

Promotora(e)s: Best practice for Building a Bridge to the Community

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For the People by the People...

Go to the people, live among them, love them.

Start with what they know,

build on what they have;

and the best leaders,

when their works are achieved,

and their tasks are done, will hear

the people say

“WE DID IT OURSELVES”

Lao-Tsu

The City

Lawrence, MA

- Oldest planned industrial city in the United States
- Founded in mid 1847
- History of drawing immigrant populations
- Current population is 70% Latino



Its Demographics

- One of the 25 poorest cities in the country
- Median family income for Hispanic residents is \$26,780
- 29% of families and 31.7% of children live below the poverty level.
- 64% speak a language other than English at home



Barriers to Access

- Language, literacy, education, culture, and documentation, prevent access to assistance
- **Most can't afford health insurance**
- Many have preexisting conditions, live in poor housing, and have high hazard jobs.



Promotora(e)s: What Do they Do?

- Provide case management services by promoting clinic and community resources.
- Educate women and community on local programs
- Very effective in approaching local residents
- Very effective in building community capacity and reaching underserved communities
- Connect with own people which promotes true community mobilization



Program's Approach & Strategies

- Report back to the community
- Build on the values of the culture
- Validating the strengths of the community
- Fostering mutual respect
- Hiring and Training people from the community who speak the language and are from the culture
- Reaching out to people in familiar community settings

Program's Approach & Strategies

Cont.

- Understanding barriers to accessing services.
- Keeping personal information confidential.
- Building partnerships among community agencies.
- Providing resources and referrals.

Benefits of a Promotora(e)s Program

- Increase organizational cultural competency and ability to reach diverse populations
- Create new leadership and promotoras become respected members of the community
- Promotoras gain self-esteem and leadership skills and are sought after by the community
- Gain skills which can be used in other work
- Are positive representation of the organization
- Promotora programs are cost effective
- Increase client volume for programs and organizations
- Promotoras receive payment which provides autonomy

Promotora(e)s Program Challenges

- Inadequate amount of Spanish staff to deal with increased client volume
- Promotoras may not feel fully integrated in the organization as they spent more time in the field
- Can only work with documented Latinas and may create resentment in undocumented community
- May run into safety issues. Must send them out in pairs
- Their outreach is not monitored so it is difficult if they represent organization well
- Busy lives make it difficult to dedicate time to program consistently

Selection Process

- Identify community leaders and ensure inclusiveness in the complete process
- Screen for the right candidates before training them
- Know their personal experiences and context they live in
- Make sure promotoras reflect the community they are expected to reach

Responsibilities

- Commitment of participation
- Willingness to participate, learn and give back to the community
- Willingness to work flexible hours
- Willingness to be part of a diverse team
- Available and open to travel
- Responsible and able to submit written information that includes reports, surveys, and other data as required
- Participate in all required trainings

Training

- Training tailor to learn to inform others in need identified (Teen pregnancy & root causes)
- **Community mobilization/community building**
- **CONOCIMIENTO:** getting to know each other in the group
- **Understanding mission of organization**
- **Understanding the PROMOTORA role and the role of organization in the community**

Questions

Thank you!!