

Tips for Recruiting Diverse Groups¹

Identifying who is not at the table when important community issues are being addressed and recruiting these people is the basis of LeadershipPlenty.[®] Several steps can be taken to involve people from different groups:

Decide how many and what kinds of people you are trying to reach.

LeadershipPlenty[®] training is designed for groups of 15-25 participants. We encourage organizers of LeadershipPlenty[®] to think broadly as they recruit participants. Consider race and ethnicity, gender, age, background, interests, education level, socioeconomic level, and locale.

Figure out who can reach out to these diverse participants.

Consider: Are there groups or individuals involved in our steering committee or partners committee who can reach out to different kinds of people? If not, who can help us?

Plan outreach strategies.

To communicate your program, use a multifaceted approach, combining personal invitations and general publicity. Remember, people need to hear the same message at least three times before it begins to register. Recruitment efforts could include a wide array of strategies from targeted media campaigns to potluck dinners to personal invitations. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, however. Recruitment strategies will differ from community to community depending on the particular challenges being addressed.

- ▶ A personal invitation is the best recruiting strategy. There is no substitute! You can do this through face-to-face visits and through phone calls. Steering committee members or partner members can introduce the program to lots of people by speaking to community groups or meetings.
- ▶ Whenever possible, give people a chance to take part in an activity from a module. Be sure to allow plenty of time for questions about the training.
- ▶ Ask volunteers to make phone calls to follow up on letters or presentations.

Consider outreach tools.

The most effective tools deliver your message to people in ways they like to receive information. Think about the people you're trying to reach. Do they read the newspaper, or are they more likely to read a religious bulletin? Do they watch television or listen to the radio? If so, which stations? Do they read fliers on grocery store bulletin boards? Do they use e-mail, or get an employee newsletter at work? Do they hear things from neighbors and friends? Do they see announcements on public transportation?

Plan on using a variety of tools so that people will hear your message several ways—for example, through the mass media (newspapers, radio, TV), direct mail (letters, notes, brochures), a personal contact (phone calls, presentations, meetings), and advertisements in public places (bus stops).

Give members of your team recruiting assignments.

Provide members of your steering committee and partners with specific background information about LeadershipPlenty.[®]

Include a few key talking points about the program that they can use wherever they go. Have them carry sign-up forms. Remember that active recruitment is the most effective.

Work hard to recruit the unaffiliated.

One of the biggest challenges is to recruit people who don't often get involved in community efforts. This will take extra work, but without it, you will be missing many important voices in your program. Here are a few suggestions:

- ▶ Go where people socialize. Think about bridge clubs, bowling leagues, sports clubs, youth groups, sewing circles, and ethnic organizations. Don't overlook local mom-and-pop establishments and businesses where people are likely to socialize, such as barbershops, hair salons, or grocery stores.
- ▶ Go where people work. In some communities, businesses have given time off to employees who wanted to take part in LeadershipPlenty.[®]