



SISTERS *together*

Program Guide



Move More, Eat Better
Help your community take steps toward better health



National Institute of
Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases

WIN
Weight-control
Information Network

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INTRODUCTION

Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better is a national health awareness program that encourages black women ages 18 and older to reach and maintain a healthy weight by being more physically active and eating healthy foods.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), developed the program through its **Weight-control Information Network** (WIN), along with several partners. Anyone who sees a need in his or her community and wants to help can start a Sisters Together program.

This guide and its tools and resources can help you promote the “move more, eat better” message, along with the benefits of regular physical activity and healthy eating, in your community. The NIDDK updates these materials regularly so they remain useful for local programs.



BACKGROUND

More than 1 in 3—about 38 percent—of non-Hispanic white women in the United States have obesity, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That number increases to more than half—57 percent—for U.S. black women.¹ Research has shown that excess weight may contribute to high blood pressure, **type 2 diabetes**, **kidney disease**, heart disease, and **certain kinds of cancer**.

A number of barriers may make it hard for some black women to move more and eat better, which may lead to excess weight. These barriers could include

- limited places to be physically active
- fewer nearby grocery stores that sell fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods
- lack of money
- inadequate transportation

A Successful Pilot Program

The NIDDK initially developed Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better as a pilot program with Harvard University, the New England Medical Center, and Tufts University. The goal of the pilot was to increase physical activity and healthy eating among young black women ages 18 to 35 living in three Boston communities. Black women in these neighborhoods worked with obesity experts to develop the program. Over the years, local groups across the country have formed partnerships with health centers, local media, recreation centers, and other groups to start new Sisters Together programs.

¹ Fryar CD, Carroll MD, Ogden CL. [Prevalence of overweight, obesity, and extreme obesity among adults aged 20 and over: United States, 1960–1962 through 2013–2014](#). National Center for Health Statistics Data, Health E-Stats website. Updated July 18, 2016. Accessed May 2, 2018.

USING THIS GUIDE

If you'd like to start a Sisters Together program, this guide is for you. The guide will help you create a health awareness effort where you live, work, or worship that encourages black women to move more and eat healthier. Whether you're a business owner, hair stylist, health professional, community organizer, parent, retired person, or student, you can start a Sisters Together program.

This guide outlines six steps to help you start your program and includes practical examples of activities from current and former Sisters Together programs.

The six steps are

1. Get Started
2. Set Goals, Create a Budget
3. Identify Community Resources
4. Plan Activities
5. Spread the Word about Sisters Together
6. Measure Success, Keep Your Program Going

Included in the guide are sample forms, letters, emails, and social media posts you can copy and modify to suit your specific needs. These resources were designed for black women ages 18 and older, and you can adapt them for other groups. As you read the guide, you'll also find boxes with additional tips and ideas for getting started.

Let your community's residents and their needs drive how you shape your program.



CREATING YOUR PROGRAM

Step 1: Get Started

Learn about your community. Who do you want to reach?

Let your chosen audience or community needs drive how you shape your program. For example, you may find that your neighborhood includes a lot of mature black women who would benefit from a Sisters Together program. This program is flexible enough to target black women or other groups of all ages, races, ethnicities, and communities. In fact, there are Sisters Together programs that even include men.

Gather Background Information

As you begin to develop your program's messages and events, think about how the community as a whole may affect residents' attitudes and choices related to health. Research shows that not having access to healthy foods and places to be physically active may be linked with other financial, health, and social issues.

The questions below may help you gather information to identify the area(s) of greatest need. If your budget allows, you also could conduct focus groups using these questions to get more detailed feedback

- What are the attitudes, beliefs, and overall knowledge of black women in your area about healthy eating and physical activity? For instance, what do they think it means to eat healthy and/or get enough physical activity?
- Are black women where you live, work, or worship aware of the links between excess weight and other health problems, such as diabetes, kidney disease, and heart disease?
- How do black women in your community seek health care? Do they have a regular doctor or receive care from local health centers, hospitals, or health departments?

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- What types of activities—for example, walking, dancing, running—are popular among black women where you live, work, or worship?
- Where do black women shop for food: at the local grocery? convenience or corner store? food exchange/bank or farmer’s market?
- Who are the role models that inspire black women in your community to improve their health?

Sisters Program Tip

You may want to check to see whether some of this information may already have been collected through health checks by your local health department. If not, you could approach your local health department or a community-based organization about gathering this information jointly.



Talking with black women about how they feel and what they do to get regular physical activity and eat healthy will help you build trust and connections.

The questions below, or similar ones, may help you get an idea of the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge of black women in your area about healthy eating and physical activity.

- What connections do you see between being active and being healthy?
- What comes to mind when you think about “regular physical activity?” What kind of activity do you think of? How much activity? How often do you think you need to be active?
- How do you feel about talking with a doctor or other health care professional about physical activity and healthy eating?
- How do you think excess weight may affect your overall chances of developing health problems, such as **sleep apnea**, diabetes, joint issues, and other illnesses?
- How do you feel about people who struggle with their weight becoming active?
- How do you feel about not being able to eat your favorite foods to improve your overall health?²

² AUSDIAB: The Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle Study. Health Knowledge, Attitudes & Practices Questionnaire. Accessed May 2, 2018.

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Talk with Your Audience

Talking with black women about how they feel and what they do to get regular physical activity and eat healthy will help you build trust and connections. Try to

- chat with people in person or by phone; use email or text messaging for quick contact
- host low-key gatherings in your home, workplace, place of worship, local hair salon, and other nearby locations
- attend meetings of other neighborhood groups

In addition, if participants are comfortable and willing to provide it, consider gathering information on age, gender, ethnic background, languages spoken, religion, education, popular foods, family size, and what people do for fun. Local and neighborhood leaders might also offer useful insights that could help shape your program.

Assess Your Community's Needs

Once you have an initial talk with select women and leaders, you can begin to assess your community's needs. As you think about how to design a Sisters Together program for your particular community, ask yourself the following questions

- What programs that encourage healthy eating and regular physical activity are already available and accessed by my audience? Are women aware of them? How do they access them? What do they think and feel about them?
- What type of program would be most appealing to women? For example, would a program be most effective if it was based in a community center, a place of worship, at work, or as part of a neighborhood group? Or might a virtual program work best for my community or audience?



Ask yourself what type of program would be most appealing to women.

Deciding what kind of resources different groups could offer your program—such as a place to meet—and **setting program goals** will help shape your plan.

Local leaders can help you assess the community's needs. Find trusted, well-respected leaders who work with black women, such as black business owners, health care providers, spiritual leaders, local activists, and cultural influencers. Consider conducting a focus group if your budget allows.

Connecting with popular radio personalities, news reporters, or bloggers may also be useful—and may help build buzz about your program and reach your audience later on.

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Focus Your Efforts

Once you have a plan for your program, you can begin focusing your efforts. For example, find out about local businesses, community centers, places of worship, and other groups that support food and education activities. These groups may become valuable resources once you start your program.

Community Centers

A community center can be a great resource for a new Sisters Together program. Programs at community centers work best when there is a need for information in the community and when the effort will most likely draw a steady following. Recreation centers such as the YWCA or the YMCA will often lend you space for group meetings or fitness classes.

