

Building Partnerships with Organizations

When implementing the National Diabetes Prevention Program's lifestyle change program, it will be important to engage community organizations and other key partners to help support your efforts. This document covers:

- Why you should engage key partners
- How to find partners in your community
- Approaching potential partners
- Maintaining partnerships

Why you should engage key partners

Partnering with key organizations in your community and state can help you launch and carry out a successful program and help your program be sustainable. Partner organizations can benefit the lifestyle change program through providing:

- Marketing and outreach opportunities
- Access to resources (supplies, volunteers, meeting space, etc.)
- Increased participant referral
- Insight into the community or population of interest from which you are hoping to recruit participants
- Credibility and support for your program within the community

Finding partners in your community

To help you find potential partners, make a list of all the organizations in your community that may be interested in the lifestyle change program. Remember, the organizations do not need to have direct involvement in the field of health care or diabetes prevention. Any organization with an interest in improving overall health and well-being in your community could be a potential partner. While compiling the list of organizations, keep the following in mind:

- Why the organization would be interested in partnering with you
- What the organization could provide to support your program
- Who within the organization you will contact

It may be helpful to create a chart with this information to help you keep track of the organizations of interest. An example chart is located in Appendix A of this document. In addition, Appendix B contains a list of types of potential partners to consider and examples of the support that they can provide to your program.

How to approach partners

After determining the organizations that you want to collaborate with, the next step is to determine who in your organization will be in charge of contacting potential partners. Whenever possible, choose someone who has a professional or personal contact within the potential partner organization. Then have that person reach out to the potential partner to request a meeting (see Appendix C for a sample e-mail). Prior to the meeting with potential partners, there are a few things you can do to prepare, including:

- **Do your research**

Prior to meeting, learn as much information as you can about the person you are meeting with and their organization. What other health-related initiatives do they support? What are their goals, and how do those goals match with your program's goals?

- **Develop talking points**

Be prepared to provide information about type 2 diabetes and prediabetes, the National Diabetes Prevention Program, and a description of the lifestyle change program and how it works. Then, share how potential partners can benefit from working with your organization.

Your research about the type of organization that you are approaching can help you create tailored messages to convince organizations to partner with you. For example, many non-profit and faith-based organizations have a mission-oriented interest in health promotion and community service that will match well with your program goals. Or, businesses that partner with your program can receive positive publicity, or they can experience cost-savings and increased productivity from having their employees participate in your program.

- **Define the role that you want to ask the potential partner to play in the program**

The talking points that you develop for potential partners should include a clear and specific "ask", or a concrete action that the person or organization can take to support your program. Make sure that you ask the partner to play a role that is realistic and that meets their needs as well as the needs of your program. Determine how and when you will follow up with the person you are meeting with to determine if they want to engage in a partnership.

- **Leave information**

Finally, you will want to leave information with the organization. Examples of the types of information that you can provide include:

- Fact sheets about prediabetes and type 2 diabetes
- Information about the lifestyle change program
- Contact information for you and your organization

For more information see the appendices of this document and “Outreach Tips” available in the Learn/Resources section of the online learning community, [Common Ground](#).

Maintaining strong partnerships

When an organization agrees to partner with you, be sure to communicate regularly with your contact at that organization, to ensure that everyone is on the same page and gains the desired benefit from the partnership.

Other tips to maintaining a strong partnership include:

- Agree on a communication system that works best for you both
- Have regular, honest communication
- Follow through on commitments in a timely manner
- Share decision-making regarding the partnership

As your program grows and you begin to have success, make sure to share the credit with your partners, as this may encourage further involvement from them. You may also want to consider giving your partners a letter, certificate, or public recognition thanking them for their support.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Chart to Organize Potential Partners
- Appendix B - Types of Potential Partners and Examples of the Support They Can Provide
- Appendix C – Sample E-mail to Potential Partners
- Appendix D - References

This document was created or adapted by DTTAC for use in the National Diabetes Prevention Program and is available at Common Ground, www.LCcommonground.org.

Appendix A. Chart to Organize Potential Partners

Potential Partner Organization	What the Organization Could Provide	Why the Organization Might be Interested in Partnering	Who We Will Contact with the Organization	Contact Information

Appendix B. Types of Potential Partners and Examples of the Support They Can Provide

- **Community and faith-based organizations.** They may be able to share resources, such as a meeting space for the lifestyle change program, and help recruit participants to your program.
- **Community leaders.** Active leaders in the community, especially those who advocate for community health, can help spread the word about your program and locate additional resources. Also, policymakers, such as a state legislator, the mayor, or city councilmember, can become champions for your program and bring attention to your efforts.
- **Employers and businesses.** Local employers may allow you to promote the program at an employee health fair or provide incentives for eligible employees to participate in the lifestyle change program. Supermarkets, local restaurants, fitness centers, and retail stores all may donate services and goods to enhance your program. For example, local sporting goods stores might provide discounts to your participants for physical activity supplies.
- **Government Agencies.** Government agencies and programs in your state or community can provide information, connect your program with partners, and help you recruit participants. For example:
 - ❖ Health Resources and Services Administration – You can find an online directory of federally-funded urban and rural clinics on this website http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/Search_HCC.aspx.
 - ❖ Indian Health Service - The Indian Health Service Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention is responsible for creating, documenting, and sustaining efforts to treat and prevent diabetes in American Indians and Alaska Natives. You can find the program directory at <http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Diabetes/HomeDocs/Programs/ModelDiabetes/Directory.pdf>.
 - ❖ Local health departments – You can find a listing of local health departments on the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) website: <http://www.naccho.org/about/lhd/>.

- ❖ **State-Based Diabetes Prevention & Control Programs** - You can find contact information for the program in your state health department on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/states/>.
- **Media representatives.** Local newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations can help you get the word out about your program and publicize your success.
- **Physician's offices, hospitals, community health centers and clinics.** Staff can test clients and patients for prediabetes and recommend that those who are eligible enroll in your program. *For more information see "Building Partnerships with Health Care Professionals" available in the Learn/Resources section of the online learning community, [Common Ground](#).*
- **Diabetes-related organizations.** National organizations may have local, state, or regional chapters that could assist you. Examples include:
 - American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE)
www.aadenet.org
The AADE is an association composed of a wide variety of health professionals who are involved in efforts to improve the quality of diabetes education and care. Through their website, you can find diabetes educators and accredited diabetes education programs in your area.
 - American Diabetes Association (ADA)
www.diabetes.org
The American Diabetes Association offers programs, materials, and activities in the areas of diabetes information, advocacy, and research. On the ADA website, you can also search for diabetes education programs in your area. To access the search engine use the following link:
http://professional.diabetes.org/erp_zip_search.aspx

Appendix C. Sample E-mail to Potential Partners

Dear *(name of person contacting)*,

You are invited to join us as a partner to help prevent type 2 diabetes in our community.

Currently, almost 26 million adults in the United States have diabetes, and 79 million have a condition known as prediabetes. Prediabetes occurs when blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. People with prediabetes have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

The National Diabetes Prevention Program's lifestyle change program is proven to help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes in individuals who are at risk for the disease. The year-long program is facilitated by a trained Lifestyle Coach and focuses on helping participants make modest lifestyle changes to improve their health.

We are excited to report that beginning on *(start date)*, *(name of your organization)* will begin offering this exciting program in our community. I would like to request the opportunity to meet with you to tell you more about the program and creative ways that you can help support our efforts.

Please let me know when you might be available to meet. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Organization contact information)

Appendix D. References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). National diabetes fact sheet: national estimates and general information on diabetes and prediabetes in the United States, 2011. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/factsheet11.htm>.

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