

Building Capacity Together: Toronto LIPs Workshop Series for Service Providers Working with Vulnerable Newcomers
A collaborative project of all Toronto LIPs (North, South, East, West, and City of Toronto's Newcomer Office), funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

OUTREACH TIPS & REMINDERS

RESEARCH

- Learn as much as you can about the people that you want to outreach to. For example, learn about where they go in the city, what they do for work, what they do on their spare time, what their priorities are, and how they communicate with each other. Be careful to avoid generalizing, and remember that there are many differences within communities.
- Research the rules, regulations, and application processes for any outreach tactics that you may want to use. For example, do you need to apply for any permits?
- Ask your organization about safety protocols (i.e. what should you keep in mind when going door to door to speak to community members?).
- Familiarize yourself with your organization's policies (ie. are you allowed to offer childcare? Who is watching the children? Are they licensed? How many children can they watch?).

INCLUSIVITY

- Accessibility is key to participation. Consider providing child care, reimbursing transportation fees, ensuring buildings are accessible to people with disabilities, providing language interpretation, organizing outreach/events at times that people are most likely able to attend, ensuring that events are no cost (or low cost if necessary), etc.
- Remember to involve traditionally "marginalized" groups in society in your outreach.
- Remember the power dynamics that exist. Ask yourself questions about power, such as:
 - Is it possible that I will be seen as an "authority figure"? Will people be comfortable speaking to me? What can I do to minimize the power imbalance?
 - Will people assume that they *have to* participate because I have asked them to? Do they think that they *should* participate in order to access a service? Are they just participating because they don't want to upset me?
 - Am I gathering people that may have conflict with each other in the same space? Are minority groups or oppressed groups going to be comfortable contributing?
- Create a safe space. Remember the various levels of oppression and discrimination that people face, and keep this in mind in every single part of outreach, program design and implementation, and service delivery.
- Consider how gender dynamics may impact your outreach.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Personalize communications by calling people or emailing them directly (instead of sending a group email). Establishing contact with someone, and showing them that you would appreciate their involvement is much more effective than disseminating outreach materials over group lists.
- Be confident! Get out there and talk to people.
- Ensure that your messaging is focused, clear and concise. Use the appropriate language and literacy level.

STRATEGY

- Remember that community engagement (working **with** a community) is more meaningful, long lasting, and effective than outreach that is done **for** a community.
- Address the needs that have been identified by a community, in the way that they want to address them. Let communities set their own agenda whenever possible.
- Be flexible to changing needs and priorities.
- Remember to be culturally appropriate.
- Remember your ultimate goal, as it is easy to forget with the pressure of meeting “targets”.
- Consider combining outreach methods (ie. distribute flyers and speak to passersby about your upcoming fundraising concert, while a musician that will be part of the concert is performing on the street behind you).
- Provide food that is culturally appropriate with options for people with allergies whenever possible.
- If you have resource constraints, consider a multi-step outreach plan (i.e. start with minimal engagement with the goal of high engagement in the future).
- Be creative and original!

PARTNERSHIPS

- Consider building relationships with community leaders. Ensure that you consider what community leaders may have to profit or lose from the collaboration. For example, will they act as “gate-keepers”? Is the community leader overworked and always asked to do things for free?
- Consider asking a person from the community in which you are outreaching to join your outreach team. Keep in mind potential power imbalances between them and the community. Could their involvement result in limited participation from others in the community?
- Build relationships in the broader community that can help you with your outreach. For example, have you built a relationship with your local library staff? Can they share information about your service or event with the residents that they work with?
- Remember that partnerships are reciprocal. If community members or organizations have helped you in your outreach, remember to make the time to support them in their endeavours as well.
- Examine potential power imbalances in every relationship and partnership, and the possible implications to your work and to the community. Consider ways of minimizing power imbalances whenever possible.

RESOURCES

- Be realistic about your resources and time.
- Consider a multi-step outreach plan (i.e. start with minimal engagement with the goal of high engagement in the future) if you have resource constraints.
- Ask volunteers to help you. Remember to train volunteers.

FOLLOW UP & EVALUATION

- Follow up after you meet someone. Establishing a connection is only the first step.
- Evaluate each outreach method you use. Did it work well? Did it achieve your goal? How could you improve if you were to do it again? Did anything surprise you? Were there any unanticipated barriers or obstacles?