

Tips for Working with Partners

Collaboration is critical for prevention of substance abuse and mental disorders. Sustaining partnerships and creating new ones, in part through National Prevention Week, can allow your organization or coalition to widen the reach of prevention initiatives while also providing additional support for your cause, mission, and National Prevention Week event.

Create New Relationships

To grow, thrive, and make an impact with your efforts, your group or organization may need to establish new partnerships. National Prevention Week presents an opportunity to introduce your work to other audiences: using your event as a platform, your group or organization can approach potential partners with a tangible way to get involved in important prevention and behavioral health issues at a local level. The following are some ways you may be able to leverage National Prevention Week to create new relationships:

- Research potential partners to identify areas where your current goals, programs, or initiatives align. Reference this specific information when talking with potential partners to highlight areas in which a partnership would be natural and could have the most impact within your community.
- Use your National Prevention Week event to start a conversation. Tying your work to a specific event allows you to showcase your organization and highlight areas for collaboration.
- If you are looking for new partners to support your group or organization, focus on asking for donations of goods or services rather than monetary support.
- Invite potential partners to “meet” your organization through the event. Instead of asking for a donation, simply ask them to attend and meet other current and potential partners.
- If you are holding an event that requires volunteer support, invite staff from your potential partners’ organizations to participate by volunteering.

With Whom Should You Partner?

Consider the following groups, organizations, and individuals as you think about potential partners that may be valuable to you during your National Prevention Week event planning. This list is not exhaustive

and should only serve as a starting point for you to brainstorm potential partners within your community:

- Community coalitions that share your group’s or organization’s ideals, goals, and causes and are also aligned with the National Prevention Strategy;
- Health care providers, including primary care physicians within group practices, school nurses, hospital staff (e.g., doctors, physicians’ assistants, nurses, and nurse practitioners), and specialists in your community such as pediatricians;
- Addiction or mental health experts, including psychologists, peer counselors, researchers, social workers, members of your local substance abuse prevention coalition (find coalitions online at <http://www.cadca.org>), or your National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC) state affiliates (available at <http://www.naadac.org>);
- Peer navigators and others in your community who are assisting individuals with accessing the health insurance marketplace;
- Community-based organizations, including the Lions Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Rotary Club, Kiwanis, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and food banks;
- Organizations serving youth, including the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, and 4-H;
- Local business people and organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, and local retail associations that represent local bar or restaurant owners;
- Elected officials, including members of the city council and neighborhood officials;
- Neighborhood associations, including neighborhood crime watch groups and homeowners’ associations;
- Faith-based organizations and leaders;

Partnering with Community Coalitions

Working with community coalitions is beneficial, because they already have an established presence in the community. By collaborating, you may be able to plan a National Prevention Week event and participate in other national or community observances jointly (e.g., SAMHSA’s [Town Hall Meetings](#), [National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day](#), [National Recovery Month](#), [National Substance Abuse Prevention Month](#), [National Wellness Week](#), [Mental Health Awareness Month](#)). Through collective action, you can strengthen prevention efforts throughout the community.

- Local law enforcement, including members from the Fraternal Order of Police;
- First responders, including paramedics, firefighters, and other emergency personnel;
- Local school leadership, including principals and teachers at local elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as administrators and professors at local colleges and universities;
- Parents and caregivers;
- Young adults participating in youth groups, school organizations, sports leagues, and other community organizations that serve youth; and
- Media organizations, including your local print and broadcast news sources (find more information through the Association of Regional News Channels at <http://newschannels.org/resources/index.cfm>).

Enhance Existing Relationships

Your current relationships and partnerships are strengthened through continued appreciation, attention, and engagement. Use the time leading up to National Prevention Week to start conversations with current partners about the successes you've had together to date, collective goals, ways to improve your partnership moving forward, and ways to strengthen your joint initiatives—including your event for National Prevention Week.

The following are some ways to acknowledge and thank your partners during National Prevention Week so that your partnerships continue to thrive:

- Invite staff from your partner organizations to play an active role in planning your National Prevention Week event. Ask members to sit on the event planning committee and have hands-on roles during the event activities.
- Describe your partners' roles in your group's or organization's marketing materials or event promotion.
- Publicly acknowledge your partners' support for your event by including their company logos in all printed materials.
- Hold an awards ceremony in recognition of your partners and present them with certificates or tokens of appreciation.