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# **DIMENSION III:**

## **Inclusion-centered Leadership Practices in Building Community Partnerships Module**

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## THEME 2

# Deepening Library Relationships with Local Government Agencies

### Introduction

You have the opportunity to rewrite the narrative and assumptions that government agencies may have about your library. Eighty-six percent (86%) of public libraries receive some amount of funding from their local governments. This is acknowledgement that government officials understand the role and value of public libraries. They understand the library is an essential institution that can have a vital role in addressing actionable science issues, community resilience, and overall wellbeing.

### Discover

Public libraries and government agencies often collaborate to enhance community services, maximize resources, and address local needs. Here are some real-world examples of such partnerships:

#### 1. Digital Literacy Programs

##### **EXAMPLE: Libraries partnering with local government technology initiatives**

- **Program:** A city government collaborates with their public library to provide digital literacy workshops, helping residents learn essential computer skills, navigate the internet safely, and use government e-services.
- **Impact:** Increases digital inclusion and ensures residents can access online resources.

#### 2. Job Training and Employment Services

##### **EXAMPLE: Workforce development partnerships.**

- **Program:** A public library teams up with local employment agencies to offer job training sessions, resume-building workshops, and job fairs.
- **Impact:** Assists job seekers in improving their employability and connecting with potential employers.

#### 3. Health and Wellness Initiatives

##### **EXAMPLE: Public health collaborations**

- **Program:** A library partners with a local health department to provide health screenings, vaccination clinics, and informational sessions on public health issues.
- **Impact:** Enhances public access to health services and education, contributing to a healthier community.

#### 4. Early Childhood Education and Literacy

##### **EXAMPLE: Collaborations with early childhood programs**

- **Program:** A library works with local government early childhood programs to offer story times, parent-child workshops, and book lending services tailored for young children.
- **Impact:** Supports early literacy and school readiness for young children.

#### 5. Disaster Preparedness and Recovery

##### **EXAMPLE: Emergency management partnerships**

- **Program:** A library partners with emergency management agencies to serve as information hubs during disasters, offering resources on preparedness, response, and recovery.
- **Impact:** Provides critical information and support to the community during emergencies.

#### 6. Civic Engagement and Voter Education

##### **EXAMPLE: Collaborations with election offices**

- **Program:** A library collaborates with their local election board to provide voter registration drives, informational sessions on voting procedures, and serve as polling stations.
- **Impact:** Encourages civic participation, and ensures residents are informed about the voting process.

#### 7. Environmental Sustainability Programs

##### **EXAMPLE: Partnerships with environmental agencies**

- **Program:** Public libraries team up with environmental protection agencies to host workshops on recycling, energy conservation, and sustainable living practices.
- **Impact:** Promotes environmental awareness, and encourages sustainable practices within the community.

#### 8. Housing Support Services

##### **EXAMPLE: Partnerships with housing and social services**

- **Program:** Libraries collaborate with local housing authorities and social services to provide resources and support for homeless individuals, including access to shelter information, social services, and job search assistance.
- **Impact:** Offers critical support and resources to vulnerable populations.

#### 9. Cultural and Recreational Programs

##### **EXAMPLE: Partnerships with parks and recreation departments**

- **Program:** Libraries partner with parks and recreation departments to offer cultural events, recreational activities, and community programs such as concerts, art exhibits, and fitness classes.
- **Impact:** Enriches the cultural and recreational life of the community.

#### 10. Legal Aid Services

##### **EXAMPLE: Collaborations with legal aid organizations**

- **Program:** Public libraries work with legal aid organizations to provide free legal clinics, workshops on tenants' rights, and information on navigating the legal system.
- **Impact:** Improves access to legal assistance and information for residents.

## WORKSHEET 2

# A Library Meet-and-Greet Tour with Government Agency Officials

### Objectives

- To create a seat at the table with a variety of local governmental agencies
- To promote the library as an essential community institution
- To diversify partnerships and collaborations with local government agencies who may be able to broaden community member participation and expand programs and services

### What You Need

- A copy of the *Library Meet-and-Greet Preparation Worksheet*
- A copy of your library's strategic and action plan
- Research and other background information you have collected on local government agencies and representatives

### Time

2-4 hours

### Discover

There are many ways that public libraries and government agencies can work together to address community needs and improve the quality of life of their residents.

Local government agencies need to believe and experience the fact that libraries do and can play a more vital role in their community's resilience and economic development.

The *Library Meet-and-Greet Preparation Worksheet* is designed for you to outline:

1. important background research and information of both the agency's strategic goals, programs, and services as well as the background and interests of the officials;
2. a partnership goals and objectives;
3. identification of appropriate overviews and informational materials;
4. talking points about the library that the government agency officials might find interesting;
5. key questions for you to ask that will encourage a discussion of mutual interests and directions for the community; and,
6. your thoughts post meeting including how the meeting went, how easy the conversation was, how prepared you were and their level of interest. Remember

this is truly a meet-and-greet if neither of you have ever met before. You will probably meet together for no more than one hour. Therefore, it will be important to be prepared to quickly broaden their perspectives of the library, help them see how the library might be of help to them, and agree that having a seat at the table will help disseminate information and connect members to other community supports.

### Instructions

On the *Library Meet-and-Greet Preparation Worksheet* complete the following steps:

#### STEP 1

##### Goal of the Meet-and-Greet

What 1-2 things do you want the local government agency to know about your library as an essential community institution? What are the 1-2 things you want to learn more about the local government agency, its programs and services, and its mission and vision? How will you know that this was a meaningful meet-and-greet? What are your definitions of success?

