

## Tip Sheet:

# Building Your Family Engagement and Partnership Plan

By [\*Green & Healthy Homes Initiative\*](#)

Here are priority areas to consider when building your Family Engagement and Partnership Plan.

***1. Leverage family engagement and partnership to ensure equity in your approaches to primary and secondary lead poisoning prevention.***

If you focus on helping the families with the highest need, lead poisoning prevention programs will produce the largest public health benefit. By centering on communities that are most affected, lead poisoning prevention resources will create more positive impacts on housing, health outcomes, and resiliency reserves. Moreover, residents will be empowered to thrive and build capacity to address the housing and environmental health issues in their own

***2. Boost the effectiveness of both outreach and educational strategies as well as service delivery strategies.***

Creating space for families, local residents, and grassroots organizations to drive lead poisoning prevention is crucial to building a program with effective outreach and strong service delivery strategies. Local residents are best positioned to provide information about effective ways to reach people in their communities and to know the common barriers to utilizing services. Residents know local language needs, trusted information sources, and the cultural diversity in their communities; therefore, encourage families to become invested in the outreach efforts and services offered through your program. Families' engagement in creating and implementing materials for lead poisoning prevention programs is key to making them effective and benefits both programs and families. Program staff also should recognize community members that help create these program materials and compensate them for the work they do.

***3. Inform continuous process improvement and program evaluation at the state and local levels.***

Engaging families in program evaluation and improvement is necessary to give them an opportunity to assess the quality of the services they receive as well as build trust with residents in the community. To implement a lead poisoning prevention program responsive to community needs, residents and clients need to be able to evaluate their experience with the program, determine whether the services were helpful, and identify any problems that the program did not address. The evaluation process must be transparent. Residents need to be informed about how their feedback is used to evaluate program processes. Program administrators should also inform residents of any new program changes that are based on resident feedback. These steps ensure that the program is accountable to the families it serves

and encourages families to engage, knowing that they have a level of ownership in the program and the work it is doing in their communities.

***4. Build capacity of community-based/grassroots groups and create partnerships that provide mutual benefits to state and local lead poisoning prevention programs and to parents.***

Partnering with grassroots organizations is crucial for implementing successful lead poisoning prevention programs. A grassroots organization is one that organizes to solve issues that affect their community. These organizations develop from within the community, are comprised of community residents, and often have a history of communicating with community members. These organizations also can benefit their communities because they can target the families who most need to learn about lead poisoning prevention programs. However, partnerships with grassroots organizations must aim to avoid being one-sided. Lead poisoning prevention programs can do important work in home hazard remediation and healthy housing advocacy; however, the goal of programs should remain focused on leaving communities better positioned to advocate for themselves. Lead poisoning prevention programs can help grassroots organizations by publicizing their work and messaging, providing necessary resources, and building on their capacity to serve the needs of families in their communities.

**Note:** Partnering with grassroots organizations presents a valuable opportunity; however, challenges may also arise in keeping the focus on lead poisoning prevention. This is because many grassroots organizations were created to address a variety of community issues, and they must be flexible and responsive to these issues as well. Although lead poisoning is a significant issue that has long-term impacts on child development, competing and longstanding issues of racism, housing affordability, workforce development, and environmental justice have an immediate and acute impact on community members. Grassroots organizations often prioritize these broader community issues. Thus, framing lead poisoning in the context of these broader community issues may be a helpful strategy for your program.