

# Runaway and Homeless Youth Training & Technical Assistance Center

## Tip Sheet: Community Education

### What is Community Education?

Community Education plays a critical role in educating the public about RHY services, and about issues specific to runaway and homeless youth. It is an opportunity to connect with stakeholders in your community to discuss the need for services in your area and to leverage their support for your program as well as youth and families in need of services. Community Education activities include participation in community activities as well as presentations to stakeholders in group settings and on an individual basis.

Remember “before you can attract and serve others, you must make it clear to them- and yourself- what you can offer them.” – Rick Crandall, 1001 Ways to Market Your Services: Even If You Hate to Sell.

### Why Conduct Community Education Activities?

It is key to increasing referral resources for youth.

It will ensure community members know what services are available, who is eligible, and how they can access services.

It provides the chance for community members to ask questions about RHY issues.

It presents an opportunity to discuss benefits of your program for both the community and the youth/families served.

It provides an opportunity to build political and civil support for the program

### What Does Community Education Look Like In Practice?

Formal and informal presentations to community members at community fairs, PTA meetings, law enforcement, social service providers, schools, health and mental health care providers, local government officials, civic organizations, etc.

Promotion of the availability of services through television, radio, newsprint, internet, flyers and promotional materials, etc.

Collecting email addresses and phone numbers during public events and meetings in order to forward written and electronic information about your program services.

Dissemination of information about your program in a variety of ways - internet, bus signage, pod casts, videos, news articles, etc.



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(p) 888.290.7233

(w) [rhyttac.net](http://rhyttac.net)

(e) [info@rhyttac.net](mailto:info@rhyttac.net)

(fb) /rhyttac

(tw) @rhyttac

### NSPN

2429 Crittenden Drive  
Louisville, KY 40217

(w) [nspnetwork.org](http://nspnetwork.org)

(e) [info@nspnetwork.org](mailto:info@nspnetwork.org)

(fb) /nspnetwork

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(fb) /rhyttac  
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2429 Crittenden Drive  
Louisville, KY 40217  
(w) [nspnetwork.org](http://nspnetwork.org)  
(e) [info@nspnetwork.org](mailto:info@nspnetwork.org)  
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Runaway and Homeless  
Youth Training & Technical  
Assistance Center

Operated by:



## Who Does Community Education?

**Board Members and Executive Management/Administration** should be familiar with all aspects of the program and provided opportunities to describe the program to the community at large. Board members should be encouraged to visit the program and participate in community education activities and other outreach activities.

**Agency and Program Staff at all levels and from all programs of the organization** should be familiar with the agency's programs and services, and staff should understand the agency's expectations and their role in promoting the RHY program in the community.

**Alumni of the program (both youth and families)** that have accessed services and know how the program provided opportunities for them to succeed.

**Community partners/organizations** that distribute information and make referrals to youth who may be in need of RHY services.

## Critical Elements of Community Education

It must be deliberate and planned- if it is not written and planned programs often focus on the immediate services to youth and forget to ensure the community knows about their services.

Have up-to-date materials to ensure key points of service availability, access, and eligibility are clear and consistent.

Regularly update all board members, staff and alumni members on the types of services your agency providers - they must know your services to be community educators.

Maintain a calendar of community events and opportunities for presentations, and assign staff or board members, alumni to attend and present on behalf of your organization.

## For more information or to request technical assistance on Community Education:

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