Getting to Know the Community You Serve

Whether you are starting work in a new community for the first time or doing education in a community you have served for years, it is important to know as much as you can about the community you serve before you begin reaching out to people and organizations about breast cancer.

To quickly learn about your community, contact your local Komen Affiliate. They may be able to share what they have learned through their Community Profile. You can locate contact information for your local Komen Affiliate [here](#). If there is not an Affiliate in your area, here are some strategies you can use to get to know your community.

- Look in the Yellow Pages or use the Internet to find organizations that serve Hispanics/Latinos in the neighborhood(s) you are hoping to reach. Start a list of organizations that you can contact to learn more about the community.
- Call each organization and identify the person or people that work on programs that reach your targeted community. Introduce yourself and your work and ask for a meeting.

**NOTE**

Phone conversations are good for doing research and setting up meetings, but face-to-face meetings are important when forming a relationship and building trust.

- Ask your contacts if a community assessment noting the strengths and needs of your targeted community has been done. Use that community assessment to find opportunities to make inroads into the community.

**NOTE**

For example, if there are a lot of children in the community, but no pediatrician in the neighborhood, you might be able to make a connection with a clinic or organization that can provide health screenings or vaccinations. You can then partner with the clinic to conduct an event that meets a need of the community and also allows you to present information about breast cancer.
If no community assessment has been completed, ask questions about the community’s strengths, needs and priorities when you meet with people from community organizations. This will help you to better understand the community and identify opportunities for partnerships. This shows that you are placing the community’s needs at the top of your priority list. It also shows that you care about the community.

**NOTE**

Things that you may ask about might include: demographics of the community (age, gender); number of children in the community; access to primary care; insurance coverage; languages spoken; level or organization within the community (i.e., are there block captains or stakeholders/community groups); and willingness among community members to learn.

Join community meetings (sometimes called stakeholders meetings). This is a good way to network with community leaders and form partnerships. And, you will be able to meet community members and know their needs.

Contact the local churches from different denominations. Meet with the leaders to discuss your program and schedule a date for outreach in those churches.

Not every organization you contact will want or need a breast health program. However, if you receive a request for a presentation on some other health condition or need, you can negotiate for time to present on breast cancer, too. For example, if an organization would like a presentation on asthma, and you are able to facilitate through your organization or network, you can agree to help fulfill that request if the organization also makes time for you to do your breast health presentation, too.