



**NEIGHBORHOOD
CONNECTIONS**

Guide to Outreach

Outreach: How will you describe the program?

Neighborhood Connections is simply a resource referral program. It is not a case management program. However, participants will receive intensive assistance. Keep the message short. Remind participants that the CRS won't be with them every step of the way, but they will be available for follow up visits.



Remember your audience

Just as with all programs and initiatives, you will need to promote Neighborhood Connections based on your audience. Let's review some talking points.

Neighborhood Connections helps with:

- **Housing assistance** The CRS has a broad knowledge of housing resources such as emergency homeless or domestic abuse shelters, low-cost housing assistance for single adults or families with young children, or information on how to obtain temporary vouchers. One patron may need immediate shelter. Another patron might have housing but is facing eviction or in dispute with a landlord. The CRS can't intervene in these situations, but they can connect the participant with the necessary channels.
- **Veterans services** Many veterans are not able or don't know how to access resources they are entitled to such as medical care, housing, and financial benefits. The CRS can connect these veterans to services that are already available to them.
- **Substance abuse** The CRS cannot provide treatment or counseling, however he/she can direct individuals to the services they need to turn their life around. A fully-trained CRS will know how one can gain access to county and state resources and health facilities.
- **Elder care** Families are struggling with finding appropriate care for aging relatives. Medical care, assisted living facilities, and living trusts are frequent questions fielded by library staff. These are topics that require in-depth knowledge and cannot always be answered during a quick trip to the Library.
- **Food/clothes banks** Many families are living below the poverty line. Are there food banks and nutrition centers that also provide essential supplies? Some families need assistance during back to school month (school supplies, backpacks, clothes) or around the holiday season. The CRS will have an up to date list of relevant information and community-wide events.
- **Legal aid referrals** Some legal questions go beyond the scope that books and online resources can provide. Additionally, some patrons need a lawyer's expertise but are limited in funds and don't know where to begin a search for a qualified attorney. There are legal aid foundations ready to help. The challenge is to connect patrons to affordable services.
- **Workforce development** Job searches, resumes, online tests and applications. These are standard questions patrons have when visiting the library. Some are rejoining the workforce after long gaps while others may be applying for their first job. One patron may need a basic tutorial on resumes. Another may have to file for unemployment benefits in between jobs. These can be time consuming tasks but the CRS is there ready to assist.



Keep it simple!

We were buoyed by the instant success of Neighborhood Connections. The positive feedback we received and our results compelled us to promote the program whenever possible. However we were able to best relay our message by isolating a few simple talking points.

This is the format we used:

1. Background

Patrons are coming into the Library seeking how to improve their lives.

2. Challenge

Finding housing, health care, and legal aid is frustrating for many. Many don't know what services exist. Many don't know how to navigate through complicated procedures nor do they have extensive online skills for in-depth research.

3. Solution

Visit a Community Resource Specialist at the Library. Neighborhood Connections is ready to assist.

4. Success

Talk about your success stories. Anecdotes bring your talking points to life. Perhaps it was a veteran experiencing homelessness for years before finally being able to access his benefits. Maybe you were able to help a family stave off an eviction by connecting them to the appropriate legal help.

5. Ask

Now is the chance to ask the audience to support your program. Should they donate, volunteer, or spread the word?

Example:

California libraries are struggling with the effects of rising homelessness and poverty. In addition, the library is seen as a safe zone for many individuals who have "fallen through the cracks". They seek help first at their local public library. Our staff helps patrons as much as possible, but some questions ("Can I afford mental health care?" "How do I apply for a green card?") require in-depth research and a higher level of guidance. This is why we offer Neighborhood Connections.

We helped a single mother create her resume, apply for jobs online, and now she's working and turning her life around. We helped a gentleman suffering from mental illness find low-cost medication and counseling through county services.