Places of Worship

Partnering with places of worship can be a good way to increase health awareness among black women, since many religious communities have a long tradition of supporting community service and public health.

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SISTERS SPOTLIGHT

The Lexington-Fayette County Health Department in Lexington, KY, operated its Sisters Together programs for many years. After starting a popular program for women, the department went on to start a Brothers Together program. The organizers combined the programs to form the Sisters and Brothers Together Weight Loss Challenge.

A huge success in Kentucky, the program's more than 800 participants were active in healthy eating demonstrations, aerobics, and Zumba classes. Child care and transportation support helped address barriers that participants may have faced in joining the sessions.



Partnering with places of worship can be a good way to increase health awareness among black women.

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Talk with religious leaders to

- see if they would be interested in hosting a program at their place of worship
- gain their support
- establish credibility, open contact, and trust
- discuss ways to work together

To build a relationship, become active in events or volunteer in programs hosted by the place of worship. Request a meeting to hand out program information to members.

A sample outreach letter that you could tailor to community centers, places of worship, business owners, or other groups is included at the end of this section. You could mail the letter or send it as an email.



Talk with religious leaders to gain their support.

Other Neighborhood Locations

Try holding Sisters Together meetings or events in places like multiple-purpose rooms, dance studios, rec centers, and playgrounds. For future planning, note which places attract the biggest turnout.

Here are some other ideas for meeting places that may not require many resources

- Schools. Find out if there is a local school with a track or soccer field that you could use for walking groups and other physical activity events.
- Parks. Look for nearby parks that might have biking, hiking, or walking trails.
- Shopping malls. Check out local shopping malls that may be good places for indoor walking, especially in bad weather.
- Homes. Take turns with members in your group hosting Sisters Together events in their homes.

When choosing meeting or event locations, be mindful of safety. For instance, walking locations should be well-lit; have walking surfaces that are smooth and free of cracks, sticks, or other falling hazards; and have crosswalks with traffic lights in areas with heavy traffic. You may want to keep an emergency kit handy in case someone falls or injures herself. For a large walking event, you also may want to contact your local police department to request help with crowd control and safety. For other physical activity safety tips, see [Staying Active at Any Size](#).

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Starting Small

Over the years, many women have told us they would like to start a Sisters Together program but lacked the resources to do all the activities described in the guide. Activities like planning a community event may be too much to do for a program that is just starting out. Here are some tips for starting small

- Choose and use only the activities and resources in this guide that meet your needs—and the needs of your community.
- Start with just a friend or two: interested people from your place of worship, hair salon, workplace, or neighborhood.
- Instead of large events like a walk-a-thon or health fair, form a walking group or get together to swap healthy recipes or support each other's goals.



Sisters Program Tip

Like community centers or places of worship, a health fair or health expo is another place to spread the word about your program, get feedback, and promote your efforts. The national launch of Sisters Together included a health fair, healthy cooking demonstrations, line dancing, and massage. To launch or sustain your program, consider hosting health challenges, cooking demonstrations, or free sessions with a registered dietitian.

RESOURCE 1

Sample Outreach Letter

You can copy and modify the sample outreach letter below to spread the word to targeted recipients about your Sisters Together program.

For example, you could revise the letter to address local groups or businesses that share your health-promotion goals. You also could tailor the letter to organizations that serve your target audience, including local hospitals, community colleges, universities, graduate nursing programs, the city or county health department, community recreation centers, faith-based groups, fitness clubs, local libraries, media outlets (on air, online, and print), and senior centers. Send the letter via email or hard copy.

[Date]

[Name of Recipient]

[Recipient's Title]

[Address]

[City, State] [Zip]



Dear [NAME]:

Are you interested in helping your clients get and stay healthy? If your answer is “yes,” consider joining us in spreading the word about the Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better program, a national program that may help your clients achieve better health.

More than half—57 percent—of black women struggle with obesity—and more black women are giving up on trying to lose the extra pounds. Excess weight is a risk factor for health problems such as type 2 diabetes, heart and kidney disease, stroke, and certain cancers.

Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better addresses these issues by encouraging black women and their families to get regular physical activity and eat healthy meals and snacks. As a trusted part of the community, your business [or organization] can become a “health champion” committed to lowering the obesity rate in your area. To join in this effort, I invite you to do one or more of the following:

Read the [enclosed] Sisters Together fact sheet to learn more about our program. You can download and print the program guide at the [Sisters Together website](#).

- **Contact our local Sisters Together group** via the email address or phone number included at the end of this letter for information about our activities. You may want to join our group, partner with us on community events, or just contact us for more information that you can share with your clients.

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- **Create a “Health Champion Action Plan”** (see the Be a Health Champion fact sheet at the end of this section) that includes promoting simple, doable tips, including those from the [enclosed] Sisters Together flyer on addressing barriers to healthy eating and physical activity. This plan might involve posting or promoting a “Move More” or “Eat Better” Tip and Photo of the Week, on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#), such as
 - “Grab a family member, friend, or co-worker and go for a walk.”
 - “Start filling half of your plate with fruits and veggies.”

Include hashtags such as #SistersTogether or #HealthChampion to help track interest in your posts and photos. You also could ask clients to submit their own tips. Getting clients’ ideas is a great way to keep them involved and excited about improving their health.

Lastly, we know moving more and eating better are not easy because you and your clients already juggle busy family, school, and work schedules. But the effort is worth it, and getting others involved can help. I encourage you to share Sisters Together materials and messages, not only with your clients and staff, but also with your friends and family. Together, you can be each other’s health champions in the Sisters Together movement.

You may contact me directly at [**PHONE NUMBER**] or [**EMAIL ADDRESS**] to discuss the enclosed materials and your interest in Sisters Together.

Regards,

[**YOUR NAME**]

[**YOUR GROUP’S NAME**]

P.S. Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better is a program coordinated by the Weight-control Information Network, a national information service of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health. For more information, visit www.win.niddk.nih.gov.

RESOURCE 2

Be a Health Champion Fact Sheet

You can copy and modify this resource to suit your specific needs.

Be a Health Champion



By supporting or getting involved in a Sisters Together program in your community, you have become a health champion. Health champions support efforts to improve their community's health and serve as role models for people within their family or community who want to learn and adopt healthy lifestyle habits.

Health champions, as individuals or part of an organization or initiative, can encourage others to stick with their goals to improve their health and help them celebrate their successes, however small or large.

How Can I Be a Health Champion?

Your organization can be a health champion for your community, but you also can become a health champion on your own. Here are some things you can try

Start a conversation. Talk with family, friends, or co-workers about your health goals and your plan for achieving them. Talk about what keeps your family, friends, or co-workers from moving more and eating better and how they might overcome their roadblocks.

Get moving together. Grab a family member and go for a walk or bike ride—or sign up for a dance or yoga class together. Start a lunchtime or evening walking group at work or in your neighborhood.

Lend support. Remind friends that if they get off track, they can always get back on. Quitting isn't an option.

