

**How to Make an Impact without Spending a Lot of Money**

As you consider ways to promote your new and innovative project or service and results it is achieving, there are creative and effective strategies that you can implement with a small budget. Below are recommendations and tips for maximizing your marketing impact without spending a lot of money. If you have examples and tips that have worked for your project/service, please let EIFL know so we can share them with the other EIFL-PLIP grantees!

**Engage volunteers and the community**

A great way to build support for your project/service and save money is to work with your library’s network of supporters and volunteers.

* Ask your volunteer network if anyone has a special skill set that you need for example:
  + Is a volunteer an artist who can design a project/service poster or other promotional materials?
  + Is a volunteer a photographer or someone with a good camera who loves photography who can take pictures at a project/service event or of a project/service-related activity?
  + Does a volunteer have web design experience and can help with your website?
  + Is a volunteer an employee at a company, such as a printing company, that might be willing to give you a discount if they are asked?
* If you need photos or artwork, hold a contest for the community to submit entries. This is a great way to engage the community and receive creative artwork.
* Engage volunteers or community leaders to donate their time to teach a training session at the library on a topic or particular skill that is relevant to your project/service work (e.g., If your project/service focuses on employment, ask someone to share their knowledge of C.V. writing, or hold an “ask the expert” discussion on a particular career topic).
* Ask volunteers to help plan and staff project/service events.
* Consider developing partnerships with the faith-based community; they can promote your project/service and related activities to their congregations and reinforce the important role libraries play in communities.

**Develop partnerships that will help offset project/service expenses**

* Ask local businesses to donate items or services (e.g., ask local restaurants and bakeries to donate food for a project/service event, ask local printers to donate printing costs). If they cannot donate, don’t be afraid to ask for a discount since your d helps the community.
* Ask local businesses and organizations to help promote your project/service by putting up posters or flyers at their locations, including information in their newsletters, and posting information and links on their websites and social media tools.
* Consider forming a partnership with a news outlet, such as a radio station or newspaper that may be willing to place Public Service Announcements (PSA’s) about your project/service.
* Ask a local advertising or PR firm if they might consider working for your project/service pro-bono (for free).

**Think Ahead**

Thoughtful planning will help you save money and will give you the time you need to explore creative, low-cost options.

* Think about economies of scale (e.g., Is it more cost effective to print 200 flyers at a time or five sets of 20 flyers?). Ask for bulk discounts.
* If you know you want to hold two project/service events during the year, look for opportunities to maximize your budget. Can you purchase supplies for both at the same time and save money?

**Thank people and organizations for their support**

Don’t forget to recognize and thank people who have supported your project/service and the library.

* Recognize volunteers and organizations that support your project/service in a library newsletter and on the website.
* Designate a special area where you can post a list of supporters such as on your library’s bulletin board, computer station, or check-out desk.
* Hold an open house for your volunteers and thank them publically for their support.
* Be sure to invite supporters and volunteers to project/service events and build the relationship so they feel a part of the library community and the success of your project/service.

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