We'd like to help even more people and share more success stories. Help us spread the word.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION SURVEY

1. How familiar are you with the services offered at the Azusa City Library? (Circle one)

- not familiar
- somewhat familiar
- very familiar

2. Have you ever given a referral to or received a referral from the Azusa City Library?

- yes
- no

3. For what resource?

- ESL classes
- Employment (resume, job search, etc.)
- Citizenship/Residency Assistance
- Housing
- Medical services
- Food
- _____

4. What do you consider to be a primary strength of your organization?

5. How might you be interested in partnering with the Azusa City Library?

- share a presentation about your organization's services
- joint program or class with the Community Resource Specialist
- sharing promotional material, such as flyers, pamphlets, and posters
- sharing a Community Resource Specialist (resources & funding)
- other:

Please list your name and contact information (your information will not be shared).

Name:

Organization:

Phone Number:

Email:

1. How have you partnered with the Azusa City Library this year?

- share a presentation about your organization's services
- joint program or class with the Community Resource Specialist
- sharing promotional material, such as flyers, pamphlets, and posters
- sharing a Community Resource Specialist (resources & funding)
- other: _____

2. How many people have you referred to the Community Resource Specialist this year?

_____ For what services?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESL classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment (resume, job search, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Residency Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Food |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

3. How many people have been referred to you from the Azusa City Library this year?

_____ For what services?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESL classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment (resume, job search, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Residency Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Food |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

4. On a scale of 1 - 10, how has your delivery of services been impacted by partnering with the Azusa City Library through the Community Resource Specialist?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
very negative			no impact				very positive		

5. What are the next steps that you would like to take to further develop your partnership with the Azusa City Library?

Name:

Organization:

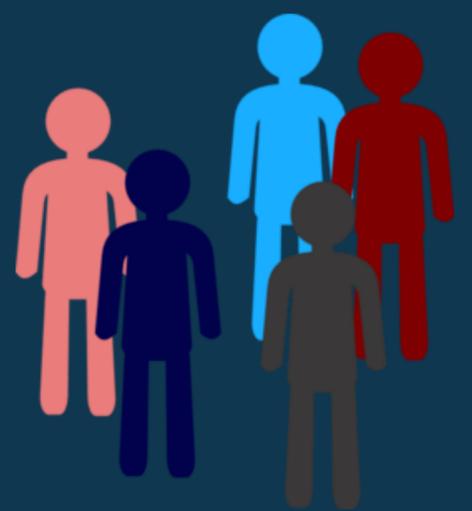
Phone Number:

Email:

SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE AT THE LIBRARY

If you need help with:

- e Government
- Legal Aid
- Employment
- Housing
- Veterans Services
- Health Care
- Citizenship
- Mental Health
- Elder Care
- Food/Clothing



Contact our Community Resource
Specialist for a confidential
appointment. Visit the Information
Desk or call the Azusa City Library at
(626) 812-5268.

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR ARE YOU AT-RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS?

IF YOU ARE A FAMILY: Dial “2-1-1” and request an appointment with one of the Regional Family Solutions Centers.

IF YOU ARE A VETERAN: Contact the veteran services hotline: 877.424.3838

For local resources & information regarding: Employment, housing, healthcare education citizenship, family services, senior services or food make an appointment with the Azusa City Library’s Community Resource Specialist at: **626.812.5100**.

**Turn this card over,
for further assistance and information**

For off hours assistance call - “2-1-1”



If you are an individual: Contact the “CES Intake Site” Closest to you:

WEST SG VALLEY:

Union Station - 412 S Raymond Ave, Pasadena, CA– 626.791.6610

M-F: 7am - 5:30pm

Friends in Deed - 444 E Washington Blvd, Pasadena, CA-626.797.2402

M-W: 9am - 5pm Th:9am - 2pm

Foothill Unity Ctr - 191 N Oak Ave, Pasadena, CA-626.584.7420

M-W: 9am - 5pm

CENTRAL SG VALLEY:

