

# TIPS FOR WORKING WITH YOUR PARTNERS

**Collaboration is critical for the prevention of substance misuse and promotion of mental health.** 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 prevention event or activity.

## Create New Relationships

To grow, thrive, and make an impact with your efforts, your group or organization may need to establish new partnerships. One way to do this is by participating in National Prevention Week, where you can showcase your prevention efforts to new organizations and learn about their successes as well. Additionally, using your event or activity as a platform, your group or organization can approach potential partners with a tangible way to get involved in important prevention efforts for mental health and substance misuse issues at a local level

**The following are potential ways you can leverage local prevention events to create new relationships :**

- **Research potential partners to identify areas in which your current goals, programs, or initiatives align.** Reference this 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 prevention 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.**
- **Think long-term by inviting 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.**

### WHOM SHOULD YOU PARTNER WITH?

#### PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY COALITIONS

Working with community coalitions is beneficial because they already have a presence in the community. You may have opportunities to work together during National Prevention Week and beyond, such as by planning a **Communities Talk: Town Hall Meetings to Prevent Underage Drinking** event, or participating jointly in other national or community observances or events (such as **National Recovery Month**, **National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week®**, or **Mental Health Awareness Month**). Through collaboration, you can strengthen prevention efforts throughout your community.



Consider the following groups, organizations, and individuals as you think about partners that may be valuable to you during your prevention 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 or organization's ideals, goals, and causes and are also undertaking prevention efforts
- **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 misuse prevention coalition (find coalitions online at [cadca.org](http://cadca.org)), or state affiliates of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals (available at [naadac.org](http://naadac.org))
- **Peer navigators** and others in your community who are assisting individuals with accessing the health insurance marketplace
- **Community-based organizations**, including Lions or Rotary clubs, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) posts, 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**
- **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
- **Media organizations**, including your local print and broadcast news sources

## Enhance Existing Relationships

Your current relationships and partnerships are strengthened through continued appreciation, attention, and engagement. Leading up to National Prevention Week and beyond, 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 prevention event or activity.

**The following are some ways to acknowledge and thank your partners so that your partnerships continue to thrive:**

- **Invite staff from your partner organizations to play an active role in planning your prevention 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.

