

Delivering the National DPP Lifestyle Change Program

Organizations across the United States are delivering CDC's [National Diabetes Prevention Program](#) (National DPP) lifestyle change program to help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. The program is designed to reach adults with prediabetes or at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Participants learn to make healthy food choices, be more physically active, and find ways to cope with problems and stress. To better understand what strategies are working, CDC conducted a series of case studies with organizations that deliver the program. This tip sheet provides lessons learned and insights from organizations that are using promising strategies to enroll and retain participants in the National DPP lifestyle change program.

What We Wanted to Know

We conducted case studies of the National DPP lifestyle change program to examine:

- ▶ Promising strategies for enrolling and retaining participants, including:
 - Hispanic or Latino participants.
 - American Indian participants.
 - People with disabilities.
 - Members of faith-based organizations.
- ▶ Promising strategies for using program supports to retain participants.
- ▶ Promising strategies for adjusting program delivery during a public health emergency.

How We Collected Information

For the case studies, we conducted in-depth interviews with representatives from national organizations and their affiliated sites that deliver the National DPP lifestyle change program. Representatives included program staff, Lifestyle Coaches, partners, and program participants.

As part of the [DP17-1705 cooperative agreement](#), CDC funds 10 national organizations to deliver the National DPP lifestyle change program in underserved areas and to enroll both general and priority populations. The following eight organizations participated in the case studies:

- ▼ 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
- ▼ National Association of Chronic Disease Directors

6 Case Studies

73 In-Depth Interviews With:

8 national organizations

26 affiliated sites

30 National DPP lifestyle change program participants

Note: Four case studies included more than one national organization.



What We Learned

Although each case study had a specific focus, common themes emerged. Organizations that successfully enrolled and retained participants used several of the same promising practices. These practices, which are described below, were [know your community](#), [use strategic planning](#), [engage partners](#), [ensure cultural competence in your program](#), and [address barriers to access and participation](#).



Know Your Community – Take the time to learn about the community and the population you plan to focus on. Gaining an in-depth understanding of the community is an essential first step. This insight will help guide program planning and implementation, which can enhance opportunities to enroll and retain participants. To effectively serve people where they live, work, learn, play, worship, and age, you must understand each community's history, needs, challenges, and available resources. Here are some ways to get to know your community:

- ▼ Establish strong relationships with community members and local organizations that can provide insight and support your enrollment and retention efforts.
- ▼ Hire staff members and Lifestyle Coaches who are representative of and from the community. They should speak the preferred language of the community and be familiar with community norms, culture, and traditions. Your staff should understand how to use culturally appropriate approaches to recruiting, enrolling, and retaining participants. For example, in some communities, successful recruitment strategies include using “word of mouth” from trusted messengers.
- ▼ Check in with community leaders regularly to understand any concerns they may have about your program or recruitment efforts.
- ▼ Create a community asset map to identify community needs and resources, like the availability of grocery stores, affordable housing, and public transportation.

“Knowing your audience or knowing the community you’re trying to reach is really important. You understand what their motivators are, what their pain points are.”

—Program staff member

“The messenger is going to matter in terms of who is going to talk to your community and how to talk to them. That really begins with a vetted relationship. Otherwise, you will either (a) never get in the door, or (b) you will get in the door, but you won’t stay long.”

—Program staff member



Use Strategic Planning – Plan how you will support participants from the time they enroll to the time they complete your National DPP lifestyle change program. Think about which communities or populations your program will serve, how you will conduct outreach, who your community partners are, and how you will help your Lifestyle Coaches keep participants engaged. Here are some ways to use strategic planning:

- ▼ Create a plan for outreach, including where and how you will contact potential participants.
- ▼ Plan supplemental activities, like group fitness classes or grocery store tours (virtual or in-person).
- ▼ Plan what strategies you will use to retain participants, like weekly check-ins.
- ▼ Use continuous quality improvement practices like [Plan-Do-Study-Act](#) to identify areas for improvement. For example, collect data to identify which enrollment and retention strategies are working or not working, then use this information to adjust your strategies as needed.

“We look at enrollment and retention with program delivery sites. If they’re going below a certain marker, we strategize some ideas for addressing participant barriers.”

—Program staff member

“Each year, we complete a retention schedule and planning guide. We identify the population we’re trying to serve, barriers they might face, and retention tactics [to use] before, during, and after the cohort begins.”

—Program staff member





Engage Partners – Identify your organization's existing partners and brainstorm new local, regional, and national organizations that could support your lifestyle change program. Partners can help you recruit potential participants and get access to community resources and supports. They can also share information about best practices to engage and retain participants. Here are some ways to engage partners:

- ▼ Identify trusted organizations in the community that serve the populations you want to enroll. Working with trusted organizations will help you establish credibility in the community.
- ▼ Identify other programs within your organization that can help you engage participants and provide access to community resources, like food boxes and behavioral health services.
- ▼ Identify subject matter experts who work with the populations you want to reach and can help you identify best practices for engaging and retaining participants. For example, ask experts who work with people with disabilities to share best practices for inclusion.