Arcadia Mental Health - 330 E Live Oak Ave, Arcadia, CA- 626.821.5858

W: 8am - 5:30pm

VOALA El Monte - 4501 Santa Anita Ave, El Monte, CA – 626.442.4357

M-F: 9am - 5pm

Foothill Unity Ctr - 415 W Chestnut Ave, Monrovia, CA - 626.358.3486

M-W: 9am - 5pm

EAST SG VALLEY:

VOALA Pomona - 2040 N Garey Ave, Pomona, CA– 909.593.4796

M-F: 9am - 5pm

FOR OFF HOURS ASSISTANCE CALL: “2-1-1”

The Press Release

Libraries are often innovating and creating, rolling out quality programs for the community and looking to address unmet needs. Besides funding, one obstacle has been conducting a large scale marketing campaign. Along with outreach visits, tabling at community fairs, and citywide presentations, staff has also found it necessary to send out news releases to local press publications. Our goal is to get our program highlighted to alert potential program participants to this new service and create new partnerships. We found that in order to stand out, we needed to frame our releases with a timely and unique point of view.

Here are some ideas:

Heading:

1. We included the name of the program “**Neighborhood Connections**” along with our logo. The goal here was to immediately brand the program and help it stand out in the minds of the readers (and journalists).
2. The document, limited to one page, was titled **Press Release**, followed by **For Immediate Release** on the next line.
3. Contact info was prominently displayed.

Content:

4. Typically we would follow with a headline. Because Neighborhood Connections is a dynamic program assisting all kinds of needs, the headline can change depending on the type of news release and the intended audience. However, one general headline we used was “*Library program provides hope for many.*”
5. The next step would be to provide the location—City, State and the date.
6. The body of the paragraph would begin with a specific story of someone we had helped through the program. Consider all the success stories you’ve logged or, if you haven’t started the program yet, all those you seek to help. For example, one of our program goals from the beginning was to assist veterans with finding housing and accessing benefits. Leading up to Veterans Day , we issued a press release highlighting this mission.
7. Including quotes and personal accounts helped bolster the story. Because of the human relations aspect of Neighborhood Connections, background stories of the participants, with their permission of course, were necessary to convey the significance of the program.

8. Additional examples:

“Not just for books anymore, how one Library is giving those experiencing homelessness a new lease on life”

“Library takes the lead in addressing unemployment.”

9. Always include a brief description of the program and Library contact information at the end of the news release.

10. Notes to the editor: We’ve found that photos, especially photos of what a session with a Community Resource Specialist would look like, were helpful in relaying the message. This would be denoted by a “Note to the Editor”, also included at the end of the release.

In closing:

11. Send the story to specific journalists with a personalized email. Ensure you have an appropriate amount of lead time for a special event or a uniquely timed release (for many of our outlets 14 days is sufficient).

12. Be sure to include a catchy subject line in an email.

13. Paste the release and include it as a PDF attachment, along with any photos.

14. A follow-up call can be helpful, however it is only recommended to initially establish a relationship with the journalist or confirm that stories promoting special events have been received.



Azusa City Library
729 N. Dalton Street
Azusa CA 91702
www.ci.azusa.ca.us/library

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

**THE AZUSA CITY LIBRARY IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE
NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS, A NEW SOCIAL SERVICE
ASSISTANCE AND REFERRAL PROGRAM**

Azusa, CA

According to the U.S. Census, one-fifth of Azusa residents live in poverty, one-quarter lack health insurance, and over 80% lack a four-year college degree. These percentages are all significantly higher than the California averages. In order to address these community needs, the Azusa City Library is proud to announce the start of *Neighborhood Connections*, a new social service assistance and referral program. Library visitors seeking access to information about employment, health care, education, housing and other social services can now make an appointment with a Community Resource Specialist to get connected to local organizations that offer a helping hand. The library is seeking to bridge the gap between service providers and residents who need them most.

Appointments are confidential and are available in English and Spanish. For more information, call (626) 812-5100, or email _____.