

Community Partner Events Guide

**SMALL
BUSINESS
WEEK 2026**



Community partner events guide

This guide is to help our community partners plan, promote and collaborate on events to support small and family businesses in their region as part of Small Business Week 2026.

This year the Office for Small and Family Business (OSFB) encourages Community Partners to collaborate, share resources, and create events that respond to their own region and community needs and that offer practical value to their local businesses.

You can use this guide as inspiration or follow our step-by-step checklist to help you plan your event before submitting your **Expression of Interest Form by 26 June**. Qualifying events will be included in the SBW26 online program from 7 July.

Community partner event expression of interest process

1. Read the Community Partners Events Guide and Checklist.
2. Reach out to your affiliated organisations and identify opportunities to collaborate.
3. Identify what event format and topic your local business community or region would benefit from.
4. Plan your event, including defining the target audience, booking a venue, and deciding on your registration process.
5. Once your event details have been finalised, complete the **Expression of Interest Form by 26 June** and receive a SBW26 communications pack to help you promote your event.
6. Qualifying events will be included in the **SBW26 online program from 7 July**.

Community partner event criteria

1. Events must be held during Small Business Week 2026, 17–21 August.
2. Event topics and formats should reflect the topic of 'Resilience'.
3. Events must support and celebrate small and family businesses in your community and offer them value, support and connection.
4. Events should be free.
5. Events must be registered via the online Expression of Interest Form by 26 June to be included in the program and to receive the SBW26 communications pack.
6. By submitting an event for inclusion in the SBW26 program you agree to complete a **Community Partners Event Feedback Form** on conclusion of your event.

Guide to community partner events

Benefits of hosting a local event for small and family businesses

Locally driven events can help celebrate and support the businesses in your region in ways that match their unique experiences. They can also be a great way to help them connect with support services, build networks, access practical information, and feel more connected to their local business community.

Successful local events for small businesses:

- Respond to the real needs of your communities' small and family businesses.
- Provide practical and relevant support and guidance.
- Don't need to be large or expensive to be valuable.



Collaborating with like-minded organisations

The first step in planning your Small Business Week event is to reach out to like-minded organisations in your region such as local councils, business organisations, chambers of commerce, community groups and local partners.

These like-minded organisations may also be planning an event, or may be interested in collaborating on your project to support local businesses in your region.

Collaborating with other community partners can have many positive outcomes such as sharing resources, increasing attendance, and creating stronger community outcomes.

- Local events can be more effective when organisations work together.
- Collaboration on events helps increase reach, attendance, and impact.
- Shared planning reduces workload and increases resource pool.

The benefits of collaboration may look like:

- Co-hosting the event.
- Providing a venue, catering or speaker support.
- Sharing costs.
- Combining mailing lists and communication channels.
- Promoting the event through each organisation's networks.
- Creating a joint event calendar and avoiding scheduling competing events.
- Joining forces for marketing, media or promotional opportunities.

Guide to community partner events



What type of event would your business community benefit from?

Once you have engaged your community partners you can decide what type of event and topic your local business community or region would benefit from.

This year's overarching theme for Small Business Week is 'Resilience'.

Think about who your intended audience for the event will be, such as start-ups, family businesses, retailers, regional businesses, home-based businesses, or established employers, or a more general audience. Then think about what activity would suit your audience and support their resilience.

To help you do this you could:

- Survey local businesses.
- Speak with chambers or traders' groups.
- Review common enquiries received by council.
- Identify current challenges such as cost pressures, workforce shortages, digital marketing or succession planning.
- Ask local businesses what would help them most.

Examples of events that could work well in your community and that can be tailored to the theme of 'Resilience' are:

- Business networking breakfasts
- Small business workshops
- Family business succession planning sessions
- Marketing and social media sessions
- Grant writing or funding information sessions
- Mental health and wellbeing sessions
- Cybersecurity or finance workshops
- Local business showcases
- Pop-up advice clinics
- Panel discussions with local business owners
- Meet-the-support-services events.

Select a format that suits your audience and topic. Keep it practical, accessible, and easy to attend.



Planning your event

Once you have decided on your audience, topic, and event format you can start finalising the details of your event.

Lock in suitable speakers:

- ▶ Local business owners, advisers and service providers can add strong value to community events.
- ▶ Where possible use credible, practical speakers who understand the unique challenges of small business in your region.

Make the event accessible:

- ▶ Consider timing, location, transport, parking, online attendance options, childcare barriers, disability access and clear communication when confirming your event details.

Choose your booking process:

- ▶ Make it easy for your local businesses to register and attend your event.

Consider using an online booking link such as Humanitix or Trybooking.

Marketing your event

- ▶ Consider how you will communicate the benefits of attending your event to your target audience and the ways you and your partners will communicate it.
- ▶ Write a catchy heading and a short event overview explaining the features and benefits participants will gain by attending your event:
 - ▶ Short, catchy heading.
 - ▶ Program copy explaining your event's features and benefits (up to 150 words).
 - ▶ Bulleted list of 4 key takeaways your attendees will gain after attending.
 - ▶ Include an online booking link and contact information for any event queries.

Promote the event widely:

- ▶ Collaborate on promotional opportunities with your community partners.
- ▶ Use council newsletters, business networks, social media, local media, chambers, libraries, community noticeboards and partner mailing lists.
- ▶ Register your event by 26 June to receive a SBW26 digital branding kit to help you promote your event and be included in the SBW26 Digital Event Program.
- ▶ Manage your RSVPs and send updates and reminders to attendees in the lead up.

Delivering your event

Deliver a useful experience

- ▶ Keep the event welcoming, practical and focused.
- ▶ Allow time for questions, networking and sharing local support options.

Feedback and follow up

- ▶ Ask attendees and collaborators for feedback at your event and use it to plan future support opportunities for your business community.
- ▶ Send attendees useful links, speaker notes, contact details and upcoming opportunities.
- ▶ Record the number of attendees at your event and the name of any stakeholders that participated.
- ▶ Complete your Community Partners Event Feedback Form and send OSFB your photos to celebrate your event.



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