

# CSG – Community Support Groups

## STRATEGY

### Introduction

This step by step guide will help you and your community to focus your outreach efforts for Summer Work Travel participants, with the purpose of creating a safe and fun environment for international participants who come to work in your American community. Please take the time to thoroughly read and explore each step, on how you can collaborate with the community (including the J-1 sponsors) so that you are best able to plan and execute your Community Support Groups.

### Steps

1. Forum for community members to discuss J-1 Summer Work Travel program and possible community group.
2. Establish the purpose and define the goals
3. Figure out the key players
4. Meet with the key players to brainstorm and design the output the CSG will be implementing
5. Create a firm vision for the CSG
6. Implement a timeline for each step of action to achieve the CSG
7. Evaluate the inputs (time, money, collaboration) that will need to be invested to create a successful CSG
8. Tell others!
9. Put the CSG into practice
10. Evaluate the effectiveness of the year
11. Refine for next year

### 1) Establish the Purpose and Define Goals

Before you can successfully start your own community for International participants, you must first evaluate both the needs of your community and the participants. It is important to assess the resources available to you; it may be beneficial to you to reach out to the Department of State to aid you in this endeavor. Outline the concerns that you have for your community as well as the concerns that you anticipate participants will have. Are there any law enforcement officials to whom you can reach out? Identify local resources that are available to participants within your community. The following shows some of the long-term goals for an effective CSG:

Goal	Example Tasks
Community Meetings and Student Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinate, host and promote community</li></ul>

# CSG – Community Support Groups

## STRATEGY

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and employer forums and pre or post season conferences</li> <li>• Host and promote orientations for participants</li> <li>• Host and/or promote cultural events</li> <li>• Coordinate best access options with Social Security offices</li> </ul>
Communication Hub for Participants, Sponsors and other Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate meetings to all sponsors</li> <li>• Host website and/or social media for local events and information to SWT participants and community</li> <li>• Inform sponsors of any cases involving the health, safety and welfare of SWT participants</li> <li>• Alert all sponsors of any local concerns, issues or emergencies</li> <li>• Inform Department of State of all group meetings and annual progress</li> <li>• Alert Department of State of issues that are not being effectively addressed by the sponsor</li> <li>• Stay informed of group events promoted to SWT participants (church, sponsor and/or social events)</li> </ul>
Local Advocate for SWT Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as local advocate and spokesperson for all SWT program concerns, including emergency planning, transportation housing and general safety</li> <li>• Educate local businesses and municipalities on Summer Work Travel participants</li> </ul>

## 2) Identify Key Players

Take another look at your community and determine if there is another group that has a similar mission to yours. Take this time to evaluate who can help you in creating this participant-focused group. Outline any key players in your area that you think would be a great addition to your group. Think of who is the most passionate about cultural exchanges as well as any sponsors who might be interested in working with you. Gather their contact information as soon as possible. Key players include sponsors, employers, housing and transportation providers, Chambers of Commerce, local Social Security Administration, Hotel and Lodging Associations, health departments, emergency planning committees,

# CSG – Community Support Groups

## STRATEGY

local volunteer groups, places of worship and faith-based organizations, local government, and Police, Fire, EMT, and Ocean Rescue Departments.

### **3) Meet with the Key Players in a Community Forum.**

Now that you've determined who to go to, it's time to set up a meeting with people you want involved in this organization. Set up a meeting to meet with everyone you described in Step 2. In the space provided, create an agenda for your organization: i.e. what are your goals, what can the community do, and what is your vision for this group? Again, the examples provided above might give you a better idea of some common goals that previous CSGs have developed.

### **4) Outline a Vision for Your Group**

Here you are making sure that you and the team are on the same page. Brainstorm with your organization to determine what the structure of the group will be. Identify possible local leadership for the group. As a whole, what are your expectations? During this discussion, ensure that simple and clear goals are established.

### **5) Implement a Timeline for Each Task**

The organization has been formed and members have been selected. Take the time now to outline the steps necessary to achieve your ultimate goal. What are your dates for cultural activities, meetings, and/or orientation? Outline your goals, steps, and deadlines. As much as possible, it is important to delegate tasks to members of the local community.

### **6) Evaluate the Inputs that will need to be Invested to Create a Successful Organization**

You have outlined your goals and your team members are on board, that's great! But are they practical goals? Realize that some financial support will be necessary, so create a plan for fundraising. Who are potential backers (sponsors, local government, etc.)? Who will be your donors each year (J-1 stakeholders vs. community)? Will you make a handbook for international participants in your area? How will it be constructed? How much money do you expect your organization to cost? How will these financials be sustainable overtime? Note that liquid funds for groups are traditionally sparse, so be creative in your approach!