Use social media. To inspire and encourage others

Tweet an inspirational quote, or healthy eating or physical activity tip, at least once a week. Include hashtags such as #HealthChampion to help track and monitor the conversation. Here are some sample tweets

Grab a friend, get #active, and be a #HealthChampion. [This information](#) from #@NIDDKgov can help you start a walking club.

Be a #HealthChampion all year. [#@NIDDKgov has various resources](#) to help you manage your weight.

You can be a #healthy role model as a #HealthChampion. Check out these [#@NIDDKgov ideas to help you start and keep moving](#).

Post photos of healthy meals/dishes to your Instagram account or your Facebook page—or start a Health Champion Facebook group where others could also share ideas and information.

Text a photo of a physical activity event you did, like a group walk or Zumba challenge.

Become a Sisters Together recruiter. Post Sisters Together recruitment flyers (Resource 3) in your community, inviting people to attend a Sisters Together meeting. Possible places to post flyers include places of worship, hair salons, recreation or community centers, and your office. If there is no Sisters Together program in your community, consider starting one. [The Sisters Together Program Guide](#) shows you how.

Thank you for being a health champion. By taking charge of your health and inspiring others to do the same, you are helping to improve the health of your community!



NIH National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

WIN Weight-control Information Network

Create specific goals and track your progress.

Goal: Set up 6-week walking program

Milestones	By Date	Achieved?	Notes
Hold group meeting to decide details about time and place	March 1	✓	5 people attended
Get 6 members to commit to lead for 1 week each	March 8	✓	Beth, Connie, JP, Mary, Pat, Sarah
Send out emails/texts to group members for signup	March 10	✓	Beth, Sandra sent 17 emails/texts
Put 20 flyers up in the neighborhood	March 12	✓	JP printed and posted

Step 2: Set Goals, Create a Budget

Plan your goals. What do you want to achieve with your program?

Creating a few specific goals and target deadlines will help you become more focused and organized, and plan for the future. Tracking your progress in meeting your goals can help you improve your program over time and increase the program's impact.

Try to set realistic goals and dates. For example

- By [DATE], begin promoting the program in your community with flyers, emails, etc.
- By [DATE], hold a program kickoff meeting in the community.
- By [DATE], have a formal weekly walking program in place.
- By [DATE], conduct monthly meetings on healthy eating.
- By [DATE], create and launch a website.
- By [DATE], start a program Facebook page.
- By [DATE], have [NUMBER] fans of the program's Facebook page.
- By [DATE], launch a Twitter account.
- By [DATE], have [NUMBER] Twitter followers.

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You may adapt these goals to meet your local needs or come up with new ones. For instance, if another community group is already promoting physical activity, approach the group about partnering, or focus your goals on raising awareness about the benefits of healthy eating instead.

You may find you need to revise your goals after you've launched your Sisters Together program. Community needs may change over time, and having a successful program depends on being able to adjust and respond to local needs.

Create your budget and fund your program.

What will it cost to support your program?

After you set your goals, you'll need to create a budget. Figure out what it will cost to support your program over a specific period of time, accounting for staff, office, activity, and other expenses. You then can begin to look for funding to support your budget.

Potential and existing partners—such as churches, local health departments and businesses, and other community organizations—may be possible sources of funding in the form of grants, volunteer or staff time, or other in-kind donations. See a sample in-kind donation request letter at the end of this section.



SISTERS SPOTLIGHT

The Center of Wellness for Urban Women, Inc. (CWUW) applied for and received a mini-grant from the American Heart Association to hold eight nutrition workshops at a local community center for CWUW's Sisters Together program. Local foundations and organizations in your community with a health focus or mission may also offer grants that support community initiatives.

RESOURCE 3

Sample Sisters Together Recruitment Flyer

You can copy and modify this resource to suit your specific needs.

Do you want to get *active* but don't know how to begin?

Do you think you should make *healthy changes* in your diet but could use some guidance?

There's a new movement in the neighborhood!

[ORGANIZATION'S] Sisters Together program offers lots of ways for you to *move more* and *eat better*.

Meet other women in the community as we work together to improve our health!

Join us on [DATE] at [TIME] at [LOCATION] to launch a new chapter of Sisters Together!

- Get moving with our dance classes and walking groups.
- Come and enjoy a healthy meal and learn how to become a healthier person. You'll get healthy cooking recipes to take with you and try out at home.
- Help spread the Sisters Together message by joining community wellness walks and other events.



The [ORGANIZATION] created the Sisters Together program to help black women and families in our community work together to become more physically active and adopt healthier eating habits. We host activities designed to help the women in our community because more than half—57 percent—of U.S. black women have obesity. Excess weight can contribute to serious health problems, such as type 2 diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease, and certain cancers.



For more information about [ORGANIZATION'S] Sisters Together program, please contact:

[NAME] _____

[ORGANIZATION] _____

[EMAIL] _____

RESOURCE 4

Tips for Planning an Informational Meeting

Starting a new Sisters Together group may require some planning. Where do you meet? What do you do? Who do you invite? Below are some tips for how to plan and run a Sisters Together meeting.

Meeting Planning Tips

Before the meeting

- Decide on the meeting place and time, and reserve a meeting room. Many local community centers, libraries, places of worship, or schools offer free meeting space to community groups and may want to partner with your program to show they care about the community.
- If you or members of your group are able, offer meeting attendees healthy snacks such as whole-grain crackers and peanut butter, fruit, low-fat yogurt, or water or unsweetened tea. Ask your local grocery store manager to donate drinks, food, and paper products. Be sure to ask early enough to ensure an answer in time for your event.
- Arrange for child care if there may be attendees who need to bring their children. Members of your group may be willing to take turns watching the children from meeting to meeting.
- Promote the meeting using whatever resources you have: emails, flyers, phone calls, social networking, texts, tweets, Facebook or Instagram posts, and word of mouth.

- Have current members help out if they can. They can reserve the room, make flyers, contact interested people, set up the room, and get or make snacks. Asking people to help makes them feel like part of the group.

On meeting day

- Call ahead to confirm that the meeting room will be open and available at the set meeting time.
- Bring the following items to the meeting
 - an agenda
 - pens, blank sheets of note paper, flip charts and markers, and “sticky notes”
 - refreshments, napkins, cups, and serving utensils (if you have them)
 - sign-up sheet
 - Sisters Together fact sheets and brochures
- Arrive early to set up the room and make sure everything is ready.

After the meeting

- Email, call, or text attendees to thank them for their interest and for attending the meeting. You also can highlight a couple of key meeting decisions as long as you keep the communication short. If you don't have internet services, check with your local public library, which may offer free public use of computers and the internet. Mention next steps, including details about the next meeting.

RESOURCE 5

Sample In-kind Donation Request Letter

You can copy and modify this resource to suit your specific needs.

Dear [INSERT NAME OF CONTACT AT COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION],



The Sisters Together program of [CITY, ORGANIZATION, OR COMMUNITY] will hold its first annual “Walk for Health” event on [DAY, DATE] at [TIME]. The 5-mile walk will begin at [LOCATION] and end at [LOCATION]. We’re writing to ask you to help support this community-wide event by donating bottled water for participants.

Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better is a national health program that encourages black women to improve their health by becoming more physically active and eating healthier foods.

