

Partnering With Various Community Sectors

The Faith Sector

What you need to know about the faith community

- It is diverse, multi-talented and has been committed to social justice for a long time.
- These groups may already be involved in health-related charity work.
- Know the difference between:
 - *Faith-based initiatives* involve the congregation in each step of planning and development with meaningful input.
 - *Faith-placed initiatives* take place at the faith-based institution with no real partnership between the coalition and faith community.
- Understand the traditions, values, culture and mission of your faith partners.
- The faith community expects to help plan and develop the action plan; don't push leaders into taking on more than they can handle.

Tips for working with the faith sector

Respect institutional norms and values

- Contact faith institutions' regional and/or national offices to pitch your coalition and gain entry to specific denominations.
- Research existing policies, regulations, resolutions and statements and integrate them into your materials.
- Design strategies that equip and strengthen faith community for sustained work; maintain your relationship with them over time.

Communicate effectively

- Base your message on scriptures.
- Stay in constant dialogue with specific communities; ask would help them participate in coalition.
- Work with media staff at national, state and regional faith offices to link with locals.

Identify and enlist natural partners and allies

- Start with churches that are currently involved in health care.
- Identify those responsible for social justice/health ministries, such as parish nurses.
 - Keep appropriate clergy and spouses involved.
- Show connections between your work and their health-related charity work.
- Show how getting involved in advocacy can strengthen their goals.
- Show problems firsthand:
 - Visit hospitals and public health agencies to raise awareness of health issues.
 - Collect stories from congregation and highlight in church bulletin.
 - Plan meetings with food and work around people's schedules.



The Youth Sector

What you need to know about the youth sector

- Youth and families are surrounded with education, opportunities and relationships that support development.
- Youth are resources to be developed, not problems to be solved.
- Youth expect to participate in all stages of project: planning, implementing and evaluating.
- Youth must receive support and training to prepare them to be competent and caring adults.
- Everyone is more energized when focused on aspirations and opportunities.
- Build on capacities, gifts and strengths that already exist among youth.

Tips for working with youth

- Treat youth as partners! All members, regardless of age, share decision-making power; equal voice=equal vote.
- Welcome, encourage and affirm contributions from all. Don't assume what people of any age are like.
- Encourage everyone to recognize mutual benefits of partnership. Adults must "buy into" youth's participation.
- Establish high expectations for all. Don't lower expectations for youth or expect more from them than from adults.
- Provide training and build capacities of both youth and adults.
- Schedule meetings/events when youth can attend and in accessible locations.
- Develop good relationship with youth *before* expecting much. Adults' impatience may be misinterpreted as disinterest.
- Consider that youth need to say, "No" at times due to education, relationships, communities and other activities.



Public Officials and Legislative Sector

What you need to know about the governmental and legislative sectors

- Public officials are interested in your views and rely on contact with citizens for information.
- Most state legislatures work in one- or two-year cycles. Don't wait until you want something to contact decision-makers.
- Even if your legislator is not on right committee, they can be valuable contact.

Tips for working with the governmental and legislative sectors

- Look for opportunities to introduce yourself and your issue to legislators and staff.
- Attend local advisory council, neighborhood association and school board meetings to connect w/other active members of community.
- Learn about local government agencies and legislature, especially relevant committees that have jurisdiction/responsibility for your issue.
- Identify friends or staff connections who are constituents of committee members and are willing to write letters, call, or accompany you on visits.
- Find your champion(s). Research background of legislators – they may have special interest in substance abuse (bio/website may provide clues).
- Consider other connections - religious affiliations, school/alumni associations, professional/trade associations, or club memberships.
- Get involved - volunteer in legislator's campaign to build relationship and make a personal financial donation.
- Invite legislator/staff to speak at coalition meeting, attend function or receive award.
- Offer to provide information about health issue for legislator or constituents. Serve as a problem solver/technical expert that may gain access to legislator's office.
- Create short, clear and convincing talking points to describe your policy proposal.
- List the strengths of your position. Anticipate criticisms and prepare for opposition.
- Quantify issue to show number of people impacted, cost to society and cost effectiveness of your programs, etc..
- Focus on localized message. Legislators want to know how issue affects their constituents. Use stories to highlight issue and show why your program is valuable.



The Business Sector

What you need to know about the business sector

- Businesses' mission may not be health-related, but they care about rising health care costs and the health of workers as it relates to absenteeism, and productivity.
- Businesses need practical information that tells them where you are taking them, particularly implications, actions steps, and prompts.
- Be aware of self-interests. Businesses may not share proprietary information. MOUs or contracts may alleviate this issue.
- Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment to behave ethically and contribute to economic development, while improving the quality of life of the workforce, their families, the local community and society at large.

Tips for working with the business sector

- Learn the business culture. Include differences in public versus private sector language, acronyms and norms.
- Communicate the benefits of the partnership – the “what’s in it for me” factor.
- Make the business case. Routinely evaluate and report partnership benefits and value compared to the cost or the businesses return on investment (ROI).
- Be aware of the differences of fiscal cycles among partners.
- Have clear goals and what the coalition brings to the table to accomplish those goals.
- Timeliness is essential. Arrive early and promptly respond to phone calls and emails.
- Develop tight timelines with quick deliverables.
- Communicate effectively – no jargon or technical terms.
- State the problem, potential solutions and the past successes, and how the plan will be implemented and outcomes measures - give practical and actionable advice.



The Education Sector

What you need to know about the education sector

- Recognize that education's chief mission and goal is not health related.
- Focus on educational impact and frame arguments for strategies on educational outcomes (e.g., improved academic achievement and decreased absenteeism are directly linked to improving health).
- Implementing quality school programs are states' responsibility, but tempered by a respect for local control.
- "No Child Left Behind" leaves little room for new programs or strategies.

Tips for working with the education sector

- Respect the hierarchy. To work with teachers and staff, permission is needed from the principal, administrative staff or the superintendent.
- To change standards and policy, you may have to work with school boards, state boards of education, the chief state school officer and the governor.
- Work with educational and professional associations to reach more people and increase exposure for credibility (e.g., PTA).
- Engage students in public forums, hearing agendas and research.
- Link communication about desired PSE changes to the state and national education standards.
- Make sure communications are succinct and address the educational mission.
- Provide practical advice identifying research-based successes and best practices.
- Provide specific recommendations and policy options.
- Develop curricula and lesson plans with links to required standards to make their use more likely by busy teachers.