

Building Community Connections

A key component of outreach is being known in potential participants' communities. Building community connections will strengthen your program, increase program participation, and foster relationships that may help participants in areas your program doesn't cover.

General Recommendations

- Build consistent communication with your community contacts
 - *When possible, have the same person email/call to schedule times to table, flyer, or ask other questions*
 - *Send follow-up communication after you visit thanking the site*
- Try to connect with staff and other people at the site when you are there
 - *Example: if dropping off flyers, talk to the staff you see – explain what you're doing and why. Most connections are built through conversation.*

Beginning to Build Connections

Consider incorporating these efforts if you are short staffed or do not have a designated person for outreach and marketing

- Select 1 -2 of the highest priority sites for tabling or flyering on your Outreach Planning forms
 - Brainstorm the best ways to connect with them
 - **Questions to consider:**
 - Do they host any events where you or your program could be present?
Example: festivals, distribution events, workshops, open house days for schools & workforce centers, etc.
 - Do they have social media with which you can build connections?
Example: share their events on your page, like their posts, etc.
 - Can you invite any of them to come visit your program?
Example: invite someone from the workforce center to present on their programs, invite a small business owner to talk about their experiences, etc.
 - Can you do a field trip to the location with people in your program?
Example: visit the library, workforce center, farmers' market, school, etc. with participants
 - Choose 3-4 options from your brainstormed list to try and do throughout the year in addition to tabling and flyering

Growing Your Connections

After you've begun to build connections (or if you have high outreach capacity), grow your connections by adding these options

- Expand the number of sites with which you intentionally build community
- Increase the number of times you connect with each site annually
Example: both attend an event that they host and invite them to your program and connect with them via social media