In-depth:
Each year, the Philadelphia Science Festival works hand in hand with Yards to create a Science of Beer event, which focuses on the chemistry of brewing at their facility, located along the Delaware River. This event has evolved over the Festival’s history and explorations have included the science behind food pairings (in 2012 – 2014) and the science behind the beer itself in 2015.

When the event focus was pairings, the Yards’ tasting room allowed participants to connect with sensory scientists from the Monell Chemical Senses Center and attendees were able to look at why certain food and beer pairings complement each other while others don’t. Local food vendors provided samplings of their products to go with a specific beer, while the Monell staff demonstrated the science behind the pairing. In addition to the tastings, the brewers have hands-on tables that feature specific ingredients and their role in the brewing process. Guests can touch, taste, and smell hops, yeast, barleys, and common minerals found in specific waters.

In 2015, Festival organizers decided to take participants back to high school science class with a Beer Lab themed event. Each table was given a lab kit that contained beer related experiments, and each participant received a lab manual to record observations. Local scientists discussed barley, hops, water, malting, yeast, pumping and skunking while attendees completed the experiments.
Perhaps the most rewarding part of the Yards Brewery partnership is the creation of the annual Science Festival beer, available only during the Festival. This brew is featured at many PSF 21+ events and is often bottled as a limited edition that is available for purchase at the brewery. New for 2015 was a crowd-sourcing approach to determine the type of beer that was brewed. This proved to be a fun way to get people talking about the Festival months beforehand. The 2015 Survey is included in the Resources section of this Tool Kit.

While this event can require a great deal of in-depth planning and coordination, it has become one of the Festival’s most successful and talked about events. This program has consistently sold out and scored among the highest in participant evaluation.

Want to host a “Beer Lab” program for your festival? Consider the following:

- Are there local breweries, wineries or distilleries in your city?
  - What is their incentive for participating?
  - Do you already have a primary or secondary contact? If not, do you have existing partnerships with other organizations that might be able to provide an introduction?

- Food Components
  - Do you want to have a food component to this program?
  - If you want a food component, does your facility have a kitchen that is willing to help with the pairings, or do you need to find vendors?
    - Does the facility have an existing relationship with local vendors?

- What science resources do you have?
  - Are there sensory scientists that can help add to this program?
  - Can you partner with a local university or research facility?

- Budget Considerations
  - Programs of this nature have considerable costs. If food components are involved you want your audience to feel satisfied for the price they paid. A few questions for when looking at your program:
    - Will you sell tickets to offset the costs?
    - How will you charge for alcohol drinks?
      - Will a flat-rate include all you can drink?
      - Will attendees be given a specific number of drink tickets for the cost of admission?
  - Are there any vendors willing to give a discounted price or donate their product?