



How Mayors Can Increase Community Health Coverage in the Health Insurance Marketplace

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

How Mayors Can Use Existing City and County Resources to Help Enroll Constituents in Health Coverage

There are a number of ways that mayors can use existing city and county resources to help enroll constituents in quality, affordable health coverage. This year, **Open Enrollment will run from November 1, 2016 through January 31, 2017**. Below are some of the successful strategies that elected officials have utilized in previous open enrollment periods, in order to help connect constituents to health care coverage information and enrollment assistance.

- **Open up city/county facilities for enrollment activities** by setting regular office hours for enrollment at recreation centers, libraries, workforce development sites and other city/county offices. Work with your HHS Regional Office to identify trained assisters who can staff these sites, or train city/county personnel.
 - The City of St. Louis held enrollment sessions at public libraries every week throughout the enrollment period.
 - The City of Jacksonville held weekend enrollment sessions at city sports complexes to help consumers sign up for coverage.
- **Make health coverage information available at all city/county facilities** and train consumer-facing city/county employees to answer basic questions and provide referrals to assisters. Coordinate with local partners on providing interest cards that consumers can fill out for follow-up information.
 - The City of Philadelphia partnered with Enroll America to train city employees about the marketplace and ask all consumers coming to city offices whether they had health coverage and if they needed assistance enrolling.
- **Apply to become a Certified Application Counselor (CAC) designated organization** and have staff trained to become CACs to provide assistance in city/county facilities. You can apply to be a CAC organization at <https://marketplace.cms.gov/technical-assistance-resources/assister-programs/cac.html>.
 - Mayor of Perth Amboy, NJ, requested an ACA educational session from HHS staff to provide an overview of the ACA and the Marketplace, prior to the city becoming a Certified Application Counselor organization.
- **Use city/county call centers and action lines** to refer consumers to enrollment assistance locations.
 - In the City of Austin, the healthcare district in Travis County used paid media to direct consumers to the local 211 call center, which in turn identified the closest location where consumers can get assistance to enroll.
 - In the City of Chicago, the 311 helpline asks callers about their health insurance status and schedules appointments for them through the “Get Covered” Illinois scheduler.

- Leverage City Offices to Conduct Outreach to Consumers**
 - In the City of Chicago, the Department of Public Health included navigators at Flu Shot events with City Aldermen, and included information about enrollment at Chicago Police Department community events.

- Include informational inserts in regular mailings to residents.**
 - The Cities of Milwaukee and Houston included a one-page insert about the Health Insurance Marketplace in their monthly water bill mailing to all city residents.
 - The Chicago Housing Authority regularly emailed all its housing residents about enrollment deadlines and how to enroll.

- Host a press conference before open enrollment or large enrollment events** to let constituents know about upcoming enrollment opportunities and generate earned media. In addition, include information on the Marketplace at other events to continue to push the message.
 - Mayor of Chicago hosted a press conference with consumers to kick off the enrollment period.

- Add enrollment information, location, and times to public calendars and public signage.** Include information about where to find local assistance as well as the national 1-800 number on any city/county websites.
 - Milwaukee County added information on their website and a 1-800 number to electronic signage on county buses and electronic signs at the county zoo to inform residents about where to sign up and get assistance.

- Work with the local school district and PTA** to include information for parents through school newsletters, back-to-school events, open houses and take home pamphlets.
 - The Los Angeles Unified School District provided a backpack-stuffer for all students to take home asking “Am I Covered?” and provided information for parents on where to get assistance enrolling.

- Record a PSA encouraging constituents to enroll** in the Marketplace and work with local television and radio stations to air the announcements.
 - Multnomah County, OR Commissioner recorded a radio spot that aired on radio stations throughout the county.

- Use emails, newsletters, and telephone networks** to reach constituents with enrollment information.
 - Mayor of Atlanta recorded and sent a targeted automated call to constituents letting them know about the opportunity to enroll in health coverage.

- Serve as “door openers” or conveners** for city, county, or regional roundtables targeting special populations, chambers of commerce, school boards, and hard-to-reach entities.
 - Mayor of Orlando hosted a faith leaders breakfast with over 60 local interdenominational leaders who each provided a written commitment for specific actions (hosting enrollment events; providing information in church bulletins, etc.) to support local enrollment efforts.

