

Points for Consideration: Planning a Community Forum

The most important piece of the Forum's agenda is to guide it towards your audience. If you have a mixed audience of neighborhood folks (some service providers, some business owners, some parents), you want to be able to provide some basic information of how your system works under mandates and how you would like to change the way families are served with the help of the community partners through F2F concepts.

In order to build credibility with your community, these forums must be held regularly (quarterly or biannually) to respond to your community's desire to stay informed. Each forum should be based upon your community's response to the preceding forum. (i.e. Audience asked a lot of questions about hotline calls, investigations, or specific neighborhood issues-increased juvenile arrests, trends in drug use, etc.)

***Remember: KEEP IT SIMPLE, CLEAR, AND CONCISE!**

Helpful hints to keep you on track:

- Identify the neighborhood for your Forum based upon your geographic data. Identify a key community leader/stakeholder in the targeted neighborhood and begin planning the event in partnership. The Forum should be hosted in the target area and co-presented by a neighborhood stakeholder. The neighborhood will respond to an invitation and a presentation for support by a trusted established leader within their community. It is essential for the Forum to be perceived as a community event in partnership with the child welfare agency to guarantee its success rather than a "child welfare" event held in the neighborhood.
- Provide the audience with flyers or written materials containing basic agency information. (Office locations, addresses, phone numbers, agency descriptions of departments, roles, etc) Most likely this material already exists. If it helps, break it down geographically by neighborhood.
- Highlight neighborhood data using brightly colored inserts. Keep it