Overweight and obesity are serious health problems. More than 1 in 3 adults in the United States—about 38 percent—have obesity. That number increases to more than half—57 percent—for black women. Excess weight increases the risk of serious health conditions such as diabetes, kidney disease, and heart disease.

Would [NAME OF COMPANY] support us in our effort to create a healthier community by contributing bottled water? We are expecting about **XX** walkers and volunteers, although that number may increase between now and event day.

Please contact me at [PHONE NUMBER AND/OR EMAIL ADDRESS] for more information about the “Walk for Health” event or the Sisters Together program. You may also visit our website at [INSERT WEBSITE ADDRESS].

On behalf of Sisters Together and all of those who will participate in the “Walk for Health,” thank you for considering our donation request. We all benefit from healthier communities. I look forward to speaking and partnering with you soon.

Sincerely,

Partner with individuals and groups who share your commitment to help those who may benefit from a Sisters Together program.



Step 3: Identify Community Resources

Find out how your community can help. What resources and partners can you turn to?

Partnering with individuals and groups who share your commitment to help black women or others who might benefit from a Sisters Together program in your community may help you

- identify resources, including financial resources and program volunteers
- find program participants
- identify potential meeting places
- identify possible speakers and experts with backgrounds in healthy eating and physical activity to participate in the program

Choose Potential Partners

To find potential partners, check with members of your peer groups such as co-workers, family

members, and sorority members. Also contact organizations or groups that have supported community events and activities, such as local sports teams or businesses.

Choose individuals and groups that

- share your program's values and goals, such as being committed to improving the health of black women
- address women's issues and concerns
- have a track record of success in the community
- have access to and credibility with black women in the community
- use messages similar to those of the Sisters Together program

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Approach Potential Partners

Once you have ranked the people or groups you want to approach, think about how you would like them to support your program. Match your program needs with their interests and time, and develop a list of key selling points that clearly describe “what’s in it for them.”

The following steps may help you enlist a partner

- Call, email, or write your contact and explain that you’d like to discuss a potential partnership opportunity that might interest him or her. Describe the goals and potential benefits of your program. Request an in-person meeting. Sample emails are included at the end of this section.
- Have a “pitch” or notes ready when you meet with possible partners. You can start with information about the health benefits of moving more and eating better, and the health risks of being inactive and having excess weight.
- Be prepared to offer something in return, such as attracting media attention, displaying the partner’s logo, or presenting awards.
- Ask for a commitment, but be aware that your potential partner will probably need time to review your request.

After your first meeting, follow up quickly with a thank-you email or letter that repeats your interest in becoming partners. Prompt your contact to get in touch with you if there are any questions. Once you form a partnership



Think about how you would like potential partners to support your program and explain what’s in it for them.

- Assign one person in your Sisters Together group as the main contact for that partner.
- Put your agreement in writing—for example, a letter signed by you and the partner that describes the purpose of the partnership and each partner’s roles and responsibilities. See a sample partnership agreement letter in the Resources section.
- Update your partner regularly. Use the partner’s feedback to refine your program. Your partner’s advice may help you attract new members and decide where to promote your events.
- Recognize your partner’s contributions with thank-you letters, certificates of appreciation, or other public recognition.

RESOURCE 6

Sample Emails

You can copy and modify this resource to suit your specific needs.

POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Dear [NAME],

My name is [NAME]. [NAME from ORGANIZATION, if you have a referral] suggested that I contact you about our Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better program.

[YOUR ORGANIZATION] started Sisters Together in our community to encourage black women to improve their health by becoming more active and eating healthier foods. Because [POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PARTNER NAME] shares our program goals [and has already done some outstanding work in our community, if applicable], we would like to invite you to become one of our partners.

I would love to meet with you to tell you more about our program and how becoming a Sisters Together partner can benefit your organization [or company] and our community. Is there a convenient day and time in the next week that we can meet? I would be happy to come to your office if that works best for you.

In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about Sisters Together, please visit the [Sisters Together web page](#). Thank you for your interest and time. I look forward to meeting you very soon.

Sincerely,

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POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear [NAME],

Would you like to get healthier and have fun doing it? If so, we'd like to invite you to learn more about the Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better program.

Sisters Together is a free program that encourages black women to support each other in becoming more active and eating healthier. We're starting a program in your area and are planning a kickoff meeting on [DATE]. If you'd like to attend, please respond to this email and we'll send you the meeting details. You're welcome to bring friends or family members.

We're excited about bringing the national Sisters Together program to your community. We have some great ideas for activities and events centered around physical activity and healthy eating—including cooking demos and walking groups—and would like to hear your ideas as well. We hope you'll join us!

In good health,

[NAME]

POTENTIAL LEADERS OR CLERGY IN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Dear [NAME],

My name is [NAME], and I'm contacting you on behalf of [ORGANIZATION'S] Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better program.

Sisters Together is a free, national program with a community focus that encourages black women to improve their health by becoming more physically active and eating healthier foods.

We're planning a [TYPE OF EVENT] and would like your help promoting this event to your congregation and community. The purpose of this event is to encourage community involvement in Sisters Together programs and to promote the Sisters Together "move more, eat better" health message among black women and their families. As a spiritual and community leader, we believe you can help bring this project to life through your insight, resources, and support.

Would you be available sometime this week or next to meet and discuss this community outreach opportunity in person? Please let me know what times are most convenient for you.

Thank you very much for considering our request. I look forward to your reply.

Warmest regards,

[NAME]

RESOURCE 7

Sample Partnership Agreement Letter

You can copy and modify this resource to suit your specific needs.

[Date]

[Name of Recipient]

[Recipient's Title]

[Address]

[City, State] [Zip]



Dear [NAME]:

We at [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] are thrilled that you have agreed to become a partner in our Sisters Together program—and that we share the mutual goal of helping black women improve their health by moving more and eating healthier.

As a new partner, we encourage you to take advantage of the resources, tools, and expertise our Sisters Together program offers

- evidence-based information and messages for black women
- a community for networking, exchanging ideas, and learning from a diverse group of organizations, including advocacy, business, clinical, community, and government groups

The guidelines below provide direction and guidance for partners and the Sisters Together program to work collaboratively to reach mutual goals and objectives. These guidelines seek to ensure that all partner products and activities are

- useful to the target audiences and community at large
- evidence-based, accurate, and reliable
- independent and free of commercial bias

Roles and Responsibilities of the Sisters Together Program and Partners

The Sisters Together program shall use its best efforts to

- provide partners with access to resources (e.g., data, pdfs, and audio and video educational materials) and allow them to adopt and adapt messages and materials and reproduce and distribute them in their own campaigns and program materials

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- develop, implement, and evaluate new program activities and materials
- inform partners about strategic planning and other activities through routine communications such as emails and conference calls
- work together to find additional partners and opportunities to communicate information to the public

Partners shall use their best efforts to

- incorporate Sisters Together messages and strategies into their own organizations' educational activities and materials
- help disseminate and evaluate Sisters Together activities
- enhance the reach of Sisters Together messages and materials to address target audiences by reproducing and distributing Sisters Together messages and materials through the media and other channels
- share information about other relevant materials and activities with Sisters Together and other partners
- provide the Sisters Together program with copies of materials produced and distributed by the organization and report on Sisters Together-related activities to keep track of the overall program

Sisters Together Criteria for Partnership Collaborations

- The partnership shall support the Sisters Together program's overall mission and advance the program's goals and objectives.
- The mission of the partnering organization; the activities, messages, and materials it provides; and its behavior in conducting business shall be consistent with the Sisters Together program's mission and shall not compromise the Sisters Together program's mission, image, standards, integrity, or credibility in any way.
- The collaborating organization agrees to provide the Sisters Together program with general information about the organization's activities related to Sisters Together.
- The Sisters Together program will not endorse, directly or through implied endorsement, specific products, services, educational programs, or enterprises.

