

Establishing Partnerships to Serve Students Better

Promising Practices 20

Program Puzzler

In your community, there is an agency that assists low-income parents with young children. The agency provides childcare for their clients, along with providing guidance and assistance with work and education issues. You think that there is potential overlap of services and/or clientele. You would like to work with this and other programs in the community to better assist your students, but you are unsure how to begin a partnership. How should you proceed?

Peer Perspective

Steps to Establishing Partnerships

1. Acquire and maintain a knowledge of agencies in your community that provide social services that could assist your students. Utilize Internet searches, brochures/flyers, newspaper articles, and advertisements and other items to learn more about the community agencies.
2. Make contact with identified agencies (e.g., via phone calls, e-mail, face-to-face meetings) to create awareness of your services, to better understand their services and how their services are marketed to the community, and to identify how services can complement.
3. Cultivate relationships with individuals with whom you want to partner. Partnerships are built as much on trust as mutual interest. Invite representatives from agencies to your program and to events and keep them informed of your progress.
4. Market to potential partners.
 - o Offer brochures of services, presentations, attendance at job fairs.
5. Establish and maintain partner relationships.

Timely Tips

Recruit community and program partners to be members of your advisory committee.

Suggested Partners

- Business and Industry
 - o Business associations
 - o Chamber of commerce
 - o Hospitals/healthcare
 - o Manufacturing companies
 - o Restaurants
- Civic/Religious Organizations
 - o Churches
 - o Lions club
 - o Rotary club
- Governmental Agencies
 - o Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR)
 - o Libraries
 - o Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)
 - o One-Stops

- Probation boards
- Veteran affairs
- Youth services
- Educational Agencies
 - Aspire programs
 - Adult Workforce Education programs
 - Colleges and universities
 - Community colleges
 - Schools

Sample Partnership Services






- Building space
- Childcare
- Funding
- Onsite classes
- Referrals
- Remediation (e.g., preparation for WorkKeys)
- Technology (e.g., Internet access)
- Transportation

Added Insights

Aspire programs can better serve students by partnering to support student beyond the classroom. According to adult education research, providing “wrap around” services helps with student retention. Identifying potential barriers, addressing issues, and providing direct support (e.g., access to transportation, daycare, referrals) increase persistence.

- Develop collaborations with social-service agencies and build a large network of service providers to help students in your program persist. (*Program Administrator's Sourcebook*, National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2005)

AspireLink Accompaniments

-  Primary Reasons for Attendance - by Site
-  Program Demographic Information
-  Program Overview - Student Demographics
-  Referring Agencies (How did you find out about this program?)
-  Secondary Reasons for Attendance - by Site