



Communicating with Service Providers

NORC Ambassador Groups thrive when resident leaders and their neighbours identify needs and interests in their building. These needs and interests can inform new activities, events, and programs you may want to start up in your building. Many of these activities build off the skills, abilities and knowledge of neighbours. But what if your group needs to find expertise outside of your building to meet residents' needs? That is the time to seek out the resources of a local service provider that can support aging in place. Here are some tips for making a positive connection.

Reaching Out to a Service Provider

1. Designate a champion

Find an Ambassador or other volunteer in your building who will initiate contact and be the primary point person for communication. This will ensure that a service provider is not being contacted by multiple people from the group and streamline the efforts of you and your neighbours

2. Be specific

Be prepared to share with the provider what you would like from them. Is it a guest speaker to discuss a specific topic of interest to residents? Do you want someone to deliver a program at your building? Are you paying money for the service or do you want the service for free?

3. Check out the NORC Partner Resource List

We have connected with some service providers that have agreed to facilitate education/workshops and support to your program. If there is a match, you are well on your way to making a good contact with a provider that can assist. If not, then go to step 4.

4. Seek out Providers

If you need to search for a service provider, then using an information template will be very helpful to fill in important information you need to get when you make contact. [See the **Service Provider Information Sheet**].

There are excellent websites to seek out services including 211 which is a central database of services across the province. You can find their website here [211 Ontario](#) or the Ontario Health Team website [Ontario Health](#)

5. Logistics

Review the following considerations: Where will your program take place; how many people do you expect will be at your activity; do you have tables and chairs; are there any technology requirements that might benefit the activity (i.e., use of a big screen television for presentation materials). This detailed information will be important for you to know should there be any COVID protocols in place for capacity. Also, these details will help your new partner know how many people they can expect.

6. About You

Be prepared to share an overview of what your group is, what your vision and purpose are, and a little bit about you as your group's champion.

7. About the Provider

Read through the service provider's 'About Us' section. If your group's interests/needs don't pop up reading through the About Us section, you can scan the headings on the provider's website and search for a Resource or Programs heading.

8. Be Prepared to Say Yes

Before you make contact, be clear about whether you can say yes to the service provider in the meeting or if you are gathering information to take back to your group to consider. In other words, understand the purpose of the meeting you are having with the provider.

9. Make Contact.

Some providers have an online portal to fill in a request for a meeting or programs, while others might have a staff person that deals directly with the community. If you are using an online portal or an email here is an example for you to consider using.

Sample Introductory Email:

Hello, I'm a resident at [insert address]. I am working with my neighbours to identify ways we can help strengthen our community by enhancing residents' capacity to age in place.

Our neighbours have identified that [insert subject] is something they would like to see happen in the building OR is something they would like to learn more about. I would be interested in talking to you about how [Provider Name] could provide support to our resident run groups in these communities.

I will leave a link here that describes the value of aging in place programs a little more and hope we can connect to chat soon. Thanks so much.

[NORC Innovation Centre](#)

10. They said Yes!

Be prepared to provide your name, position (if applicable), your email address and phone number as a contact person for the provider.

11. Send a Thank You!

Good relationships with external providers are based on trust and respect. So get off to a good start and thank the person who has emailed you back or met with you. After they have delivered a service, you may want to consider a small gift or token of your group's appreciation for their attendance.

Opportunities for Learning!

Many providers have opportunities for seniors to volunteer, get trained and become trainers themselves! Be open to hearing about opportunities that your group may not have explored but may be of interest to your group.