



Communications and Outreach: A Tip Sheet for 21st CCLC State Coordinators

This tip sheet is based on the themes explored in a Y4Y Showcase Webinar, [Talk: How to Create and Deliver Effective Communications and Outreach](#). The webinar discusses best practices and strategies for communications and outreach to help 21st CCLC professionals examine and refine how they talk with their audiences. The U.S. Department of Education's Y4Y Technical Assistance team shares the discussion with three guests: Brittany Miller, staff coach at YouthQuest Afterschool Initiative in Michigan; Christine Schmidt Redline, director of BEE SMART (Baltimore Environmental Education Summer Math and Reading Trailblazers) in Maryland; and Dr. Rafael Inoa, professor at Kean University and a 21st CCLC program evaluator in New Jersey.

Here are some tips for improving communications and outreach for the 21st CCLC program in your state:

Create a Communications Plan

- **Be intentional about communications.** To communicate with department of education colleagues, program and site staff, school and district staff, partners, and funders, determine the frequency and formats of your communications, and deliver your messages on schedule.
- **Provide ways to communicate with you.** Have open-door policies for in-person and virtual messages so you know what's important to audiences and can respond to their needs.

Be Visible

- **Participate in events and meetings.** Choose ones that will inform your work and help you support the work of others. Engage with colleagues and leaders in the department of education and other state agencies. Build relationships with grantees, funders, technical assistance providers and evaluators to share data, strategies and the 21st CCLC mission.
- **Motivate and support program and site staff to be visible in their communities.** For example, the BEE SMART program in Maryland achieved 95 percent family engagement after it hired a bilingual family liaison to support effective communications with Spanish-speaking families. Refine RFP and grant packages to suggest or support effective practices. The YouthQuest staff coach in Michigan said, "Being visible in my building got buy-in from [the] administration of my school, my superintendent [and] my principal...because they saw me being a very visible, working piece of that machine."

Provide Professional Learning

- As YouthQuest's Brittany Miller said, "With Y4Y resources, people feel like you're giving them knowledge and resources. They feel like they can change the world." At state or regional 21st CCLC events, take advantage of Y4Y resources such as these:
 - **Provide cultural competence training.** As Rafael Inoa said during the Talk webinar, "First impressions are very important. Remember three things: Language, culture and lifestyle." He also noted, "Every culture has power. We can always learn from other beliefs, behaviors and attitudes — the program should be a judgment-free zone." Find cultural competence resources in the Train section of Y4Y [Family Engagement course tools](#).
 - **Provide training on communicating with staff.** Good communications skills improve the program climate and culture, thereby improving job satisfaction and reducing turnover. See the [Introduction to Staff Handbook Training to Go](#) in the Y4Y Managing Your 21st CCLC Program course.
 - **Provide training on communicating with program audiences.** See Critical Task 10 in the [Program Planning Checklist](#) from the Y4Y Managing Your 21st CCLC Program course for step-by-step guidance on creating a communications plan. To help grantees use social media effectively (all webinar guests stressed the importance of this), invite technology specialists to present on ways to use free or low-cost tools that share stories and deliver information efficiently.
- **Recommend that grantees watch the archived webinar.** The next time you send scheduled news and updates to grantees, let them know about the good ideas and research-based tools and information in [Talk: How to Create and Deliver Effective Communications and Outreach](#).

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