### **7) Tap Into your Existing Community**

You may find that there is already an existing community of volunteers, sponsors, etc. that are working to benefit the local J-1 Summer Work Travel community. Note that there are many J-1 Summer Work Travel communities that have already established their own

# CSG – Community Support Groups

## STRATEGY

community groups and have many resources and best practices to share, including: financial sustainability, documents, and evacuation procedures. Tapping into these resources on a local and national basis, will help to ensure that your CSG is a success.

### 8) Tell Others!

Now that you're operational, let everyone know! First and foremost, alert all employers and community members, especially those who did not attend the original forum. One suggestion is to create an advertisement in the local Chamber's newsletter, if the price is right. Chamber of Commerce communications are a great way to capture the audience you wish to connect with. Additionally, look into other communications within your community (radio, church or other faith-based centers and their communications, etc.). Notify the Department of State so that all sponsors are updated. Lastly, consider using social media to reflect resources and information regarding the organization.

### 9) Put It into Practice

Using the timeline you created, accomplish each step and activity that you have planned. Create a checklist for yourself to ensure that you are staying on task in completing each step that lead to your ultimate goal.

### Example: Community Forum Agenda

One of your first steps might be to organize a Community and Employer Forum. The goal of a forum is to educate local stakeholders about the SWT program and encourage them to get involved. Local stakeholders include employers, housing and transportation providers, Chambers of Commerce, Hotel and Lodging Associations, local volunteer groups, places of worship and faith-based organizations, local government, and Police, Fire, EMT, and Ocean Rescue Departments.

The following is a sample Community and Employer Forum Agenda. In the first year, presenters may only include the Chair, a Sponsor representative, and Department of State. As the group develops, it may be beneficial to add in additional presenters:

Presenter	Topic
Local community Support Group Chair	Welcome and goals of forum
	Prepare employers and community for the summer season and ensure a safe and successful program for all participants
	Introduction to speakers

# CSG – Community Support Groups

## STRATEGY

Sponsor Representatives	Introduction to Work Exchanges worldwide Summer Work Travel program overview Participant Profile Importance of working with a sponsor
Department of State: Educational and Cultural Exchange Specialist, US Department of State	Overview of Summer Work & Travel program Role of Key Players: Department of State, sponsors, employers, third parties Statistical data pertaining to community/town Areas of concern
BIKE SAFETY VIDEO	
<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Local Police Department	Personal safety/bike safety
Beach Patrol	Beach rules and water safety
Fire Department	Fire safety, occupancy limits, EMT

### Example: Orientation Agenda

One of the most valuable resources a Community Support Group can offer SWT participants is an orientation. The goal of an orientation is to prepare participants for the summer season by presenting an introduction to community members and local officials, providing tips and resources, and reminding them of program rules. Depending on the number of participants in an area and the timing of peak arrivals, it may be beneficial to offer several orientations over 1-2 months.

The following is a sample orientation agenda, with recommended presenters, which may be tailored to reflect the needs of your community. Orientations should last no more than two hours, with some time reserved for socializing

<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Town Council or Commissioner	Challenges particular to the town/community
Local Emergency Management	Hurricane planning and emergency evacuation

# CSG – Community Support Groups

## STRATEGY

representation	protocol
Dept. of Transportation	Available public transportation for participants
Housing Association or local Dept. of Housing	Housing options for seasonal SWT participants: opportunities and challenges
Local State Dept. of Labor	Tax and labor laws
Social Security Administration	Advice and clarifications on Social Security applications
Bank Representative	Options for participants to open bank accounts and required documents
Medical Representative	Overview of urgent care or hospital visits: insurance, out of pocket costs, local facilities
Employer	Important training for participants, example employment issues share best practices
Community group leaders	Planned cultural events, welcome events and dinners
Other Community Support Groups	Share best practices on successful community events and services elsewhere
Open Q&A Session	

### 10) Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Year

The end of the year always calls for reflection, and the same goes for planning and effectiveness. Create an evaluation for the participants to fill out via social media or a website and have an end-of-the season meeting to evaluate costs, and to give overall feedback. Brainstorm what questions you would like to include on the evaluation, collect all of your expenses from the season, and compile an expense list. What would you do again next season? What worked for you, what didn't work for you?

# CSG – Community Support Groups

## STRATEGY

### **11) Refine for Next Year**

Implement the changes that were designated for the next year. Now that you've gone over the seasons' successfulness, implement the changes that you received based on feedback.

*CSG strategy document*  
*2/8/2017*