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- Individual partners interested in initiating an activity with the Sisters Together program may make a formal written proposal to Sisters Together. The Sisters Together program will review and assess the proposal, judging all proposals by the criteria outlined in this document. Upon approval of the collaboration, the Sisters Together program shall prepare a letter of agreement that specifically describes the
 - purpose of the collaboration
 - goal and intended benefits
 - roles and responsibilities of each partner
 - resources each partner commits to the project
 - rights to any property, goods, services, or other components of the project
 - individuals acting as leads for each partner
 - commitment of support
 - production timelines
- The Sisters Together program shall review the agreement periodically as the project is implemented and update it as needed. If the potential collaboration is not approved, a record shall be kept of the decision for documentation purposes.
- Partners that provide support for Sisters Together activities and/or educational materials may be acknowledged on all materials, without reference to or endorsement of commercial products.
- Verbal acknowledgements and signage that recognize sponsors are appropriate. Support will be clearly acknowledged, as deemed appropriate.

Please contact me directly at [PHONE NUMBER] or [EMAIL ADDRESS] if you have any questions about this partnership agreement letter. Once again, we would like to thank you for joining our partnership network. We look forward to a successful collaboration on behalf of our organizations and the community we serve.

Regards,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR GROUP'S NAME]

A wellness walk or bike ride may fit better with your program goals than hosting a yard sale.



Step 4: Plan Activities

Decide on core activities and events. Which ones are best for your participants and for promoting your message?

Activities and events are the foundation of your program. They can

- increase awareness of the program
- create interest and excitement about your program and its goals
- establish a unique program identity
- highlight program messages

Think about activities that support your program's objectives. For example, a wellness walk or bike ride may fit better with your program goals than hosting a yard sale, as physical activity promotes your program's purpose to encourage "moving more."

When planning activities, choose those that

- address the needs and interests of black women in your community by offering doable tips
- fit your program goals—to build awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and increased physical activity and provide information that can lead to healthy lifestyle changes
- tie in with your partners' activities and have your partners' approval
- don't need more effort, money, or time than you and your partners have

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Planning Your First Community Event

Once your program is up and running, think about planning your first event. One idea is to have a recipe exchange at a popular neighborhood rec center, place of worship, or workplace. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) "[Healthy Eating on a Budget](#)" website has healthy recipes, tips about saving money at the grocery store while making healthy food and beverage choices, and advice about how to prepare low-cost, healthy meals.

Hold meetings to discuss which activities and events to plan, keeping in mind things that may keep your target audience from participating. Some of these issues—and tips to address them—are outlined in the resource at the end of this section. You can make a tips flyer, list some of these items on a blackboard or whiteboard, or simply offer them up for group discussion.

Keep a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of people who attend your meetings and events. Call them or send them a note, text, or email to update them about future activities and events. An easy way to grow your mailing list is to bring a sign-up sheet to all of your meetings and events. See the resources section in Step 2 for a tip sheet on planning an informational meeting.



RESOURCE 8

Barriers to Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Fact Sheet

As you develop your local Sisters Together program, you may hear participants express a number of reasons for not sticking with regular physical activity and healthy eating. For instance, black women with many demands on their time and lives often voice concerns about a lack of child care, the cost of physical activity, time constraints, and the effect of physical activity on their hair. Concerns about budgets, lack of energy and time to shop and cook healthy meals, and not being able to eat favorite foods may be barriers to healthy eating for some people.

Help your Sisters Together members leap over these hurdles with the tips that follow or with the additional resources listed below.

You may use the tips on barriers to physical activity and healthy eating in many ways

- Discuss the tips at a meeting, and let attendees share ideas for dealing with them and offer each other support.
- Make a “tips flyer” to hand out at events or post around your community, if your group has the financial means. You could print physical activity tips on one side of a page and healthy eating tips on the other to save copying costs and for a convenient, one-page handout.
- Create an activity based on the barriers. For example, ask group members to track times during the coming week when they face one of the barriers. At the next week’s meeting, discuss which barriers members confronted and how they overcame them.
- Have members share their healthy recipes or discuss how they’ve turned old family favorites into healthier dishes.

Additional Resources

For more information on healthy eating plans and physical activity, use these science-based government resources:

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

These guidelines discuss the health benefits of specific types and amounts of physical activities and how much physical activity you need to realize these benefits. The Federal Government will release updated physical activity guidelines at the end of 2018.

The **Tools and Resources page** includes printable fact sheets, lessons, flyers, and posters, including *Be Active Your Way: A Guide for Adults*.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015-2020

These **guidelines** from the Federal Government provide advice on healthy eating.

The **Tools and Resources page** includes tips, messages, and materials to help you share information from the Dietary Guidelines with program participants.

ChooseMyPlate, based on the Dietary Guidelines, has additional information and interactive tools for consumers about healthy eating and physical activity.

Check out the **10 Tips Nutrition Education Series**. Each one-page tip sheet has 10 easy-to-follow tips

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on healthy eating, such as how to build a healthy meal and how to add more vegetables to your day. You can print these to hand out at meetings, post on a wall or refrigerator, or use as a discussion group topic.

Staying Active at Any Size

This information from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) at the National Institutes of Health may **help people of all sizes find a physical activity that's right for them**. Also included are tips for sticking with a physical activity plan.

Changing Your Habits for Better Health

This NIDDK content explains the **stages people go through on** their way to making healthy lifestyle changes. Tips are included for overcoming roadblocks and maintaining healthy habits.

Tips for Overcoming Barriers to Physical Activity



"I don't want to mess up my hairstyle."

- Try a natural hairstyle, short haircut, braids, twists, locs, or wigs.
- Wrap a scarf around your hair; when you're done with your workout, remove the scarf and let your hair air dry.

TIPS

Physical activity may make your hair look dull or lead to salt buildup. To keep your hair healthy as you stay fit

- Cleanse your scalp with a clarifying product when needed.
- Avoid harsh products that may strip hair of natural oils.
- Limit the use of heat on hair, such as dryers and curling irons. If you use heat, keep on low settings to protect hair from damage.
- For styling ideas, also consider viewing **YouTube videos** and visiting other relevant online hair groups and communities to be informed and inspired.

"I have no one to watch my kids."

TIPS

- Work out with your kids by taking a walk or jog, dancing together, or playing tag.
- Swap babysitting duties with another parent or ask a family member or friend for help.
- Find a community center or place of worship with free or low-cost child care.

"It costs too much."

