

CAL RIPKEN, SR. FOUNDATION

BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIP

The *Badges for Baseball* program was created in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice in an effort to reach children residing in underserved communities and to help bridge the gap between youth and law enforcement. With that in mind, law enforcement support and participation is critical to the success of the *Badges for Baseball* program. As a law enforcement agency participating in the *Badges for Baseball* program, you will need to build strong relationships with community-based organizations (CBO) as they will be your partners in the program. CBOs serve their community in order to affect positive change in them. The following tips are provided to assist you in developing and maintaining those relationships.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- **Identify and contact the community-based organizations in your area.**
 - We recommend that you start with the senior leadership at the CBOs in your area as a first step in engagement. You will have more success in building your partnership if you have the support and buy-in of the executive staff from the start.
- **Explain the benefits of participating in the *Badges for Baseball* program.**
 - Provide a thorough explanation of the *Badges for Baseball* program; offer materials related to *Badges for Baseball* – found on www.ripkenfoundation.org/resource-portal or *Badges for Baseball* Resource Guide.
 - Stress the benefits of adding another level of community engagement, youth mentoring, and positive press through their participation in *Badges for Baseball*. Many CBOs welcome opportunities to build positive relationships with the local law agencies in the communities they serve.
 - Recognize that most CBOs do not have funding to support outside programs. They should know from the start that their participation will not require additional funds.
- **Plan a visit to your local community-based organization.**
 - This serves as a great opportunity to build a relationship with your local CBO and allows them to get to know your staff and your agency, and more importantly, you can interact with the kids they serve.
- **Be an open and engaged partner from the beginning.**
 - Learn what challenges their organization and their kids face in the community and how you might be able to work together to mitigate those challenges through *Badges for Baseball*.
 - Discuss long-term plans and goals for both organizations.
- **Assign a main point of contact to be the liaison for your agency and community-based organizations.**
 - This person should be in constant contact with the CBO, keeping them updated on events, programming, and other details related to the program (i.e. If youth are having a problem that officers should know about ahead of time, keep CBO in the loop).
- **Create a schedule at the beginning of the program and stick to it.**
 - Most CBOs run multiple programs at their organization, so they will need to know in advance when you plan to implement your *Badges for Baseball* program.
- **Properly utilize staff at the community-based organization as additional coaches and mentors in the *Badges for Baseball* program.**
 - The intent behind the program is to build relationships between officers and youth. While your officers should play a key role in delivering the curriculum, find ways to include the staff at your local CBO. Meaningful interactions with caring adults allows youth to form more positive and trusting relationships ultimately aiding them in becoming successful in their endeavors.



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TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES, CHANGE KIDS' LIVES

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Ensuring good communication is the single most important thing you can do as a law enforcement agency to maintain solid relationships with your community-based organization.
- Include CBO in activities and events beyond *Badges for Baseball* year-round.
 - Ask them if you can assist in any other programs they offer.
 - Ask them for input on other community engagement opportunities – you might be surprised at the ideas they have.
- As always - stick to the schedule!

ONE FINAL THOUGHT

One of the frequent questions we hear from law enforcement agencies is: “Are Boys & Girls Clubs the only CBOs we can reach out to?” No! Any community-based organization in your area can assist with your program and serve as an added resource in your efforts to recruit and positively impact youth. If you find that additional support is difficult to identify, get creative by reaching out to your local church groups, schools, colleges, professional sports teams, YMCAs, and recreation centers. At the end of the day, it’s all about providing youth with opportunities to be around positive role models!

