

Outreach Best Practices



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We've compiled some of our outreach and enrollment best practices from both the Washington Health Benefit Exchange and partner efforts to get Washington residents covered.

Key Dates and Deadlines

- **Nov. 1** Open enrollment begins!
- **Dec. 15** Enroll by Dec. 15th to get coverage that starts Jan. 1st
- **Jan. 1** Coverage begins for new and renewing customers



General Tips

- Understand who you are trying to reach. Choose strategies that fit that audience, including thinking through any barriers to their engagement.
- Having a hard time reaching a specific target population? Reach out to community leaders to understand why. Adapt your outreach strategies based on what you learn.
- Provide information in the primary languages you serve. Use our [translated open enrollment announcement](#), which is available in 20 languages, if it's helpful.
- One size doesn't fit all - offer multiple opportunities for engagement. People are busy and health insurance is complex. Consider a multi-pronged approach that meets people where they are, including ways to engage online, in-person, and when and where it's convenient.
- Leverage local resources (navigators, brokers, enrollment centers) whenever possible.
- Keep your messaging concise, and be clear about calls to action (don't confuse the message).

Key Open Enrollment Messages

- **Health insurance protects you from the unexpected.**
An accident or injury can happen any day. When it does, the last thing you should worry about is how to pay for your health care. Find a health insurance plan that keeps you covered, no matter what life throws your way.
- **It's time to get covered.**
Qualified Health and Dental open enrollment is November 1st - December 15th. Washington Apple Health (Medicaid) enrollment is year-round.
- **Open enrollment is short!**
Renew, shop, and select a plan by December 15th to get covered for the new year. Open enrollment is short - don't wait until the last minute to get covered.
- **Shop - even if you were auto-renewed.**
You might have been automatically renewed, but you should still check out your options to make sure you get the right coverage for your needs.
- **Use Smart Planfinder.**
Use the shopping tool, Smart Planfinder, to find plans that are a smart choice for your household.
- **Add dental to complete your coverage.**
Both health and dental plans are available through Washington Healthplanfinder. Find dental coverage to complete your insurance package.
- **Find in-person help.**
Download the WAPlanfinder mobile app to find local assisters in your area.



Enrollment Center Best Practices

Here are some of the questions to ask and tactics to employ to help drive traffic and increase outreach/enrollment at enrollment centers.

1. Location matters. Find a place that makes sense, is accessible, has plenty of parking, and is a fit for the service you're providing.
2. Is your enrollment center easy to find? If not, get signs on the door, windows, and at the street entrance. Market the site by noting a local landmark that is nearby. List the site on popular mapping tools, like Google Map, etc.
3. Is there enough signage to make it clear what you are offering? Is there competing signage? Make it clear that this is a Washington Healthplanfinder enrollment center.
4. Is it clean, safe, and professional? Is there someone to greet walk-in clients and answer questions or set up appointments? Or, if there isn't a front desk, is there an established protocol for who greets people as they come through the door?
5. Are staff easy to identify? Consider name tags, t-shirts/polos, or other items to make it clear who is available to ask questions to.
6. Are there materials readily available to hand out and options for kids (coloring books, etc.) who have to wait for their parents?
7. Are you staffed appropriately? Track dates/times that have the highest traffic and adjust schedules based on that outcome. Consider weekend hours. 10am on Saturday is a popular enrollment time nationally.
8. Have you invited other outreach providers to co-locate for special events? For instance, a free mammography event or free dental screenings at your location. Consider offering these year-round, so the location becomes more familiar to your target communities.



Events

Event Location

- Use locations that your target population trusts, are familiar with, and are easy to access (bus, parking, etc.)
- Leverage other events/locations that draw a crowd - for instance, offer enrollment assistance at a free vaccination clinic or provide information at ethnic restaurants trusted in minority communities

Logistics

- Consider event timing - evening and/or weekend hours may work best for the community you are targeting
- Connect with local broker and navigator organizations that may be able to help answer questions and offer enrollment assistance. Ensure that internet access can be available at the location, ample power sources are available, and there is enough privacy for meeting one-on-one with individuals
- If your target population is limited English proficient, ensure that resources will be on hand to help interpret
- Email navigator@wahbexchange.org to see if enrollment assistance is available. Let corpsupport@wahbexchange.org know as well, and the Exchange can promote the event on www.wahbexchange.org

Marketing Events

- Publicize event information as soon as possible, but at least 4 weeks prior to the event date
- Promote the event through multiple channels, including through the use of marketing strategies
- Promote at multiple locations that serve the target population, such as faith-based organizations, county agencies, elected officials, local coalitions, and local provider offices and pharmacies where people are seeking health services

Recurring Events

- Establish regular schedule; walk-in's are much more likely if you are at a location on a set schedule
- Signage is key; ensure that the location is okay with posting notices/signage prominently
- Word of mouth will be some of the strongest marketing for recurring. Provide excellent service.

Marketing Strategies

Spread the Word: Word of mouth remains one of the strongest outreach tools available. Connect with local advocates who can get information out through their networks. And, ask people to help.

Email Your Lists: Email marketing has been the top tool for notifying customers to key information, and every year, we are seeing higher open-rates. Alert your audiences about open enrollment. Send a dedicated email to your members, customers and/or employees and make sure they know that if they need coverage - or a friend or family member needs coverage - now is the time to sign up.

Tactics include:

- Segment your groups and be direct. If you are promoting an event in a specific area, target that email to audiences near that area only.
- Send emails Monday - Thursday, during business hours. This has historically had the highest engagement.
- For renewing customers, consider taking the time to reach out directly early (October) and set up appointments starting November 1st.

Include Information in Your Materials: Include information about open enrollment in print communications that are received by your members, customers or employees. (For example, general brochures, church bulletins, membership letters, program applications, etc.)

Host an Enrollment Event: Partner with local in-person help to host enrollment events in your community. Email navigator@wabhexchange.org to learn more and get connected to enrollment groups in your area.

Share Information in Your Space: Display information in your office, business, or organization that alerts the public to open enrollment and how to get covered.

Join the Conversation Online: Not all social media should be treated equally. If your organization has a presence on multiple social platforms, observe how your engagement may differ between them, and use analytical tools provided by those platforms to understand your demographics. This might adjust your messaging.

And, finally, engage with our social channels, which can provide quick tips, marketing tools, and consumer education information to share with your networks.

In-Reach

Many organizations provide “in-reach”, offering enrollment services at their immediate locations, such as community health centers and hospitals. While these services are generally offered year-round, consider providing a blitz during the open enrollment period to ensure awareness around the sign up period.

- Target the busiest days/times to have information delivered
- Offer sign-ups in waiting areas
- Get large signs up, noting key dates, and who to contact for help
- Cross-train all staff to ensure that everyone gets screened for coverage, regardless of what services they are accessing
- Set up a shared appointment calendar, so that if people aren’t served immediately, they at least can get an enrollment appointment established

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twitter.com/WAplanfinder



Instagram:

[@waplanfinder](https://www.instagram.com/waplanfinder)



Snapchat:

[wa_hpf](https://www.snapchat.com/add/wa_hpf)



YouTube:

youtube.com/c/waplanfinder

Resources

Partner Toolkit

For print materials, social media, event planning resources and more, visit wahbexchange.org/partners/partners-toolkit/.

Know Your Plan

For questions about how insurance works or information about key insurance terms, check out knowyourplan.org.

Questions?

Email info@wahbexchange.org or visit wahbexchange.org.