



Delivering the National DPP Lifestyle Change Program to Older Adults

Organizations across the United States are working to deliver CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) lifestyle change program to help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Participants learn to make healthy food choices, be more physically active, and cope with problems and stress. Beginning in April 2018, the National DPP lifestyle change program became a covered preventive service for eligible Medicare beneficiaries through the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP) of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). To become an MDPP supplier, an organization must:

- Apply for CDC recognition and deliver the National DPP lifestyle change program for at least 12 months.
- Achieve Preliminary, Full, or Full Plus CDC recognition from the Diabetes Prevention Recognition Program (DPRP).
- Apply and receive approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

This tip sheet provides lessons learned and insights from organizations that enrolled and retained Medicare or Medicare-eligible participants in the MDPP or the National DPP lifestyle change program. These insights may be valuable for organizations seeking to enroll older adults.

Keys to Success: What Organizations Have Learned

- ▶ Consider how becoming an MDPP supplier could benefit your organization's National DPP lifestyle change program.
- ▶ Understand the needs and interests of the older adults that you plan to engage in the MDPP and adjust delivery to fit their needs.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for older adults to build a connection with other program participants.
- ▶ Ensure that program staff and Lifestyle Coaches know the community you want to reach and have experience working with older adults.

These tips are explained in more detail in the following section.
Review to see which ones will work for your program.

Consider how becoming an MDPP supplier could benefit your organization's National DPP lifestyle change program.

- ▼ Determine whether becoming an MDPP supplier aligns with your organization's program goals. If you're already working to improve health and prevent diabetes in medically underserved areas or with Medicare-eligible older adults, becoming an MDPP supplier could help your organization achieve its goals.

"We have a high percentage of older adults in our community, and we want to make sure that they have prevention services, like the MDPP, available to them. We don't want older adults to think their blood sugar is high simply because they're aging and can't do anything about it."

—Program staff

- ▼ Assess whether becoming an MDPP supplier would make your National DPP lifestyle change program more sustainable.

"It was a step toward a more sustainable program for us to start billing through Medicare and not rely on grant funds."

—Program staff

- ▼ Determine how much support you have from your organizational leadership and program partners for becoming an MDPP supplier.

"We saw a need in the community. At the time, nobody else was offering the MDPP. We have a strong relationship with our community health programs and had early support from leadership. Despite reimbursement issues, making sure this program is accessible for patients is the right thing to do."

—Program staff

Tips for Recruiting and Retaining Older Adults in the MDPP

- ▼ Do in-person program outreach at a senior gym, senior living facility, senior center, or other locations where older adults are likely to be.
- ▼ Send program flyers home from school with children and grandchildren to reach older adults.
- ▼ Offer your program where older adults gather, like at a senior center.
- ▼ Communicate regularly and in person with older adults about what's happening in the program to promote increased engagement.
- ▼ Offer program activities that align with older adults' interests.
- ▼ Create a group text chat as an easy way to help older adults talk about the program and connect with other participants.
- ▼ Avoid postponing or canceling classes, as older adults often rely on the program for social engagement and connection.

"A key benefit of this program is the social aspect. Many older adults are not going to work, and they need something in their lives to keep going. I see this program bringing them together and providing them some purpose and activities."

—Program staff



Understand the needs and interests of the older adults that you plan to engage in your MDPP and adjust delivery to fit their needs.

- Assess participants' interests and offer activities that align with those interests. Allow enough time to plan and incorporate the activities into your program.

"We offer participants activities like access to a gym with a fitness coach, cooking classes, or trips to the store to read food labels. This makes the program a place where they can come every day. They do exercise, cooking, and they focus on their health."

—Program staff

- Tailor program materials to make them appealing to older adults. For example, use recruitment materials that show images of people in their age range.

"To appeal to older adults, we use images of people that may be around their age in our flyers."

—Program staff

- Understand potential challenges to participation for older adults and consider these challenges when planning your program. For example, if your program is delivered virtually, make it easy for participants to join by showing them how to use virtual technologies. If the program is delivered in person, help participants plan their transportation to support regular attendance and easy access.

"When we were delivering the program in person, participants had trouble getting to class. They didn't know who was going to be able to drive them."

—Program staff

Provide opportunities for older adults to build a connection with other program participants.

- Many older adults may be socially isolated, so provide opportunities for them to build connections with other participants. For example, allow time during each class for participants to celebrate successes and share challenges.

"For us, fellowship is one of the main reasons that participants stay in the program. Participants really do create bonds with each other. They celebrate each other's wins and support them in their losses."

—Program staff

- Offer cohorts with large numbers of participants to help create a more engaging group dynamic.

"We can offer more cohorts, but then some of those cohorts are small. We find people really enjoy the group dynamic. To get that rich group dynamic, we need to have larger cohorts. That was something that we learned this year."

—Program staff

- Make sure your materials and activities are culturally relevant to your population. For example, when appropriate, focus on the foods and food preparation practices that your participants use in their own homes and communities. You can also provide class materials in more than one language if needed.

"There is a difference between how different racial and ethnic groups eat. So I know what our staples are and what things we love and what things we can't live without. So when we had Hispanic or Latino participants, we provided them with another resource specific to Hispanic or Latino foods."

—Program staff

Ensure that program staff and Lifestyle Coaches know the community you want to reach and have experience working with older adults.

- ▼ Encourage staff to be patient with older participants and take the time to build relationships with them.

“Being a part of the MDPP, you have to have the right people that know how to engage and talk with people in this age group. There’s a lot of follow-up and relationship building that’s required.”

—Program staff

“It really is all about building the relationship. Being patient and being in the moment with them because they want to be heard, and they need someone to listen.”

—Program staff

- ▼ Hire program staff and Lifestyle Coaches who reflect and represent the population you want to reach.

“I think our participants feel a connection when they come here, and the program is in Spanish. Our Lifestyle Coaches are all Hispanic or Latino and from different areas of Mexico and South America, so that helps too.”

—Program staff

“All of our coaches are local, so they’re very familiar with the neighborhoods, resources, and markets. Having that resource is huge. I really can’t highlight that enough—the ability of our coaches to make our Hispanic or Latino community feel at ease, to not feel intimidated talking about their health, and to feel like they have a sense of ownership over their health.”

—Program staff

Acknowledgment: CDC acknowledges the American Diabetes Association, Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations, Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists, The Balm in Gilead, Black Women’s Health Imperative, Comagine Health, National Alliance for Hispanic Health, and Trinity Health for their participation and contributions to this tip sheet. These organizations are recipients of CDC cooperative agreement DP17–1705: Scaling the National DPP in Underserved Areas.

Helpful Resources

- ▼ NACDD: [Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program \(MDPP\) Basics](#)
- ▼ NACDD: [Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program \(MDPP\) Implementation Resources](#)
- ▼ CMS: [Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program \(MDPP\) Expanded Model](#)
- ▼ CDC: [MDPP Promotional Materials for Part B Beneficiaries](#)
- ▼ CDC: [Using County Level Data to Increase Access to and Enrollment in the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program Webinar](#)