TIPS

- Choose free activities, such as walking or jogging in a park or on a school track.
- Walk around your neighborhood or the mall several times, if it's safe.
- Look for free or low-cost classes and activities in your community.
- Find workout videos online and on YouTube if you have internet service—or fitness DVDs at the library—and work out at home.

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Tips for Handling Barriers to Healthy Eating

“I don’t have much time or energy to fix healthy meals.”

TIPS

- Stock up on fruits and veggies you can eat on the run. Apples, bananas, and oranges—or a baggie with baby carrots—are easy “grab-and-go” snacks.
- Buy foods that are easy and quick to make, like whole-grain pasta and tomato sauce, rice and beans, or whole-grain cereal with fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Add canned, fresh, or frozen veggies (like broccoli, carrots, or spinach) to grilled chicken or pasta and rice dishes.

“Healthy foods cost too much money.”

TIPS

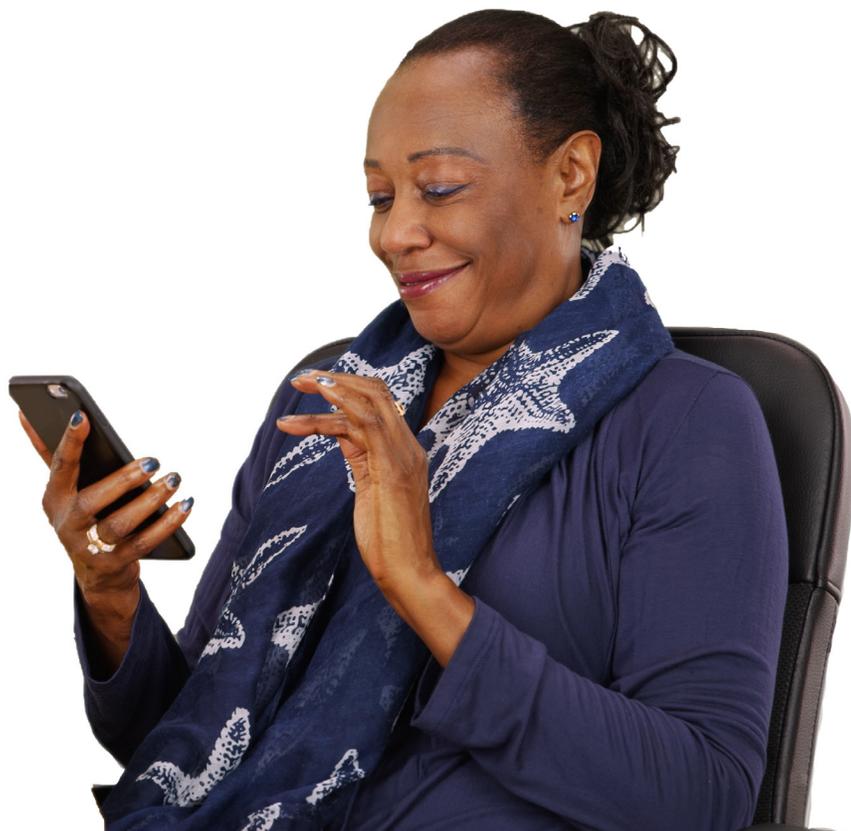
- Buy store brands, rather than name brands, of whole-grain pastas, breads, beans, and other healthy items.
- Read weekly sales flyers to plan meals around healthy items at reduced prices.
- Cook and share healthy meals with friends to cut costs.

“I don’t want to give up my favorite foods.”

TIPS

- Make your favorite dishes like lasagna using fat-free or low-fat dairy products. Add mushrooms or spinach to get some extra veggies and manage your calories. Also, eat smaller portions.
- Reduce the amount of fat and sugar in your regular recipes.
- Add veggies or different types of tomatoes to your favorite pasta dishes.

Tell others about your program by using local, national, and social media.



Step 5: Spread the Word about Sisters Together

Use media outlets to promote your program. How can you get others involved?

Promoting your program will help attract participants. Use the communication and promotion tools included in the resources at the end of this section. The information below can help you spread the word about your Sisters Together program, depending on the size of your program and how many activities you decide to hold.

Use Media Outlets

Use the media outlets below to publicize your program. Consider creating a blog or feature article about health tips for your community, followed by a plug for your program or one of your program events or activities.

National and Local Newspapers or Magazines

When you contact national and local newspapers or magazines, suggest that they feature your program in their

- event calendars
- editorials
- food sections
- health sections
- regular columns or ads

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National and Local TV and Radio Stations

Suggest that national and local TV and radio stations feature your program in their

- community affairs segments or features on physical activity, getting and staying active, etc.
- announcements of local events
- health or food shows

Social Media

Research has shown that more than 40 percent of consumers say information they found through social media affects how they deal with their health. Today, 18- to 24-year-olds are twice as likely as 45- to 54-year-olds to use social media for health-related discussions.³

Use social media to spread the word about your program. Social media platforms include

- Blogs
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Instagram

Create a List of Possible Promotional Contacts

Use these tips to create a contacts list of media outlets and other groups that reach black women and that care about health and wellness issues

- Search your local phone book or go online to identify media and other groups to contact, such as community centers; libraries; grocery stores, hair salons, fitness centers, and other local businesses; and places of worship.



Use the media to publicize your program.

- Check with community partners and members to see if they have any direct contact or relationships with the groups listed above that they can share with you, or with community leaders; local reporters or bloggers; media personalities, whether print, online, radio, or TV; or business owners. Try to gather contact information—including names, titles, phone and fax numbers, and email and street addresses—that is less than 6 months old. Otherwise, you may need to update the information, which can be time-consuming.
- Contact print or online bloggers or reporters who cover general local news, as they may also be useful contacts.

³ Warden, C. 30 facts & statistics on social media and healthcare. referralMD website. Accessed May 3, 2018.

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Once you have created your list, you can make it even more useful if you

- include notes about deadlines or events related to your efforts and the best way and time to notify your contacts
- focus first on those groups that have the greatest outreach to black women, and then branch out to more general interest groups

Using your new list, send contacts news announcements and updates about Sisters Together meetings and events, or offer short tips on physical activity and healthy eating. You might want to adapt the sample outreach letter included in Step 1 Resources for community groups, local businesses, or places of worship to let them know about your program. Ask your contacts to cover or support a special event, such as a fitness walk or food festival. This kind of outreach not only helps promote your program, but also helps inform others about issues the program addresses.

When you update the contacts on your resource list about your events or programs, remember to

- Send materials via social media such as Facebook or Twitter; email, fax, or regular mail—or a combination of these.
- Add photographs of your group (with group members' written permission) or other related items to boost interest.
- Allow several days for your contacts to receive and review the information.
- Follow up with your contacts by social media, phone, or email. That way, you can check that contacts received the materials, answer any questions, and restate the value of the program.
- Thank your contacts when they promote the program in any way. Call, email, or mail them a thank-you note for every announcement, notice, or story they create about the program.

Prepare Information for Social Media

Many radio stations and newspapers now have social media accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. By starting your own pages or accounts on these platforms, you can better connect with their audiences to promote your program. Remember to include all the details in your posts, tweets, and descriptions—the “who, what, when, where, and why.”

