



## Marketing, Outreach, and Recruitment Strategies

To effectively recruit program participants, it is important to develop a recruitment plan that is targeted to a specific population, has clear and positive messaging, and raises community awareness of the program through diverse mechanisms. Below are examples of strategies that can be used. Each program site is unique, and selecting a variety of strategies that will appeal to your intended participants is key to successful recruitment.

### Visual Promotion

- Create and hang signage in highly visible locations, like a street banner over the main road in town.
- Advertise through street or transportation billboards.
- Distribute yard signs with the program dates and registration contact information.
- Hang posters in community locations (e.g., libraries, schools, hair salons, youth centers, after-school programs, and grocery stores).
- Post announcements on local business, school, or community marquis.
- Use sandwich boards in front of schools, community centers, or businesses.
- Engage a college marketing or graphic design class in creating a logo and/or marketing materials.

### Media Venues

- Conduct free, live interviews on morning radio shows. Federal regulations also require stations to offer free public service announcements; request the opportunity to record an advertisement for your program. Include past participants' testimonials if possible.
- Post announcements on online community calendars or online news sources.
- Invite reporters to attend a program session. Provide them with a bulleted list of key points and ask to review the article before printing if possible.
- Post cable TV announcements.
- Submit newspaper advertisements.
- Prepare press releases.
- Post announcements in local guides or news sources.

## Online Marketing

- Utilize social networking sites, such as a Facebook page, to highlight program activities and stay connected with past participants.
- Access networking media, such as an email LISTSERV.
- Post announcements or links on the websites of the host site, community partners, local schools, and referral sources.
- Use messaging programs, like Twitter, to raise awareness of the program.

## Partnering & Referral Sources

- Identify services or programs that potential participants already utilize, like therapists, tutoring services, gyms, libraries, babysitting services, etc. Share informational materials at those locations.
- Partner with existing community program providers, such as Girl and Boy Scouts, 4-H, summer camps, sporting organizations, the YMCA, and church youth groups, to promote the program or serve as host sites.
- If a military installation exists in the community, partner with installation youth or family programming (e.g., the child development center or family readiness groups).
- Distribute bulletin announcements or inserts to local churches or faith institutions.
- Solicit businesses to distribute information (i.e., fliers in store bags, fliers on pizza boxes, announcements on placemats).
- Have nurses or physicians share brochures during school physicals.
- Send emails and referral forms to agencies or support networks with reminders of program start dates.
- Send informational and referral materials to local therapy or counseling services.
- If applicable, engage health centers and hospitals in promoting the program as a wellness strategy.
- Deliver presentations to potential referral sources, such as county children and youth services, family advocacy programs, childcare centers, juvenile probation, faith-based organizations or inter-faith community meetings, collaborative boards, and rotary clubs. Distribute informational materials and referral forms at these locations.
- Consider if the program fits within intervention services. Could it be an option for foster parent training hours or mandated by local judges in cases of abuse or delinquency as an education option for family reunification?

## Community Outreach

- Set up a display at fairs, festivals, and community events.
- Have a community leader declare a dedicated week or month. For example, if a parenting week is declared, a family-strengthening program can be highlighted to acknowledge the community's commitment to supporting parents.
- Seek involvement in sporting events, such as community nights at a local minor league ballpark.
- Deliver presentations on available program research and impact data to key stakeholders at meetings that attract high levels of publicity, such as school board, county commissioner, or township planning meetings.
- Place fliers in food bags at the local food bank.
- Have a team conduct door to door neighborhood outreach.

## Informational Strategies

- Host a short informational meeting where you provide a program overview and engage potential participants in a sample program activity to generate interest in registering.
- Invite a few well-respected adults or youth who are representative of the target population to serve on an advisory committee. Engage them in generating recruitment ideas. They may also serve as program shepherds, inviting 1-2 participants each to an upcoming program.
- Mail an invitational letter or postcard to targeted participants. Have it signed by a respected community leader.
- Produce and show a promotional video at community events.
- Make phone calls to targeted participants to introduce them to the program.
- Seek promotional opportunities at school sporting events, such as sponsoring a halftime basketball shooting contest.
- Provide items (e.g., notepads, bags, pens, pencils, water bottles, etc.) printed with program details or stuffed with a program brochure.

## Engage Past Participants in Future Programs

- Use photos of previous programs, quotes from participants, or testimonials from families or referral sources in publicity materials.
- Create an informational video. Local high school students may be willing to assist with this as a school project, especially if they earn community service hours.
- Offer incentives to alumni who help recruit new participants. Mail postcards or fliers when new programs are announced and offer an incentive for referrals.
- At the end of a program, ask participants to list the contact information for friends and family members that may be interested in participating in future programs.
- Send emails to past program participants to announce new program dates and encourage them to help promote enrollment.
- Give participants t-shirts with the logo to further brand the program and create walking advertisements. A satisfied participant is the best recruiter!

For more information or a list of references, please contact the CYFAR PDTA Center at [cyfarpdta@umn.edu](mailto:cyfarpdta@umn.edu).

