



**NEIGHBORHOOD  
CONNECTIONS**

**Sustainability**

## Neighborhood Connections is a success! How do we sustain it?

So you've debuted Neighborhood Connections and are already receiving positive feedback from your community. Now comes the next challenge. How do you ensure the continuity of the program? The Azusa City Library found initial success with this program. Yet without a Friends of the Library or Library Foundation, it was difficult to secure funding and its future was tentative. This is a dilemma facing many libraries. Our services are continuously increasing and evolving to meet current needs, however additional services are rarely matched with more resources. Our Library administration advocated for funding from the start. Various sectors (including the city's own police department) increasingly voiced their support as well. As a result, the CRS position, once grant funded, became part of the general library budget. What follows are additional options, including strategies we've used to help sustain our own program.

*It would be wise to discuss funding before launching Neighborhood Connections. In fact, the best time to begin is when you develop your outreach and marketing techniques. You will need to make presentations to community groups and partners. Always keep in mind there might be possible donors in the audience. The [Library Outreach Chart](#) will help you identify partners and potential donors.*

### Some tips to keep in mind:

#### ***Who will you approach?***

Each community has identifiable stakeholders. These may be individuals or groups. Make a list of service groups, University departments and faculty members, local non-profits, and businesses. We were fortunate to be located near a large university with a thriving Social Work Department as well as a community counseling center, and a supportive YWCA. While they were not able to donate monetarily, they assembled students and interns to work on compiling resource guides and marketing materials for the Library. Additionally, when it came time to recruit for a paid CRS position, the Social Work Department helped spread the word which yielded us a highly qualified pool of candidates.



***Look to local foundations and corporations that routinely award community grants.***

#### ***What is your message?***

Prepare for your pitch by researching your audience. If you're speaking to local businesses, you can use the workforce development strategy. Your program will help individuals find employment or connect them to training resources. If you're speaking to university faculty, perhaps you can offer their students internship opportunities. Many foundations are interested in community engagement. This is an ideal program to bring to their attention. Research your audience and craft your message accordingly. Use the [Library Outreach Chart](#) for tips on how to tailor your message.

#### ***What should my presentation look like?***

Anecdotes and case studies are very effective. Use videos, multimedia, and a great deal of show and tell. Numbers are helpful, but try not to inundate the audience. Begin with a total number of participants your program has helped, including a breakdown of topics (i.e. housing, employment, mental health resources). This was an effective strategy for our presentations. Always include success stories with stark facts. While this program can help many, more resources are essential to continue the work.

## ***Who will present?***

The CRS needs to be part of the outreach effort. This is the key staff member at the center of Neighborhood Connections and can best relay the dynamics of the program. Library management should also be included to show that there is support at the highest level. Our CRS has often presented with members of our local police department or County officials. Presenting with partners reinforces that this program involves different stakeholders in the community.