Facebook

Creating a Facebook group is a way to share your program materials and announcements with your followers and create a hub. The group can then be promoted on personal pages and multiple other social media platforms.

TIP: Select your group name carefully. Make sure it's simple and searchable—for example, “Westport Kansas City Sisters Together.”

Twitter

Creating a Twitter handle and sending messages using the Twitter platform let you give quick updates about what your program is doing and any last-minute schedule changes. You can also link Twitter to your Facebook group and synchronize updates.

Hashtags, such as #SistersTogether, are a great way to group and track your posts. Using hashtags also allows people to find topics they are interested in easily. By tagging words such as #Fitness or #HealthyLiving, your tweets will be grouped with other similar posts and attract a larger audience. Hashtags can also be used on other social media accounts, such as Instagram.

TIP: When using Twitter, keep in mind that posts or tweets should sum up the facts in 280 characters or less, including spaces. You may want to include a link for more information. You may also want to attach a photo of a flyer; members, **with their permission**; or a program event.

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Instagram

Keep the interest and conversation going about your program or special event by posting pictures to Instagram. A great picture may help spark interest and help grow your program.

YouTube

YouTube provides a universal video platform to connect with your other social media accounts. You can share these videos and embed them into a talk or email. With participants' permission, you can film events and spread the word about your local program using YouTube.



Use social media to help promote your program and activities.

Prepare a Program Kit

For outreach efforts, you may want to prepare a simple program kit that includes information about your Sisters Together program and any activities you have planned.

Consider including the following items in your kit

- any **Sisters Together flyer** that you have created for the specific event or program that you want to highlight
- photographs of your Sisters Together events or members (with their permission)
- some Sisters Together publications you could download from the **Sisters Together website**
- a list of upcoming program activities
- a contact name, email address, and phone number

You don't need fancy packaging for your kit. You can place the items in a two-pocket folder and brand it with labels showing the Sisters Together logo. You could also create your own logo. Make sure you include a place for your contact information.

You also can email, share, or post many of these items online or on social media. If you are contacting a group by email, you may attach files or provide hyperlinks to your group's social media accounts, program materials, website, or other Sisters Together outreach materials.

If you can, update the kit regularly, or whenever major changes occur in your Sisters Together program.

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Promoting the Program with Limited Resources

If you're just starting out and don't have many resources for outreach activities, think about simple, low-cost ways to promote the program in your community

- Leverage social media. Fun, engaging posts on your Facebook group, Facebook event, or Instagram or Twitter feed can create a lot of attention. Use #SistersTogether and a playful hashtag like #WorkoutWednesday or #MeatlessMondays to track discussions and posts, and add pictures to posts to create more visual interest.
- Reach out to online blogs that you or your program members follow, especially if they're local. These blogs may be able to promote your event or program through their existing channels.
- Focus on local media, such as neighborhood newsletters and the local newspaper, radio station, and TV station. Find out who covers community affairs, especially health-related news. Call or email to introduce yourself and the program.
- Call nearby places of worship to see if leaders would be willing to announce your program at services or publish information in a newsletter, bulletin, or online.

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Connect with Your Promotional Contacts

When you contact the groups you have compiled for your outreach efforts, focus on the following talking points

- Individuals, families, and communities all benefit from supporting black women in moving more and eating better.
- Some black women have health problems linked to weight—such as diabetes, kidney disease, joint problems, and other health issues.
- Sisters Together supporting materials and resources are available online.

Once you begin contacting groups or media outlets, they may ask to speak with you informally or request an interview with you. Interviews give you a chance to talk about your activities and recruit members.

These tips may be useful

- Do your homework. Learn as much as you can about the group before your meeting.
- Organize key message points and practice answering questions using the materials in your program kit.
- Make simple, direct statements that are easy to understand.
- Get back to interviewers right away with any promised information.
- Be sure to leave your card or name and phone number.
- Thank your contacts for the opportunity to talk about the Sisters Together program.

When you plan, launch, or host an event, send background information to your sources 3 to 4 days before the event. Make follow-up calls to see if reporters or others need more information, and encourage them to attend.

You can create a Facebook event to invite large groups of people, including existing and potential new program members. Use the event page to update time and location, answer any questions, and track RSVPs.

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Finally, be sure to track media coverage or any response you have based on your requests or outreach efforts. To continue to get coverage, don't forget to let your contacts know about future Sisters Together events.

Plan a Kickoff Event

A great way to raise awareness and create excitement about your Sisters Together program is to plan a kickoff event. Successful Sisters Together events have included walking groups, dance classes, aerobics classes, and cooking sessions, as well as creating a fitness calendar.

Promote your kickoff event using one or more of the following strategies

- Attend local festivals and special events. Other venues are a great place to distribute your Sisters Together materials and create buzz about your upcoming event.



Local festivals and other venues are a good way to create buzz about your pending event. Create portable posters and signs for more visibility.

- Distribute flyers where you live and work. You can post them on bulletin boards at grocery stores or places of worship, give them out at neighborhood meetings, or hand them out through partner groups.
- Email, text, or tweet interested members with event details. Ask them to forward the information to family members, co-workers, and friends.
- Invite the media to the event.
- Post the event on your program website or personal or program social media accounts.

Create Promotional Materials

If your program has an exhibit booth at a local health fair or event, a handmade poster or banner can be an effective promotional tool and make your booth easy to find. Consider creating a portable poster or banner to display at all of your Sisters Together events.

Giveaways

People love souvenirs. Consider creating Sisters Together giveaway items for your program members and sponsors. These items can help promote your program and create interest. Popular giveaway items include pens, T-shirts, and water bottles.

SISTERS SPOTLIGHT

If your budget is tight, consider recruiting program volunteers to make giveaway items. For example, one Sisters Together program made low-cost, hand-held fans featuring program members. Members handed out the fans at local places of worship to help women stay cool during summer services.

RESOURCE 9

Communication and Promotion Tools

Digital and traditional platforms may help you reach current and future members of your Sisters Together group.

You may use these tools to

- recruit new participants and partners by raising awareness of your program
- share materials and tips on healthy eating and physical activity
- promote upcoming events and activities and share photos and write-ups from previous events

Facebook

You can use Facebook in a number of ways to connect with your Sisters Together group:

Groups. Groups are great for getting things done and staying in touch with just the people you want. Within a group, you can share photos and videos, have conversations, plan events, and more. Select from various privacy settings to control who may and may not access your group. [Learn more about Facebook groups.](#)

Events. Events let you organize and respond to gatherings in the real world with people on Facebook. When you create an event, you can control who sees or joins your event. [Learn more about Facebook events.](#)

Pages. Pages are for brands, businesses, organizations, and public figures to create a presence on Facebook. A page may not be the best option for your Sisters Together program. Instead, consider creating a group first. [Learn more about Facebook pages.](#)

Invite your friends to “join” your group and “share” your content and events.

Sample Facebook Post

Make activities like walking or cleaning your car or house part of your regular schedule. You can use the world around you to stay healthy and fit.

