



## Engaging with Community Partners Tips Sheet

### Q. How to identify a community partner

A primary goal of a CATCH project is building relationships with community organizations. Community partners are valuable experts in the community. Collaborating with partners and stakeholders helps you to:

- Gain different perspectives on the health issue(s) you are seeking to address
- Better understand the needs and priorities of different groups in your community
- Build trust and increase buy-in
- Generate alternative strategies and ideas
- Increase access to your target population
- Gather input to help assess how your project is going
- Distribute the workload

Community partners should be existing organizations in the community who already serve the target population in some way. Consider what community groups are involved with your issue. Consider what input you want from community groups/stakeholders at every stage of the project's development. Engaging community partners and other stakeholders helps show a clear commitment to ensuring that the project is not "imposing an intervention unasked."

- Talk with community members with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. You can also search your area online or walk the neighborhood to see what businesses, organizations, and community groups are in the area.
- Consider how you will include groups of people, voices, and perspectives that have been under-represented, marginalized, and/or left out of decision making in the past.
- Determine how you will involve decision-makers, both in your own organization and in partner organizations. Who manages the resources that you need for your project? Who is involved with shaping policies and systems? Who can assist with needed approvals?
- Identify champions. A champion is someone who has influence, connections, and enthusiasm for your project. If you can find a champion or two, they can help you engage others, build buy-in, and address challenges.

For Resident grants, community partners should be external to patients/parents and trainee clubs/interest groups and the community partners should be other than those already associated with the hospital and residency program. Community partnerships can include broader connections with other health care professionals (EMT, school nurses, dentists), but a stronger community partnership is often outside of the medical realm.

There also may be multiple stakeholders. While engagement with one organization (ie. community center) is good, an applicant should also consider engaging multiple community partners (ie 2 community centers, or personnel in the school, or other organizations.) Ask existing partners to suggest other organizations they know or with whom they already partner.

*Example 1* – If your interest is in early literacy, considering partnering with libraries, childcare, home visiting program, schools, or community non-profit that already sees young children or pregnant/new mothers.

*Example 2* – If your interest is in support groups for parents, consider collaborating with home visiting programs, community centers, or faith-based groups as potential partners and hosts for the sessions.

*Example 3* – If interested in addressing an issue for school-age/youth, consider partnering with schools, after-school programs, YMCA/Girls and Boys Clubs, 4-H, community centers, or churches.

**Q. Examples of community partners (not exhaustive list, but close)**

The first question explored the idea of how to begin to identify a community partner. The CATCH application mentions the following suggestions for potential community partners: grassroots associations, parents, caregiver or family member, faith-based groups, local businesses, local public health service agencies, nongovernmental health agencies, and hospitals.

