers, or support in recruiting attendees.

Step 5: Plan activities.

- Refer to the list above for ideas!

Step 6: Create flyer and send out invitations.

- Work with your event partners to send out flyers and invitations at least 2-3 weeks before the event. Be sure to obtain approval from sponsoring entities before using their logos on flyers.
- Send out regular event reminders and a reminder the day prior to the event. Text messages are a great tool. Ensure that communications are translated into languages spoken by participants.

Step 7: Hold your event.

- Arrive early to set up. Have fun and celebrate your hard work!
- Distribute post-event evaluations to participants and partners.

Step 8: Debrief.

- Hold a debriefing session to solicit feedback from staff and volunteers on the event.

Best Practices

A community baby shower should follow the guidelines and recommendations below to ensure that the event creates a safe, healthy, and empowering space for all participants that appropriately addresses their needs:

- Supplies Distribution
 - Distribute products that promote mother-baby bonding and skin-to-skin contact.
 - Maternity or baby supplies for distribution must be new, unopened and no less than 6 months to expiration.
 - Avoid distribution of pacifiers, which may cause speech delays and irregular feedings due to missed cues.
- Food
 - If providing food during the event, all food should be appropriate for birthing people. This means food that is rich in protein, iron, folic acid, Omega-3, calcium, and Vitamin 3. Examples include green leafy vegetables like salad, peas, whole grain, nuts; fish, poultry, lean meat; eggs, cheese, and yogurt.
 - Avoid caffeinated drinks like coffee and tea; sugared or high-carb products like pastries, white bread, soda and juice; processed meat or raw protein (including runny yolk); unpasteurized dairy; and high-sodium products.
 - Provide plenty of water.
- Resources
 - Poor mental health is one of the leading causes of maternal mortality. Integrate of maternal mental health education and awareness resources into your event.
 - Distribute the Brooklyn Borough President's "[Spreading Love the Brooklyn Way: A Guide to Safe & Healthy Pregnancy](#)" pamphlets, which provides a comprehensive list of resources and tips for a healthy pregnancy. To request pamphlets in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole and French, complete the request form [here](#).
- Activities
 - Support educational and wellness-enforcing activities.
 - Avoid activities that may expose pregnant individuals to harmful chemicals. For example, activities involving oil paints that contain harmful solvents.
 - Encourage inclusivity and empowerment of all family models (single mother, single father, separated/divorced parents, same-sex parents, and non-nuclear caregivers).
 - Have a lactation counselor present to educate on and promote breastfeeding. Also ensure a lactation counselor is present if items like breast pumps and bottles are being distributed to encourage breastfeeding.
- Other
 - Acknowledge the stark health disparities faced by Black and Brown parents.
 - Ensure language accessibility for respective neighborhood where event is located.
 - Hold event in a location that is accessible by public transportation, ADA-accessible, and well-ventilated. Be aware at that pregnant individuals often experience higher body temperatures and are more prone to heat emergencies.
 - Ensure that attendees have a means of taking giveaways home. Encourage them to bring a companion or try to seek sponsorship from a rideshare company to provide

voucher codes (which will require attendees to download the app and have a bank card) or from a community partner to offer Metrocards.

- Ensure there is a first aid and safety plan in place in the case of emergencies. If possible, ensure that there is a clinician or first aid/CPR trained individual on site.

Appendix A: Template Project Plan

Event Name:

Date and Time:

Location:

Partner Organizations:

Target Population:

Event Objectives:

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Tasks	Lead Assigned	Other Team Members Assigned	Start Date	Due Date	Completion Status
Task 1					
Subtask 1.1					
Subtask 1.2					
Subtask 1.3					
Task 2					
Subtask 1.1					
Subtask 2.2					
Subtask 2.3					
Task 3					
Subtask 3.1					
Subtask 3.2					
Subtask 3.3					

Appendix B: Financial Budget

Personnel Costs		
Position Name	Total Cost	Notes (Include cost justification)
Total		

Other Than Personnel Costs				
Item	Qty	Unit Cost per Item	Total Cost	Notes
Food				
Space				
Supplies for decor, activities, etc.				
Giveaways, list below:				
Other, list below:				
Total				

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