

# Program referrals

Effective crime prevention initiatives rely heavily on receiving appropriate referrals from various sources, including schools, law enforcement agencies, youth organisations, community services and other spaces.

Building strong relationships with these referral sources is essential for accessing suitable participants and ensuring the safety and success of your programs.

## Strategic thinking

### Building relationships and understanding criteria

#### Building relationships with referral sources

- Establish regular communication channels with schools, police departments, youth justice agencies, and other relevant organisations.
- Attend community events, networking meetings, and training sessions to connect with potential referral partners and discuss collaboration opportunities.
- Demonstrate the value of your program and its alignment with the goals and priorities of referral sources to foster trust and engagement.

#### Understanding referral criteria

- Familiarise yourself with the referral criteria and eligibility requirements of each potential source, ensuring that your program meets their criteria.
- Clarify the types of participants suitable for your program, including age range, risk level, and specific needs or challenges addressed by your intervention.

## Operational/Action

### Ensuring safety, tailoring delivery, and monitoring

#### Develop referral forms

- Create comprehensive referral forms that capture essential information such as client demographics, risk assessments, support needs, and any safety considerations. Ensure these forms are user-friendly and easily accessible to potential referrers.
- Regularly review and update referral forms to reflect any changes in program requirements, participant needs, or legal considerations. Solicit feedback from referrers to improve the effectiveness and usability of the forms.

## Provide training

- Offer training sessions for staff and partners on how to identify potential program participants, complete referral forms accurately, and adhere to confidentiality and privacy policies.
- Establish protocols for securely storing and managing sensitive data to ensure that all referral information is handled confidentially and in compliance with relevant privacy regulations.

## Establish clear communication channels

- Offer training sessions for staff and partners on how to identify potential program participants, complete referral forms accurately, and adhere to confidentiality and privacy policies.
- Implement clear communication channels and procedures for receiving and processing referrals, including designated contact persons and response timelines.
- Track the flow of referrals from initial contact to program enrolment, monitoring key metrics such as referral source, response time, and participant outcomes.

## Ensuring participant safety

- Develop robust screening and assessment procedures to identify suitable participants and assess their risk levels and support needs.
- Establish clear protocols for participant confidentiality, data protection, and informed consent to protect their privacy and rights throughout the referral process.
- Collaborate with referral sources to exchange relevant information and ensure a coordinated approach to participant support and monitoring.

## Tailoring program delivery

- Adapt your program content, format, and delivery methods to meet the diverse needs and preferences of referred participants, taking into account factors such as cultural background, language proficiency, and accessibility requirements.
- Provide ongoing support and feedback to referral sources to address any concerns or challenges encountered during program implementation, fostering a collaborative and responsive partnership.

## Monitoring and evaluation

- Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track participant progress, assess program effectiveness, and demonstrate outcomes to referral sources and funders.
- Collect and analyse relevant data on participant demographics, engagement levels, and outcomes to inform program refinement and improvement over time.

By cultivating strong relationships with referral sources, understanding their criteria and priorities, prioritising participant safety, and tailoring program delivery to meet diverse needs, organisations and individuals can effectively source referrals for crime prevention initiatives. This collaborative approach ensures that programs reach the right participants, address their unique challenges, and contribute to safer and more resilient communities.

## Promotion of program to referral sources

Promoting your program effectively to referral sources is key to reaching the Youth Justice cohort and ensuring your program's success. Simply building a program and expecting young people to come on their own may not be effective in the YJ context. To overcome this challenge, focus on strategic outreach and awareness-building:

- **Identify and leverage referral partners:** Work closely with schools, community organisations, social services, and justice system stakeholders such as Youth Justice and Queensland Police Service. Their endorsement can be instrumental in reaching the target audience.
- **Educate referral partners:** Share your program's goals, benefits, and eligibility criteria with potential referral sources so they understand how your program can meet the needs of the young people they work with.
- **Offer informative sessions:** Organise presentations or workshops for referral sources to introduce your program, share success stories, and answer any questions.
- **Provide promotional materials:** Create and distribute promotional resources such as flyers, digital content, and brochures to help referral sources share information about your program.
- **Strengthen communication channels:** Maintain open lines of communication with referral sources to keep them updated on program progress, changes, and opportunities for collaboration.
- **Solicit feedback:** Encourage referral sources to provide feedback on the program's impact and how it serves young people. This information can guide your ongoing development and outreach strategies.

By actively promoting your program and maintaining strong relationships with referral sources, you can increase referrals and engagement from the YJ cohort.