

User's Guide to *Turban Day*

Congratulations on taking the first steps to organize a *Turban Day*! This document has been compiled with the help of Sikh leaders from around North America who have successfully hosted this program on their campuses and in their local communities. This User's Guide will provide you with guidance, resources, ideas, and best practices as you begin to plan your event. We hope you find this package useful and wish you well on organizing a successful *Turban Day*!

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Part I – Soliciting Financial Support

One of the incredible things about hosting a *Turban Day* is that it generates a large impact at a relatively low cost. There are some basic expenses to run this event, and we hope to ease this process for you by providing some sample templates for funding proposals and pitches in a separate document entitled “*Turban Day – Fundraising Guide*.” We encourage you to draw on this resource as you reach out to other funding bodies to solicit sponsorships and partnerships.

The Surat Initiative has also committed to supporting your event with a \$100 contribution. If you would like to initiate this financial support as you organize this event in your community, please let us know by emailing literacyproject@suratinitiative.org.

Based on the experiences of those who have successfully run a *Turban Day*, here are some ideas on how to find, approach, and interact with potential sponsors:

If you are running this event through a student organization, remember that colleges and universities have ample funding for diversity programs. Academic institutions tend to emphasize cultural awareness and appreciate the educational, engaging, and impactful premise of *Turban Day*. There are a number of entities through which you can seek financial support:

- Academic Departments (e.g., Religious Studies, Sociology, Political Science)
- University Offices (e.g., Office of Diversity Programs, Multicultural Affairs)

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- Student Organizations (e.g., Interfaith Club, Amnesty International)
- Elected Student Offices (e.g., Student Councils, Student Governing Boards)
- Invested Local Organizations (e.g., Local Interfaith Council, Local Gurdwara)

These relationships are not only about financial support. If someone you approach is supportive of *Turban Day* but unable to offer funding, ask them to help you by advertising, attending, or volunteering for the event. Reaching out to local Sikh institutions is a particularly effective way of finding volunteers who can help with various tasks, including turban-tying.

Part II – Selecting a Location

There are two key issues to keep in mind while selecting the location for your event – adequate space and publicity.

With regard to space, make sure to select a locale that meets the needs of your program yet allows for a sense of intimacy between volunteers and participants; these interactions are key to the success of *Turban Day*. Try to avoid a space that will feel too empty or too crowded. Most likely, your event will require at least two tables for holding materials (e.g., handouts, sign-up sheets, turbans).

In terms of publicity, aim to hold the event at a location on campus where there is a large flow of students, faculty, and community members (e.g., main quad, student center). One of the draws of *Turban Day* is its visual uniqueness, and holding the event in a populated area of campus will play to this strength. If you choose to hold the event outside, make sure to reserve a backup location for the event in case of inclement weather. Conducting the event outdoors is preferable because it allows for more visibility and exposure, and therefore, creates more awareness about Sikhi.

Part III – Acquiring the Materials

As you might imagine, the most important materials for *Turban Day* are... turbans. **The simplest and most economical source for turbans is your local gurdwara – request local contacts to donate turbans they wear infrequently.** If you are unable to obtain sufficient turban donations for your event, consider buying them locally. Turbans are also available online from different sites, including **ehutty.com, turbaninc.com, and gosikh.com**. Both donated and purchased turbans should be washed prior to use.

We recommend using a standard single turban (4-5 meters) to help simplify the process and decrease the cost. We also recommend having an assortment of colors available so that people can select their preferred turban. If you are planning to use the same

turbans on different people, you should also plan to have disinfectant spray available.
Other useful materials for turban-tying include pins, scissors, and mirrors.

In addition to the turbans, it is important to provide informational handouts that participants can take home with them. **We have produced a handout specifically for this event that you can download and print for free. This file is labeled “Turban Day – Handout.” These flyers have been professionally designed and contain key bullet-points on turbans and Sikhi.** Each image comprises about a quarter of a regular sheet of paper, and we recommend that you have these printed in full-color on standard glossy paper stock. If this does not fit your budget, feel free to cut costs by printing on regular paper or in black and white. In addition to these handouts, you may want to contact The Sikh Coalition and SALDEF to obtain the informational brochures and pocket calendars they have produced that present Sikhi accurately, positively, and professionally.

Part IV – Advertising the Event

Advertising for *Turban Day* should begin at least one month prior to the event. Efficient methods of advertising include emailing your listserv, creating a Facebook event, and asking partner organizations to help spread the word. One of the most effective ways of advertising an event is to post flyers around campus. **We hope to save you the effort of creating your own flyer by providing a customizable advertisement with the official design for *Turban Day*.** The sample template is included in the package under the title “Turban Day - Flyer.” If you experience any trouble customizing the flyer for your event, let us know via literacyproject@suratinitiative.org.

Part V – Seeking Media Coverage

Given the dynamic, interactive, and unique nature of this event, media members have typically responded positively to requests for covering *Turban Day*. Any media coverage will help increase the impact of your work, and therefore we encourage you to reach out to your local and campus media sources and inform them about the program details. **To help with this process, we have provided an email template you can customize and use in reaching out to media contacts.** We have also provided a few suggested talking points that can help prepare volunteers in case they are requested to give an interview. This file is part of “The Turban Day Package” and is titled “Turban Day - Media Guide.”

Part VI - Best Practices: Suggestions from Experienced Organizers

Organizers of *Turban Day* have successfully added various creative ideas to fit the interests of their local and campus communities. Below is a compilation of some best

practices that you might consider incorporating or repurposing to increase the impact of your event.

- “I have found that it’s best to have a photographer available to take photos of people wearing turbans. It’s a once in a lifetime experience for the people who tie a turban, and it means even more to them if we can help them capture the moment. We used an SLR camera, noted people’s email addresses, and sent the pictures the following day – and the next day my Facebook feed was filled with profile pictures of classmates in turbans!”
- “We asked our volunteers to engage in conversation while tying the turbans on the students. It’s the perfect moment to share our culture and heritage with people, especially because it’s the moment in their lives that they will be the most interested and available to learn about Sikhs.”
- “We received so much financial support that we were able to let people keep the turbans we had bought for the event. We simply tied the turbans on them and challenged them to wear them around campus to see how it felt. People really loved that.”
- “The most surprising thing about *Turban Day* is how much the media loved it. The local newspapers and news stations came out to cover the event and said it was a great feel-good story that provided great visuals for media. I would definitely recommend everyone to reach out to the media and invite them to attend.”
- "Even though I don't always wear a dastar, I made sure to wear one on Turban Day to encourage other females and to help them be more comfortable in participating in the event. Having Sikh women wearing dastars and tying them on participants - both male and female - is a great way to drive home the point of gender equality."
- “We encouraged people to learn about Sikhi by having a table on the side where they could answer trivia questions. If they got the answers right, they would be entered in a raffle for a chance to win prizes.”
- “We have done *Turban Day* for several years now, and we’ve been able to sustain it by asking people to return the turbans after the event. When people bring back their turbans, we give them a \$5 gift card that we receive as donations from local businesses (e.g., Jamba Juice, Starbucks, Chipotle). For the people who don’t return their turbans, we bug them via email until we get them back.”
- “At our *Turban Day*, we kept participants engaged by adding other components, such as music, performances, and speakers. Having other things for students to do gave them a reason to stick around, and I’m glad they did because they ended up learning a lot more!”
- “We created a tri-fold poster board with many pictures of Sikhs in government and media, as well as text with information about Sikhi, the 5Ks, and recent events involving Sikhs. People would look at this while waiting in line, and by the time they came to the front, they would have insightful and interesting questions for the person tying the turban on them.”