



COVERING FAMILIES, ONE SCHOOL AT A TIME

For years, community organizations, health care providers, school leaders, and other civic-sector actors have used a variety of school-based outreach strategies to find children and family members who could be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance coverage. This tactic has proven fruitful, as nearly half of the nation’s uninsured people who are eligible for Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) live in families with at least one school-aged child. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities’ [“Guide to School-Based Outreach for Health Coverage Enrollment”](#) describes the main ingredients of successful school-based outreach programs so that new and experienced practitioners alike can benefit from successful enrollment efforts.

Atlas Learning Project

Now more than ever, funders and advocates need to learn from each other and put effective approaches and strategies into action. This guide is part of the Atlas Learning Project, a suite of resources from The Atlantic Philanthropies and other experts in the field aimed to help funders think strategically about how to defend, sustain and advance progressive policy change. With smart thinking, bold action and sustained focus, funders and advocates will be better positioned to succeed in advocacy and policy change.

TOP INSIGHTS FROM SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH COVERAGE OUTREACH

- School-based health care outreach is successful for several reasons. Schools have experience communicating with the community, they tend to be geographically accessible and they have established methods for sharing information with families.
- Schools have a direct interest in making sure their students have the insurance coverage they need because of the link between children's enrollment in Medicaid and improved academic performance.
- Before conducting school-based health care outreach, it's vital to do the following:
 - Assess the needs and resources in the community to avoid duplication of effort
 - Identify partnerships and areas for collaboration
 - Lay out a long-term, concrete plan with a timeline of several years
 - Develop a strategy for monitoring and evaluating progress
- School-based outreach can take many forms, but these ingredients are essential to success:
 - Involving school leadership to build the effort's credibility and confirm that operations are conducted within the bounds of what is acceptable in the school setting.
 - Conducting targeted, strategic outreach to reach the right audiences, which saves time and money.
 - Providing hands-on application assistance to parents and helping them overcome barriers such as disclosing private information or worrying that applying will have negative implications for their families.
 - Safeguarding privacy and confidentiality and ensuring that all activities are in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
 - Having a realistic funding plan that reflects the goals of the initiative and takes into consideration the costs associated with each strategy.

“Our goal is a kid’s education. We know that every day a kid isn’t learning is a day wasted. So it is our job to make sure they are healthy enough to get into a classroom and learn.”

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