

Arizona Department of Administration
Submittal for NASPE Eva N. Santos Communication Awards
Category: Poster

Poster Title: **Gear Up For Success: State Employee Education Fair**
State: Arizona
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1. Provide a brief description of the submission

Providing tuition assistance to State of Arizona government employees to further their education was an available benefit for state employees for a number of years. During this time annual state education fairs were held and major universities, colleges and vocational technical schools promoted higher education to state employees with information about certification, degrees, or other training and professional development opportunities. However, due to the recession and budget issues tuition assistance for employees was either eliminated or drastically reduced at many agencies and the annual education fairs were eliminated. Knowing that the budget issues would be long lasting, ADOA Human Resources Division pursued another means to allow employees to continue their education – tuition discounts for state employees and their dependents.

ADOA Human Resources Division began contracting with various private and public universities, colleges and training facilities to provide tuition discounts to employees and their dependents. To date, five private schools and universities are partnering with the State of Arizona to offer tuition discounts ranging from 5% to 24% per course. In addition to these schools and universities, we are working with several other colleges and universities, including one of the state's public universities, and hope to enter into more agreements in the near future. This tuition discount program costs nothing to Arizona tax-payers and is an innovative way in which the state can show support for staff in these difficult economic times. Based on this partnership, ADOA began receiving requests from these various educational institutions for permission to solicit educational opportunities and the discounts provided on the properties of numerous state agencies. So in 2013, ADOA's Human Resources Division, in coordination with the ADOA Director's Office, organized and revamped the state employee education fair. This provided an opportunity to allow the universities and colleges to promote their discounted rates while also encouraging employees to further their education.

Based on a series of meetings with interested educational institutions, ADOA created a comprehensive marketing and communications plan. Working with a very slim promotional budget, a creative strategy was developed. It centered on eye-catching, colorfully graphic posters. These posters were displayed in agency buildings throughout state government. They were also used as email attachments in all event-related communications, and were the inspiration for the event webpage.

2. How long has the submission been in existence?

Tuition discounts began during the recession to address the lack of tuition assistance previously available to state employees. Education fairs for State of Arizona employees go back as far as 2002, however, as previously noted, when tuition assistance was diminished, the education fairs were discontinued. This renewed effort in 2013 had a goal of providing employees knowledge of the various opportunities to further their education. This, in turn, will provide our state with a better workforce, and an opportunity to further reinforce strong partnerships with our universities, colleges and vocational-tech schools.

The poster, which was created for the 2013 State Employee Education Fair, is a good example of our resolve to help our employees and our state be all we can be despite budget challenges.

3. Why was the submission created?

The poster was developed to create awareness and motivation to participate in the 2013 State Employee Education Fair. Employees participating in the fair and learn more about universities and colleges and the discounts available with some of the schools..

4. How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?

Supporting the goals and objectives of our agenda/department, "Gear Up For Success!" became the campaign theme of our education fair. Strong, motivating words. Powerful graphics. All designed to grab attention, hold interest, provide information and motivation. The immediate goals and objectives were to create awareness of the event, connect with the message, come to the fair, and come away with valuable, beneficial information. Looking beyond the short term, the event also became a tool for retention – directed to state employees who want to further their education and ultimately their careers. It was also a preview of a future recruitment theme – to look at the state as a place with strong potential for growth and the future. The posters, as part of a larger marketing campaign, were central to ensuring that state personnel could quickly be informed about the scope of the event. The poster design laid the foundation for the event webpage. In addition, the posters were used in all electronic communication advertising for the event. Each agency was provided several hard copies of the flyer as well as an electronic file to be used

in newsletters, webpages, Intranet postings, and agency-specific email communication. Finally, the poster design provided an enhanced sense of professionalism and commitment to ensuring a well-executed event for the benefit of state employees and participating educational institutions.

5. Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of this submission? If so, how?

The marketing strategy, including the poster design, was highly effective as evidenced by attendance and a follow-up survey. All respondents from participating educational institutions were satisfied with the event and pleased with the number of employees they were able to interface with. Furthermore, the respondents indicated that they didn't have any recommendations for improvement primarily because "the event was well promoted as seen by the amount of traffic." Moreover, although a definitive attendance number is unavailable, ADOA estimates between 750 to 1,000 state employees attended the event. More than 500 employees pre-registered and numerous others attended without pre-registering. To date, four private schools and universities are partnering with the State of Arizona to offer tuition discounts ranging from 5% to 24% per course. In addition to these schools and universities, we are working with several other colleges and hope to enter into more agreements. This tuition discount program costs nothing to Arizona tax-payers and is an innovative way in which the state can show support for staff in these difficult economic times.

State of Arizona Education Fair Samples

- 1) Poster
- 2) Webpage <http://azdoa.gov/edfair/>
- 3) Event Photo



STATE EMPLOYEE

EDUCATION FAIR!

Gear Up For
Success!

- ⚙️ 30 Major Universities, Colleges and Vo-Tech Schools
- ⚙️ Career Center, Human Resources & Learning Center Reps
- ⚙️ Food Trucks
- ⚙️ Prizes & Giveaways

For more information, visit: azdoa.gov/edfair

Wesley Bolin Memorial Park
Wednesday, November 6, 2013
11am - 2pm



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