



# Prevention Collaboration in Action

Bringing the Right  
Collaborators On Board

## Tips for Successful Recruitment

The elements of successful recruitment aren't complex, but they do take time and resilience. Engaging a potential partner requires careful research, relationship building, and a strategic pitch. But even with careful preparation, there will be times when your recruitment efforts don't pan out—at least not initially.

This tool presents some tried-and-true tips from seasoned prevention practitioners on “getting to yes” when recruiting potential prevention partners.

- **Time your recruitment efforts carefully.** Depending on the sector you're trying to engage, there are both good and less good times to engage in recruitment efforts. Your primary goal is to reach out at a time when your potential partner is most likely to be receptive—when they are the least busy and most open to collaboration. For example, early August is often a good time to engage school administrators; they are well-rested but not yet inundated with other school responsibilities.
- **Lean on the expertise of “recruitment pros.”** Some people are simply more comfortable than others reaching out and connecting with new people. Identify those members of your team who are good at networking, comfortable asking, and have the “woo” gene—and then put them to work! When possible, enlist the help of coalition members who have established relationships with the potential partner to provide a warm hand-off (make the initial introduction).
- **Prioritize your recruitment efforts.** If you are short on time, begin by recruiting those partners whose involvement is most important to your prevention efforts, including those partners who can help you reduce the behavioral health disparities present in the community.

- **Be flexible.** Instead of walking away when someone says “no,” ask and genuinely listen to find out why. Explore other ways to potentially work together. For example, a busy agency director may not be interested in chairing a committee but might be willing to serve as a cultural liaison. Remember, there are different levels of collaboration. By adjusting your expectations (and meeting your partner half-way) you are keeping the door open to more involvement over time.

**Remember: Every “no” leads you closer to a “yes”!**

Don’t let a “no” be the final time you interact. Find out if there are other ways to continue to engage—with no strings attached. For example, ask if you can add the individual to your newsletter mailing list. See if you can call them again in a month (or six months). Take the opportunity to continue learning about the individual’s organization and their priorities. Listen for what their interests or concerns may be. Change can be scary—or at least uncomfortable—for many. People need time to get used to new ideas, new ways of doing things, and new potential partners.