

# Community Action Training

## RECRUITMENT & OUTREACH

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Estimated Time (no. of minutes)	30 minutes
Session Overview (narrative) Group activity, discussion, role play	Group members share their experiences recruiting for programs or advocacy campaigns and review factors for success.
Learning Objectives	Participants will be able to: 1. Explain two reasons for recruiting. 2. Describe at least three ways to reach potential team members and allies.
Facilitator Preparation	Use the information on the handouts as appropriate to supplement participants' experience and advice.
Materials/equipment needed	Notepads and pencils Flip Chart, Marking Pens
Handouts	Outreach and Recruitment – Team Worksheets. Outreach and Recruitment – Getting Ready Steps toward Successful Recruitment

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### Time (in min) Training Activities

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1 **Introduce the Learning Objectives.**

**Small Group Discussion** - Break into groups of four. Discuss and record:

- ◆ What have been the greatest organizational challenges you've faced when recruiting?
- ◆ What personal challenges have you experienced?
- ◆ What factors have contributed to successful recruiting?
- ◆ Discuss questions on the worksheet – “Outreach and Recruitment - Getting Ready– Team Worksheets – Why, Who, What, Where?”

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- 2 **Report back**– Ask a representative of each group to briefly report.
    - ◆ On flip chart, write key points. Use separate sheets to list challenges, successful strategies, etc. Ask the group to suggest ways they’ve addressed some of the obstacles listed. Ask in what situation a particular strategy is relevant. How might they develop new skills and overcome obstacles? Might additional training be necessary? [Perhaps public speaking, making one-on-one contacts, letter writing, etc.]
    - ◆ Distribute handouts and discuss points as appropriate. “Outreach and Recruitment – Getting Ready” and “Steps toward Successful Recruitment.”
  - 3 **Optional Role Plays:** Ask for two or more volunteers to act out the following or other scenarios, possibly one based on the obstacles mentioned in the groups. Run through the role-play. Then ask participants to provide suggestions.
    - ◆ CAT member seeks support from a neighborhood association or church group to organize after school recreation programs.
    - ◆ Timid CAT member recruiting for the very first time encounters a polite but reluctant recruit.
    - ◆ CAT members first strategize how to approach and gain support from another group working (and possibly competing) on a similar issue and then make the contact.
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## Outreach and Recruitment – Getting Ready

What kinds of things might you want to accomplish?

- ✓ Build support for your issue, get help with the work.
- ✓ Find out more about the problem.
- ✓ Be inclusive.
- ✓ Learn about possible solutions, local resources for solving the problem.
- ✓ Involve people with new perspectives. Keep the organization fresh.
- ✓ Get volunteers to help with an activity or event?

Who might be helpful in accomplishing these things?

- |                                       |                                                       |                             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Neighbors                           | ✓ Businesses                                          | ✓ Agency directors or staff |
| ✓ Youth                               | ✓ Community leaders                                   | ✓ School staff or students  |
| ✓ Faith community members and leaders | ✓ People with knowledge and experience of the problem | ✓ Concerned individuals     |

What do you need to recruit?

- ✓ Shared vision for the team. A clear message.
- ✓ Clear expectations of recruits. Publicity.  
If you have an on going need for volunteers consider:
- ✓ Range of on-going activities for recruits to participate in.
- ✓ Have ongoing entry-level activities and tasks for new people to participate. Ask yourself whether newcomers to activities might feel like outsiders.
- ✓ Build outreach into every aspect of your group's work. Regularly do things that raise your visibility. Encourage everyone to recruit.

Where might you recruit?

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ✓ Community meetings and events | ✓ Through word-of-mouth |
| ✓ Newsletters                   | ✓ Announcements         |
| ✓ Mailings, phone calls         | ✓ Door to door          |

How can you keep them engaged?

- ✓ Increase benefits and decrease costs for participants, i.e., use their time wisely.
- ✓ Maintain focus.
- ✓ Plan small successes.
- ✓ Involve partners in evaluation of the process.
- ✓ Appeal to people's self-interest –They may want to participate to solve a local problem, develop new skills, or share power with the group.
- ✓ Consider offering childcare.
- ✓ Allow people to participate at their chosen level of time commitment and responsibility

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## Steps toward Successful Recruitment

### *Be Prepared –*

- Learn as much as you can about the issues. Practice explaining it in a few sentences.
- Explain your goal and what you want the person to do.
- Have fallbacks, jobs that require less of a commitment.
- Review what you know about person or organization that you're recruiting. Try to understand what *their* interests are.
- Be ready to refer the person to other programs or deal with their issues.

### *Legitimize Yourself*

- Explain that you're from the same community and that you have the same problem (if true). Show that you're not using their problem to advance some other agenda.
- Say how you got the person's name.
- Mention other people that are involved.
- Point to good work your organization has done in the past.
- Listen
- Be open and observant. Watch for the response. Notice and acknowledge their interests.
- Build rapport.

**Agitate** - Explain how a situation is unfair and how it affects the community.

### *Get Commitment*

- Be specific about your expectations of the person. Avoid open-ended conversations.
- Match your organization's needs to the person's self-interest and talents.
- Recruit participants to an activity, not to a meeting.

### *Follow Up*

- Set up a system or schedule to stay in touch with new participants.
- Make time to welcome new members. Introduce them around.

**Keep Volunteers Interested and Involved** --People are eager, though they may be very busy, to learn, to meet other people, and to take charge of things in their world. They appreciate contributing to well-organized, productive efforts.

- Show commitment, respect, and appreciation.
- Don't waste volunteers' time. Schedule tasks so they can work as soon as they arrive.
- Maintain regular volunteer hours.
- Provide opportunity for advancement within the organization.
- Give public recognition. Celebrate birthdays and other events.
- Acknowledge even the small efforts. Do not show disappointment.
- If a volunteer is not doing a good job, perhaps s/he needs a change in responsibilities. Make adjustments that address the needs of both the group and the volunteer.

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Based on "Recruiting" in *Organizing for Social Change: a manual for activists in the 1990s*, by Kim Bobo, Seven Locks Press

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# Community Action Training

## Worksheet – Getting Ready to Recruit and Do Outreach

Why?

Why recruit? What knowledge, skills, representation, partnerships, and resources does your team need?

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Who?

Who or what groups might be helpful or willing to participate?

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What?

What will you need to recruit successfully?

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Where?

Where can you recruit?

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