#### STEP 2

##### Gather Important Background Information of the Agency and its Officials

What is the name of government agency you are interested in meeting with? Gather background information on the current mission, vision, programs, and services of that government agency, and identify who is responsible for the creation and implementation. Identify key strategic goals and initiatives that the agency is currently focusing on that align with the vision of your library. Do you know, or do you know someone who knows, this(se) individual(s) that could give you additional information as well as possibly make introductions?

#### STEPS 3 & 4

##### Alignment of Library's and Government Agency's Goals and Objectives

**Goal:** Choose one goal that your local government agency is working on that aligns with a goal at your library (e.g., broadening participation, engagement with specific underserved community members, a specific actionable science issue).

**Objective:** Identify a measurable action that the library can pursue toward that overall goal. For example: The

library will partner with local emergency and public health agencies to assume the role of cooling facilities where and when needed to provide places for residents, especially the elderly, poor, or otherwise vulnerable, to come inside to cool off. The library wants to:

1. be seen by the community as a welcoming safe space to all;
2. broaden participation and use of the library to community member groups who normally do not use the library;
3. be directly recognized as an essential community institution; and,
4. want to expand services to provide support to these local government agencies in the dissemination of public health information and social services during a time of extreme heat.

## STEP 5

### Library Information That Will Resonate

Put together a library information packet of no more than three (3) documents that best convey critical information, such as:

1. measurable results and library data;
2. overview of your library that describes the types of programs and services that highlight why the library is and should be considered an essential community institution;
3. stories about who you serve and the benefits to the community; and,
4. a one-page outline of the vision and benefits of a deeper partnership and/or specific services your library can provide the government agency to positively reach their community goal.

## STEP 6

### How Can the Library Be of Service to the Government Agency

Broaden their perspectives of the library. Identify and prepare talking points to ensure the local government agency official(s) understands your library, your mission and vision, the power of your library and its staff, and who you serve and why.

## STEP 7

### Establish a Rapport

It will be important that you listen and understand their strategic goals, what they want to accomplish, and who they are as an agency and as individuals. List key questions that will allow you to learn more about them, their goals, their thoughts of the library, and possible interest in exploring a partnership around a shared community goal.

## STEP 8

### Schedule the Meet-and-Greet

Schedule a one-hour in-person (preferably) or virtual meeting. Give yourself the time and space to prepare for the meeting. Try to schedule the meeting during a day and time that is not your busiest as you want to be focused and engaged with the person you are meeting with. Location can be an opportunity for you to showcase the library, if the individual is interested in seeing the library in action. In these instances, be sure there is a program or service as well as a diverse group using the library, particularly adult users.

## STEP 9

### Reflect on the Results of the Meeting

Write down your thoughts post meeting including how the meeting went overall. Was it an engaging conversation? Was the information you compiled on the agency helpful? What other topics came up that you did not prepare for? Describe any other key observations. Describe the next steps the library and agency want to pursue. This reflection will help prepare you for the next meet-and-greet.



## LIBRARY MEET-AND-GREET PREPARATION WORKSHEET

### STEP 1: Goal of the Meet-and-Greet

What are 1-2 things you want the local government agency to know about your library as an essential community institution?

What are 1-2 things you want to learn more about the local government agency, its programs and services, and its mission and vision?

How will you know that this was a meaningful meet-and-greet? What are your definitions of success?

### STEP 2: Gather Important Background Information of the Agency and its Officials

Name of Government Agency:

Key strategic goals and initiatives that agency is currently focusing on that also align with your vision:

Name(s) of agency officials you want to meet:

Do you know, or do you know someone who knows, this(se) individual(s)?

### STEPS 3 & 4: Alignment of Library's and Government Agency's Goals and Objectives

**Goal:** Choose one goal that your local government agency is working on that aligns with a goal at your library (e.g., broadening participation, engagement with specific underserved community members, a specific actionable science issue).

**Objective:** Within the identified goal, identify measurable actions to achieve that overall goal.

### STEP 5: Library Information That Will Resonate

List no more than three (3) documents that best convey critical information (e.g., measurable results and library data, overview of your library defining the types of programs and services that highlight why the library is and should be considered an essential community institution). Provide stories about who you serve and the benefits to the community. Prepare a one-page outline of the vision and benefits of a deeper partnership and/or specific services your library can provide the government agency to positively reach their community goal.

## LIBRARY MEET-AND-GREET PREPARATION WORKSHEET (continued)

### STEP 6: How Can the Library Be of Service to the Government Agency

Your intent is to broaden their perspective of the library and how the library can be of service to the agency. Identify and list the key targeted talking points you want to make sure the local government agency official(s) understands about your library, your mission and vision, the power of the library as a place and its staff, who you serve and why.

### STEP 7: Sincerely Establish a Rapport

Begin to build and/or deepen the relationship by understanding the strategic goals, what do they want to accomplish, and who they are as an agency and as individuals. List key questions that will allow you to learn more about them, their goals, their thoughts of the library and possible interest in exploring a partnership around a shared community goal.

### STEP 8: Schedule the Meet-and-Greet

Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 9: Reflect on The Results of the Meeting

Write down your thoughts post meeting including how the meeting went overall, was it an engaging conversation, were the preparations that you described above the right information, what other topics came up that you did not prepare for and any other key observations. This reflection will help prepare you for the next meet-and-greet meeting.

## Reflect

Look at your current relationships with the government agencies. Do any government agencies directly recognize the library as an essential institution? If so, how might the library further develop the programs and services with them?

## Act

If you believe that you need to deepen the relationship, it might be time to host a meet-and-greet with your partners to enhance and deepen your relationship through communication, reminding them of what is happening in the library and ways to continue the partnership.