



Delivering the National DPP Lifestyle Change Program

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 find ways to cope with problems and stress.

This tip sheet provides lessons learned and insights from an organization that focused on enrolling and retaining American Indian participants.

The organization's overarching lesson is that you must build meaningful relationships with the community you're trying to reach. These relationships will help you identify each community's unique needs and encourage more people to participate in your program.

Keys to Success: What Other Organizations Have Learned

- ▶ Establish strong relationships with American Indian communities and invest the time to understand their unique culture.
- ▶ Use culturally relevant materials and adapt and translate them as appropriate.
- ▶ Include local traditional foods in your program materials.
- ▶ Use teaching methods such as storytelling and active learning.

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





Establish strong relationships with American Indian communities and invest the time to understand their unique culture.

- Take the time to learn about each tribe's cultural norms, traditions, geography, resources, and governance structure. Find out if they have existing type 2 diabetes management and prevention programs. This approach will build community leaders' support for your program and can increase participants' trust. It can also help sustain your program by encouraging community leaders and other tribal members to take an active role in your program—for example, by becoming a Lifestyle Coach.
- Use the knowledge you collect about each community to help you identify the specific needs and barriers of potential participants. For example, find out the most convenient location or time to offer your class sessions to make it easier for people to enroll. You can also provide transportation or offer incentives that appeal to specific communities, such as raffle prizes chosen by participants.
- Recruit tribal liaisons to help you build trust in the community and sustain your program. The main role of the liaison is to work with the community and articulate its needs.
- Reach out to existing type 2 diabetes management and prevention programs in the community, such as the Indian Health Service's Special Diabetes Program for Indians. Connecting with these programs will help you identify resources and practices that can complement and support your program.

"To be successful, there needs to be a liaison who is Native American. There's more success when there's someone helping people voice their struggles, their barriers. There is more benefit when there is a Native American coming back to help their people. The liaison also helps with trust in the partnership between the organization and the lifestyle change program."

— Program Staff

"I think it's really important that somebody from the community has gone through the program and has said, 'I'd like to become the Lifestyle Coach because I want to change the way things happen in our community.' That is going to be very powerful for recruitment and retention."

— Program Staff

Use culturally relevant materials and adapt and translate them as appropriate.

- Modify your program materials for each community to reflect its culture and traditions. For example, you can use photos of people or food that are representative of the community. Make sure your materials include information about local customs, such as traditional ceremonies, foods, and activities.
- Translate program materials into Native languages. This approach will help participants understand your program and be more engaged.

"Having different handouts in [Native languages] to make it more relevant to them was very helpful. Having marketing materials that featured Native American people and graphics made people feel more comfortable with joining the program."

— Program Staff

"Sometimes you have to change some of the language to help them understand. So how I talk to you would be different than if I'm presenting to my own people. You have to change the language to be understood, in the sense of where this population is coming from."

— Program Staff





Include local traditional foods in your program materials.

- Modify your materials to include information on how to adapt traditional recipes and how to prepare healthy meals with local traditional foods. Discussions of nutrition and food access can be sensitive in American Indian communities because of historic trauma and current problems with food insecurity. As a result, weight loss can be perceived as negative.
- Identify resources to support the use of traditional foods, like My Native Plate, an educational tool created by the Indian Health Service. Look for tools that use Native language to explain different food groups. Check with your local Special Diabetes Program for Indians program site or health clinic to see what materials are available.
- Work with elders and others in the community to learn about traditional foods. Have the tribal liaison review existing traditional food programs for ideas on how to include traditional foods in class session content. Some foods may be related to seasons, events, or ceremonies, and they can be highlighted in your program sessions.

"I know a lot of National DPP materials do not feature [Native] traditional food, so we try to alter them. For example, a cup of blue corn mush without sugar is a traditional food. How many carbs is that compared to having mutton stew? We've never done nutritional facts for any of the Native food. Participants would ask us questions, and if we didn't have it, I would ask my contacts if they had any nutritional facts for traditional foods. And they would send it to me, and during the next session, we would talk about it."

—Program staff

Use teaching methods such as storytelling and active learning.

- Recognize that storytelling and active learning through first-hand experiences (also called experiential learning) are common characteristics of many Indigenous cultures. Using these approaches can make class sessions more engaging and easier for participants to understand. For example, you can use vision boards or visual presentations to explain how type 2 diabetes affects a person's body. You can demonstrate how to prepare healthy meals with traditional foods. You can also use everyday items, like a deck of cards or a softball, to show food portions.

"We did several versions of vision boards, which was a really good fit because Native Americans are storytellers; they're visual. Just by doing a vision board and having them explain their 'whys,' you have such insight to them right off the bat. The first meeting, maybe the second meeting, you have great understanding of their lives, but it's not invasive or threatening to them."

—Program staff

"The other [strategy] we used was keeping an eye on the portion size. We had a domino for an ounce of cheese. Or we had a little softball or half of a baseball for cooked brown rice—that's the portion size. We have a deck of cards for a serving of chicken that's considered 3 ounces. We had a golf ball, that's considered a serving for peanut butter. We had a CD ROM for bread size."

—Program staff

"I can show them My Plate all day long and tell them, this is how you need to eat. It's not engaging. It doesn't matter to them. To go into reasons why they should do that, that's engaging."

—Program staff



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Helpful Resources

- [Traditional Foods Stories](#)
- [Our Cultures Are Our Source of Health](#)