

# Tips and Tricks

Making the mini-grant work for you

This document shares lessons learned from Year 1 of the School Mini-Grant Program.

## Health Office Asthma Data

* What type of IT support do you have? Meet with your IT staff to gather budget and time frame needs. Use the mini-grant funds to pay for IT assistance.
* Data reports on how student attendance is influenced by asthma or other health conditions could assist in future grant applications and further funding of programs (i.e., this data could support other applications for grants from MDH or EPA).
* Attendance data can help identify students who are frequently absent or seeking medical attention; this can help you to identify students who could benefit from one-on-one education or services (i.e., this data could be used to support another mini-grant project from MDH or in response to a similar RFP).

## Environmental Policy

* Many people work in the background on policy; including other staff members as partners such as custodial staff and/or food services staff can help institute a sustainable policy that works for the school, staff, and students.
* Your administrator should be your partner in your mini-grant projects, be sure they are part of the planning process. Including many different levels of school staff can lead to involvement of important players such as facilities transportation management, and even local government.

## Partnerships & Building Awareness

* Students love hands-on projects. Building lung models with balloons or using straws to experience asthma are experiential learning activities that can allow families to learn about asthma together.
* What is your PTA or PTO organizing? Asthma could be a highlighted topic at an event.

## Providing Asthma Self-Management Education

* When planning, think about how many students will participate, in how many sessions, in what setting, and during what time of day.
* Who will facilitate the sessions? What is that person’s credentials and or experience in asthma and classroom management?
* This grant could fund hiring 1-2 experienced facilitators (such as an AE-C) with good classroom management skills to actually teach the sessions.
* Contact clinics and health systems that are most likely to serve your school or district. Ask if they have a Certified Asthma Educator (AE-C) on staff or perhaps an asthma specialty group that could offer support by providing staff to lead your sessions.
* Many clinics have community events coordinators that offer classes – contact your local clinic and ask who you should talk with.
* Many colleges and universities require medical students to work with the community. College students could be a valuable resource to provide education, help you plan and write your mini-grant application and offer assistance in programming. Colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing, Medicine, and Respiratory Therapy are good examples.

## Linking Schools & Health Care Providers

* Clinics may have their own initiatives that the school could support. You may not need to start from the beginning. Contact clinics or health systems nearest your school and ask to speak with clinic managers or care coordinators.
* Review your health offices frequent flyers to see if there’s a clinic or provider whose name comes up often. Contact the Clinic Manager to set up a discussion about their policies or ask who you can talk with regarding their policies.
* Health clinics or systems may have an active quality improvement (QI) department – contact the QI department within the nearest health system or ask the lead clinic nurse for assistance identifying the right players.

## Health Office Staff & School Personnel Training

* To create buy-in from colleagues, share examples of how each person in the school may be affected by asthma or could make a change to make the school more asthma-friendly (e.g., changing cleaning supplies, decreasing fragrances, managing dust).
* Explain how data can be a powerful tool in helping the school be more asthma-friendly.
* You don’t have to start from scratch! The MDH Asthma Program website has PowerPoint Presentations you can pull from to create your own health office or school staff trainings. We also have presentations from previous applicants we can share.
* School staff trainings can be done in 15 minute increments. Try reserving the teachers’ lunch room for 20 minute sessions teaching all school staff about asthma, what they should know, and what to do if their student is having an asthma attack.
* Is there a learning day coming up for health office staff or school personnel in general? Schedule time to do separate trainings for each group during the learning day. Be sure to include your Principal, Assistant Principal, and all teachers and support personnel.

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