"Our partnership was instrumental. They have a training course that Lifestyle Coaches can take to help them understand people with disabilities. They provided consultations on our marketing materials and shared materials for participants—specifically, resources on exercises that can be modified for people with disabilities."

—Program staff member

"Our subject matter expert has been working in the community for decades. She's able to run the class with the Lifestyle Coaches and show them techniques and incentives to engage their participants."

—Program staff member



Ensure Cultural Competence in Your Program – Take the time to learn about the cultural norms, traditions, and governance structures of the communities and populations you plan to engage. Ensure that your program approach emphasizes the pursuit and practice of cultural competence.

Here are some ways to ensure cultural competence in your program:

- ▼ Hire staff who are from the community, speak the language, and can help to ensure the cultural competence of your program. Staff from the community are more likely to know how to address challenges or concerns in a way that is culturally appropriate. They will help you maintain the community's trust. For example, if you're working with Indigenous communities, hire tribal liaisons who can communicate the needs of the community and enhance engagement efforts. If you're working with people with disabilities, consider training people with disabilities to become Lifestyle Coaches.
- ▼ Tailor program materials to ensure they are culturally and linguistically relevant to your populations. For example, translate materials into other languages if needed. Include references to local traditional foods, ceremonies, and activities in your program. You can also use program curricula and materials that have already been adapted or translated by CDC.
- ▼ Use teaching methods that align with the cultural norms, beliefs, and practices of your participants. For example, storytelling and active learning (also called experiential learning) are well-accepted approaches in many Indigenous cultures. For these populations, you can use vision boards or visual presentations to explain how type 2 diabetes affects a person's body.

"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 member

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

— Program staff member





Address Barriers to Access and Participation – Continually assess participants' needs, interests, and challenges throughout your program. Try to remove or minimize potential barriers to participation. Enhance factors that make it easier for participants to become engaged in your program and stay engaged over time.

Here are some ways to address barriers to access and participation:

- ▼ Ask participants directly—through surveys or interviews—about their needs, including potential barriers to accessing the program and what program supports might be useful to them. Use this information to decide how and when to use program supports. For example, will all participants receive supports or just those who need them? Will participants receive supports when they reach a milestone, such as losing a certain amount of weight or attending a certain number of classes?
- ▼ Identify the most convenient location or time to offer classes to make it easier for people to attend.
- ▼ Tell participants about community resources they may qualify for, such as rental assistance programs and community food banks. These supports might enhance your engagement and retention efforts.

"For a program to be effective, you have to constantly listen to what your participants are telling you. If you're paying attention to them, you're able to respond and tailor program supports."

—Program staff member

"Sometimes in rural areas, access to resources or services is a challenge. So, when we think about food insecurity or even access to gyms or other things like that, what's available is really limited."

—Program staff member



Tips for Training and Supporting Lifestyle Coaches

Organization leadership and Program Coordinators can take extra steps to support programs and Lifestyle Coaches.

Here are a few tips:

- ▼ Help Lifestyle Coaches participate in trainings on best practices for recruiting, enrolling, and retaining participants.
- ▼ Train Lifestyle Coaches how to use all technology needed to deliver your program.
- ▼ Teach Lifestyle Coaches how to communicate and make accommodations for different population groups, like people with disabilities.
- ▼ Provide ongoing opportunities for Lifestyle Coaches to come together to share successes and challenges.





Lessons Learned From the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

Many organizations switched to virtual program delivery during the **COVID-19** public health emergency. This shift presented unique challenges as well as opportunities to find creative ways to deliver the National DPP lifestyle change program and meet participants' needs.

The case studies we conducted provided lessons learned and promising strategies for program delivery during a public health emergency. Organizations reported that they took extra steps to support Lifestyle Coaches and program participants by:

- ▶ Helping participants get equipment and Internet or phone services they needed to participate virtually.
- ▶ Adapting program delivery to make virtual participation convenient, engaging, and supportive for participants.
- ▶ Being flexible and supportive of program staff as they adjusted to virtual program delivery.
- ▶ Allowing extra time and resources to help Lifestyle Coaches and other staff members meet the increased demands of adjusting to virtual program delivery.

For more information on this topic, see [Keys to Success: How to Adjust Program Delivery of Your Lifestyle Change Program During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

Resources

[Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry: Principles of Community Engagement](#)

[Keys to Success: Recruiting and Enrolling Hispanic/Latino Participants for Your Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Lifestyle Change Program](#)

[Keys to Success: Faith-Based Approaches to Recruiting and Enrolling Participants for Your Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Lifestyle Change Program](#)

[Keys to Success: How to Enroll and Retain People With Disabilities for Your Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Lifestyle Change Program](#)

[Keys to Success: How to Enroll and Retain American Indian Participants for Your Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Lifestyle Change Program](#)

[Keys to Success: How to Use Program Supports to Retain Participants in Your Lifestyle Change Program](#)

[Keys to Success: How to Adjust Program Delivery of Your Lifestyle Change Program During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)