



## SCHOOL IS BACK IN SESSION!

Use These Strategies to Effectively **RECRUIT** Youth and Families!

### ◆ Understand and Address Barriers to Registration.

Make your program accessible and convenient. Pick an easy to access and comfortable location. When scheduling, consider school calendars and competing community activities. Incorporate supports (i.e., transportation, childcare, meals) to reduce participation barriers.

### ◆ Normalize Participation.

Be sensitive to public perceptions when selecting a location and marketing! For example, when attracting parents, help them to view program participation as normal and respected. Involve community leaders, so potential participants view the program as valued by the community.

### ◆ Craft Positive Messages.

Use positive, strength-based language that mirrors the hopes and dreams of the participants. Highlight that the program is fun and engaging. Share the expected benefits for those who participate. Avoid indicating that the program addresses skill deficits or is for at-risk populations.

### ◆ Train Program Champions.

Identify high-energy individuals who are passionate about your mission. Share the program's goals and intended outcomes and develop speaking points that can be enthusiastically shared!

### ◆ Conduct Broad Community Outreach Efforts.

Plan a one-two month marketing blitz targeting as many venues as possible, so potential participants see and hear the message *multiple* times. Use visuals, like street banners and posters. Use audio messages, like radio ads or school announcements. Use online venues, like email list-servs, websites, and social media. Present to community agencies and collaboratives.

### ◆ Build Relationships With Referral Sources.

Personal invites are more effective than advertising! Involve individuals who have a relationship with your target audience in your recruitment efforts such as teachers, coaches, therapists, case managers, guidance counselors, religious leaders, youth center staff, and employers.

### ◆ Engage Past Participants.

Past participants can serve as advisors or program champions. They have a unique perspective on the messages that appeal to the target audience. Also, their personal and emotional testimonials of program impact can attract both participants and stakeholders!

### ◆ Incentivize.

Solicit gifts or prizes from local businesses or partners. Highlight the items on marketing materials and during registration contacts. Also, offer incentives to referral sources. For example, host a friendly competition among school classrooms or community agencies with a prize for the person or group that generates the most registrations.

### CHECK YOUR MARKETING MATERIALS!

- √ Are color, pictures, and graphics used?
- √ Is the wording positive and strength-based?
- √ Are benefits and incentives highlighted?
- √ Are supports, like free childcare, emphasized?
- √ Are the program details and contact information clearly visible?
- √ Are quotes included from past participants?