How Mayors Can Work with a Community Coalition to Enroll Constituents in Health Coverage

One of the most important roles that mayors have played during past open enrollment periods was to convene and support local coalitions of business leaders, non-profit organizations, and health care providers, in order to coordinate on outreach and enrollment strategies. It is critical to maintain and strengthen these coalitions and continue the outreach work in the community, as we move into the next open enrollment.

Keys to a successful enrollment coalition:

- **Local leadership** – As a leader within your community, your participation can help elevate the work of the coalition. Designate a staff member to be the primary point of contact for the coalition, and utilize your communications staff and infrastructure to support press efforts.
- **Broad representation** – The most effective coalitions have representatives from all the relevant partners; a suggested list of organizations is below. Think beyond healthcare stakeholders!
- **Communication** – Many coalitions benefited from regular communications leading up to and during open enrollment. Weekly meetings or calls and portals for group collaboration (shared calendars, access to shared data, regular reports) helped regions divide responsibilities and reduce duplicative efforts.

Some organizations and partners to consider:

- Hospitals
- Chamber of Commerce
- Insurance brokers
- Grassroots organizations like Enroll America, Organizing for Action, Planned Parenthood
- Labor unions
- Faith leaders and interfaith coalitions
- Community Health Centers
- Community Recreation Centers, such as YMCA, JCC, and others
- Children’s Day Care providers, such as Head Start, or others
- Healthcare providers or organizations, such as doctors, nurses, or social workers
- Colleges and universities including community colleges and technical colleges
- Fraternities and sororities
- Representation from key populations specific to the local community
- Public school district representatives
- Libraries
- Food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens
- Farmers markets
- Local/Regional festivals
- Your [HHS Regional Office](#)

Examples:

In 2013, King County Executive organized a “[Leadership Circle](#)” from business, labor, education, healthcare and community organizations to lead outreach in their sectors, advise him on the enrollment initiative, and help shape outreach strategies. He appointed three co-chairs from the health, business, and non-profit sectors and the group began planning communications and outreach eight months before enrollment began.

In 2013, the City of Houston set up the Gulf Coast Collaborative, modeled on an emergency management response system with community-based partners to coordinate enrollment initiatives. The City Department of Health and Human Services coordinated across the diverse group of partners to share information and maximize efforts on training, communications, data, and logistics.

How Mayors Can Use Enrollment Events to Help Enroll Constituents in Health Coverage

While many constituents will enroll online at healthcare.gov or through the call center at 1-800-318-2596, many will want in-person assistance to help explain their coverage options and walk through the enrollment process. One way to help connect constituents to this assistance is by hosting enrollment events. Below are some tips on how to host a successful enrollment event.

Hold an enrollment event

- Decide what type of enrollment activity you will host. You can host information-only sessions, town halls where constituents can ask questions of experts, open houses where constituents can walk in to meet with an assister, or an event where advanced registration is required.
- It can be helpful to integrate Marketplace information and enrollment into appropriate existing community events, to take advantage of a built-in audience and shared logistical support.
- Planning enrollment events can take time – most have found that planning four weeks in advance of the event provides adequate time to coordinate logistics, volunteers and promotion.

Location and timing

- The ideal location is one that is easy to access, has ample parking, and is recognizable to the community. Libraries, recreation centers, sports complexes and city or county hall can be ideal locations to host events. Many hospitals also have space available for use.
- Ensure that there are adequate safeguards (physical and electronic) in place to protect consumers' information, and that there is strong internet connection at the site. Have a backup internet connection plan (such as air cards).
- Events that reach the most constituents are held either in the evening or on weekends.
- The best venues have multiple spaces to meet the different needs of consumers, such as a room for a video or PowerPoint presentation on the marketplace while consumers wait, computer banks for group account creation, and a one-on-one room for enrollment appointments.

Materials & Assisters

- It is helpful to provide attendees with an enrollment checklist ([available online](#)) in advance of the event so they can come prepared with the necessary information and documentation.
- You will need computers with Internet access for constituents to enroll and a way for consumers to print the pertinent information from their enrollment when completed.
- Identify local assisters at <https://localhelp.healthcare.gov/> or work with your [HHS regional office](#) to confirm CAC and Navigator support for your event.

Promoting the event

- Partner with local media outlets such as local television or radio stations to help spread the word and increase attendance. Use your social media channels to promote the event.
- Identify event spokespeople who speak the language of the intended audience.
- Enlist known local leaders or celebrities to attend or promote the event.
- Encourage attendees to create an email address and an online account at HealthCare.Gov before the event to reduce their waiting time on site.

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