However there are many, many more organizations and stakeholders to consider as a potential community partner. [The Community Pediatrics Training Initiative Project Planning Tool: A Practical Approach to Community-Based Advocacy](#) written by Dr Benjamin Hoffman, et al, outlined a “**Ridiculously Exhaustive Master List of Potential Community Groups and Associations**” whom you could potentially engage with in the process of developing and implementing a community-based project. This list is provided to demonstrate the breadth of the potential assets within a community. Some of these may exist in your community, while some may not.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addiction prevention recovery groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Drug ministry/Testimonial group for addicts</li> <li>– Campaign for a Drug Free Neighborhood</li> <li>– High School Substance Abuse Committee</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage Groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Black Empowerment Group</li> <li>– Norwegian Society</li> <li>– Neighborhood historical society</li> <li>– African American Heritage Society</li> <li>– La Raza</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Community Support Groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Friends of the Library</li> <li>– Neighborhood Park Advisory Council</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hobby and Collectors Groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coin collectors association</li> <li>– Stamp collectors association</li> <li>– Arts and crafts club</li> <li>– Garden club of neighbors</li> <li>– Sewing club</li> <li>– Antique collectors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal Care Groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cat Owner’s Association</li> <li>– Humane Society</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men’s Groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fraternal orders</li> <li>– Church Men’s Organizations</li> <li>– Men’s sports organizations</li> <li>– Fraternities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti Crime Groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Children’s Safe Haven Neighborhood group</li> <li>– Police Neighborhood Watch</li> <li>– Senior Safety Group</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring Groups               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– After school mentors</li> <li>– Peer mentoring groups</li> <li>– Church mentoring groups</li> <li>– Big Brothers, Big Sisters</li> <li>– Rights of Passage Organizations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletic Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Soccer clubs</li> <li>– Little leagues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual Support Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– La Leche League</li> <li>– Disease support groups</li> <li>– Parent-to-Parent groups</li> <li>– Family-to-Family groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Block Clubs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Condo Owner’s Association</li> <li>– Building Council</li> <li>– Tenant Club</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Improvement Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Neighborhood garden club</li> <li>– Council of Block Clubs</li> <li>– Anti-Crime Council</li> <li>– Clean-up Campaign</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Organizations/Support Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Jaycees</li> <li>– Local Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>– Economic Development Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Local Restaurant Association</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Democratic Club</li> <li>– Republican Club</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charitable Groups and Drives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Local hospital auxiliary</li> <li>– Local United Way</li> <li>– United Negro College Fund Drive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Kite-flying club</li> <li>– Bowling leagues</li> <li>– Basketball leagues</li> <li>– Body Builders club</li> <li>– Little League</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic Events Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Local parade planning committee</li> <li>– Arts and crafts fair</li> <li>– July 4<sup>th</sup> Carnival committee</li> <li>– Health fair committee</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Churches</li> <li>– Mosques</li> <li>– Synagogues</li> <li>– Men’s Religious Groups</li> <li>– Women’s Religious Groups</li> <li>– Youth Religious Groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Community choir</li> <li>– Drama club</li> <li>– Dance organization</li> <li>– High school band</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Zonta</li> <li>– Optimist</li> <li>– Rotary Clubs</li> <li>– Lions Club</li> <li>– Kiwanis Club</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability/Special Needs Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Special Olympics planning committee</li> <li>– Local American Lung Association</li> <li>– Local Americans with Disabilities Association</li> <li>– Local Muscular Dystrophy Association</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bingo club</li> <li>– Card playing club</li> <li>– Social activity club</li> <li>– Dance Club</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Local school council</li> <li>– Local book clubs</li> <li>– Parent Teacher Association</li> <li>– Literacy Council</li> <li>– Tutoring groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Cause/Advocacy/Issue Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Get out the Vote Clubs</li> <li>– Peace Club</li> <li>– Hunger Organizations</li> <li>– Vigil Against Violence</li> <li>– Community Action Council</li> <li>– Social Outreach Ministry</li> <li>– Soup Kitchen Group</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elderly Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hospital senior groups</li> <li>– Westside senior clubs</li> <li>– Church senior clubs</li> <li>– Senior craft club</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Industrial (UAW)</li> <li>– Grafts Union (Plumbing Council)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Neighborhood recycling group</li> <li>– Sierra Club</li> <li>– Adopt-A-Stream</li> <li>– Bike path committee</li> <li>– Clean air committee</li> <li>– Pollution Council</li> <li>– Save the Park committee</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veteran’s Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Veterans of Foreign Wars</li> <li>– Women’s Veteran Organizations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governmental groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– City government</li> <li>– State government</li> <li>– Federal government</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Social Organizations</li> <li>– Women’s Sports Groups</li> <li>– Women’s Auxiliary</li> <li>– Mother’s Board</li> <li>– Eastern Star</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Support Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Teen parent organization</li> <li>– Foster parents’ support group</li> <li>– Parent Alliance group</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– After school group</li> <li>– 4-H</li> <li>– Girl and Boy Scouts</li> <li>– Junior Achievement</li> <li>– Campfire Girls</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Advocacy and Fitness Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Weight Watchers</li> <li>– YMCA/YWCA Fitness groups</li> <li>– Neighborhood health councils</li> <li>– Traffic safety organizations</li> <li>– Child injury prevention groups</li> <li>– Yoga club</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

**Q. What are tips for engaging with and building community partnerships?**

Once you have established your list of potential partners and stakeholders and decided how you’d like to involve them, it’s time to reach out. These partnerships should be established to some extent at the time of the application for funding.

Engaging partners and stakeholders will likely require you to do some education about your topic. You should be able to explain:

- Why the work matters, both in general and to that particular stakeholder, and how it connects with other issues that are important to your stakeholders and your community.
- The benefit or impact of participating in the project.
- How the organization or individual can collaborate to address the issue and/or develop a project.

***Building successful partnerships***

The following strategies will set your partnerships up for success.

- The ability to establish trust, connection, and understanding is key to creating a lasting partnership. Start by getting to know one another:
  - Educate each other about your respective professional cultures, language, perspectives, and organizational goals
  - Share your strengths and weaknesses and what each partner can offer
  - Discuss how the project and partnership can benefit each stakeholder

- Share your vision and establish a commitment to common goals.
- Define roles and agree on what each of you will do to contribute to the project. This should be based on the needs of the project and the strengths and assets of each partner.
- Identify the norms and logistics for how you will interact. Determine:
  - How you will communicate
  - When and where you will meet
  - How decisions will be made
- Be inclusive and ensure that all partners are respectful of each other's time and contributions.
- Follow up on commitments, review progress regularly, and celebrate accomplishments. Success sustains engagement.
- Be prepared to address barriers. Even though you might have a shared mission and vision, you may face different opinions, logistical challenges, budget constraints, and other challenges.
- Think long-term. Rather than viewing a partnership as a way to accomplish your goals for the specific project, work to build a network of relationships that can help serve the needs of children and families now and in the future.

**Q. When might a community partner not match CATCH funding criteria?**

The examples below are a few scenarios where the focus of the project and/or community partners engaged do not meet CATCH criteria.

*Example 1* – When the overall goal is focused on the education of the health providers, the community partners may be well identified but the focus may not match CATCH criteria. The partnership with these community stakeholders should focus on activities that directly support the children and families in the community.

*Example 2* -- Partnering with a clinic within the same health system is not engaging with a broad enough partnership. Is there a community group (see the *chart* above) or another health organization (not connected to the health system) that would reach a broader population of children and families? A way to strengthen this proposal would be to have strong community partner(s) outside of the medical system.

*Example 3*—Community partners identified are the clinic/hospital/practice/residency program's existing referral sources – How are these relationships being strengthened or new? What other partners/stakeholders should be included with the existing partners to meet the CATCH criteria of increasing access to child health and/or reducing health disparities?