



toolbox

On involving diverse groups in community efforts

Participants in the recent Teamwork for Tomorrow workshops spent one session mocassin-walking—that is, stepping into the shoes of a hard-to-reach population to figure out what might be the best way to get them involved. Four groups were noted as particularly hard to reach. We thought our readers might find these hints helpful in recruiting these and other individuals for their community efforts.

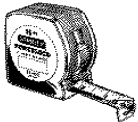
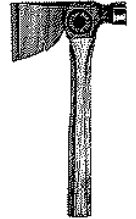
Elected officials

Ways to get me to your meeting:

- A personal invitation, visit or a phone call.
- Keep me informed of your issue.
- Send me copies of the minutes and agenda.
- Ask me for my input.
- Show me how the issue affects my district.

What you'll miss if I don't come:

- My advice/insight into local government.
- My knowledge of federal and state grants.
- Awareness of my stand on the issue and opportunity to hold me accountable for my stand.
- My support on the issue and my representation to other officials.



Youth

Ways to get me to your meeting:

- A personal invitation, visit or a phone call.
- Provide snacks/pizza.
- Invite my friends also.
- Make it fun; give me fun assignments.
- Involve me through my school.

What you'll miss if I don't come:

- A chance to develop a leader.
- My enthusiasm and fresh ideas and opinions.
- A chance to spread the word to other young people.
- My energetic contribution to your projects.

Low income people

Ways to get me to your meeting:

- A personal invitation, visit or phone call.
- Make me feel accepted, sincerely welcome me.
- Provide child care.
- Pair me up with someone I know who can offer moral support.
- Offer me a ride or hold the meeting in a close, convenient location.

What you'll miss if I don't come:

- My perspective on how to manage on a tight budget.
- A chance to change the stereotype image that the poor are dirty and uneducated.
- An idea of what low income people really need.
- A hard-working dedicated committee member.

Senior citizens

Ways to get me to your meeting:

- A personal invitation, visit or phone call.
- Provide transportation.
- Advertise your meeting at places I normally go.
- Promote the meeting as a way to be socially active.
- Meet in a handicapped accessible location.

What you'll miss if I don't come:

- My time for volunteer service.
- My experience, talent and knowledge.
- My knowledge of the special needs of seniors.
- My contacts in the community.
- My knowledge of the community's history.