Twitter

Twitter can be a tool for reaching various media platforms to get the word out about your program. You also can use Twitter to give members of your Sisters Together group real-time updates on events and happenings, inspiration, and tips on how to stay motivated

- Create a username, or “handle,” that’s easy to remember and ties into Sisters Together: for example, @Sisters2getherATL. Encourage your friends and group participants to follow your handle on Twitter.
- Be sure to keep tweets under 280 characters, including punctuation, hashtags (#), and spaces.
- Use hashtags to track popular conversations and boost views of your tweet. Hashtags are also an easy way to find and participate in Twitter Chats.

[Learn more about how to use Twitter.](#)

Sample Tweet

#HealthTip: If you’re craving ice cream to help you cool off this #summer, try a fruit #smoothie instead!

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Creating a Web Page

If your program is part of a larger group with a website, try adding a web page for your program to that site. Your program partners also may agree to have you create a Sisters Together page on their organizations' sites. If these options aren't available, consider these steps to develop your own website:

1. Obtain and register a domain name.
2. Design the website. Create a layout, find graphics, write text, and add links to help users move around the site and link to useful outside resources. Someone in your group or one of your partner organizations may have practice doing this or know someone who can volunteer some time.
3. Update the site often with new content. Make sure all links are working.

Services like **Wix**, **WordPress**, or **Squarespace** make it easy (and often free) to design a website, even if you've never done it before.

Traditional platforms may also help you promote your Sisters Together program. Consider sending a press announcement to key community leaders and local media personalities. Engaging with these stakeholders will help raise short- and long-term awareness of your program, events, and activities.

How Can We Measure the Group's Success?

1. Track how many program participants we have each quarter.
2. Count the partners we have after 6 months.
3. Use feedback forms to find out what participants think of the program.

How can we measure the group's success?

1. Track how many members we have each quarter.
2. Count the partners we have after 6 months.
3. Keep food diaries and discuss progress.
4. Record the number of miles walked each week.
5. Use feedback forms to find out what others think of our program.

Measuring your success will help you find out what activities work best for your community.

Step 6: Measure Success, Keep Your Program Going

Track your progress. How can you make your program even better and keep your program going?

Tracking your progress can help you measure your program's success over time, identify minor problems, and make necessary changes before major problems develop. You may find better ways to promote your Sisters Together activities and identify materials that best serve your community. Monitoring your success will also help you find out which activities to repeat and which ones to stop doing.

Track Your Sisters Together Materials

When you hand out flyers or door prizes, record the place, date, and type and number of items you give away. This will help you plan the timing of future Sisters Together events. For example, if you gave away all of your fact sheets at a weekend event and only a few at a weekday event, you may decide that weekends are a better time to hand out materials.

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Ask for Input from Participants and Partners

Program participants and partners can give helpful input on your Sisters Together program. Ask for their comments on your activities, events, and program, and ask how they were involved in the program. Some questions you may want to ask include

- What is working well?
- Which areas do we need to improve?
- How can we improve our program?
- What would you like the program to do next?

Ask participants if they've made any changes in their lives since starting the program. Write down any comments they're willing to share with the

group so you can all discuss the changes later. To have a better idea of changes that take place over time, you can also ask members to do the following

- Track how often they are physically active each week, and keep a weekly group count of the number of minutes/hours to compare over time.
- Track how many fruits and vegetables they eat each day.

A feedback form is a great way to find out what people think of your Sisters Together program events. You can use the information you gather to plan future activities. Keep feedback forms simple and to the point. Try to include only multiple-choice questions. A sample feedback form is included in the resources at the end of this section.



Ask program participants for their input on your activities, events, and program—and how they were involved.

Tracking Your Progress as You Start Out

Here are some things you can count or record to help you track your progress

- how many people attended your kickoff meeting, if you had one
- how many community partners joined the program
- how many people attended your first walking event and how far you walked
- how many people joined your program's Facebook page, if you have one

Share Your Success

Sharing your program's success with the community, your partners, and others is very important. Writing and speaking in public about your program's achievements are good ways to make your partners, future members, potential

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"Sisters Together changed my life. I hated working out prior to this class and the sisters motivated and encouraged me. I started off only working out with them. Then, I signed up for a gym membership at LA Fitness. I gradually made small changes in my diet and started exercising more. Now I've lost 20 lbs and exercise regularly. If I hadn't signed up for this class I don't know where my health would be."

Nikki

Her success, Our Success

Center of Wellness for Urban Women, Inc.

fundors of your program, and black women aware of Sisters Together and its messages—and to keep the program going. Highlighting your positive outcomes further promotes better health for black women—and that's what it's all about!

Keep Your Program Going

One measure of your program's success is being able to keep it running over the long haul. Maintaining strong community partnerships is important to keeping your program alive and vibrant. Your partners are a vital source of potential program participants, volunteers, funding, and in-kind support. The resources section at the end of Step 3 includes a sample partnership agreement letter.

Consider forming a committee and developing a work plan that includes your partners. Seek regular feedback from partners about your Sisters Together program. You also may want to join coalitions that have a similar focus or mission. Evaluate your program regularly, collect data about the program's successes and progress, and share that data with your committee and partners.

Using lessons learned from participant input to continually tweak and improve your program will also contribute to its long-term success. Stay connected with participants to ensure they stay engaged in the program and continue to communicate what works and what doesn't.

Finally, it's important to stay abreast of changes within your community. For example, new businesses may move into your area, offering potential opportunities for new partnerships. A changing local economy could affect your program's funding, signaling that you may need to identify new funding sources or change your goals to reflect your budget.

We'd like to hear about how you've kept your program going, secured ongoing funding, or expanded your program. Please contact us at healthinfo@niddk.nih.gov.



Stay connected with participants to ensure they stay engaged in the program.

RESOURCE 10

Sample Feedback Form

You can copy and modify this resource to suit your specific needs.

Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better

Please help our planning efforts by filling out both sides of this brief form and handing it in at the end of the event.

Tell us what you think about today's event (for example, what did you find most useful?):

How did you hear about today's event? Please check all that apply:

- Email
- Flyer. Where? _____
- Friend or family member
- Radio. Which station? _____
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Text message
- Other. Please describe. _____

What topics would you like to hear about in the next few months?

What suggestions do you have for future Sisters Together activities or events?

Have you attended other Sisters Together events? Yes No

Please tell us which ones: _____

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

Had you heard about Sisters Together before this event? Yes No

If yes, please tell us how you knew about Sisters Together or what you heard: _____

Please tell us something about yourself:

How often do you get moderately intense physical activity of 10 minutes or longer (for example, bicycling, brisk walking, dancing, playing sports, running, or swimming)?

- Not at all right now
- 1-2 times a week
- 3-4 times a week
- 5-6 times a week
- Every day

Have you made any recent changes in your physical activity habits? Yes No

If so, please tell us what changes you've made: _____

How many servings of fruits or vegetables do you eat each day?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5 or more

How do you plan to change your eating habits after participating in today's event? Please tell us what changes you would like to make: _____

If you've tried to make changes to improve your eating and physical activity habits but couldn't, what have been the major barriers to change? _____

Would you recommend a Sisters Together event to a friend, family member, or co-worker? If not, why not? _____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form.

Clinical Trials

The **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases** (NIDDK) and other components of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) conduct and support research into many diseases and conditions.

What are clinical trials, and are they right for you?

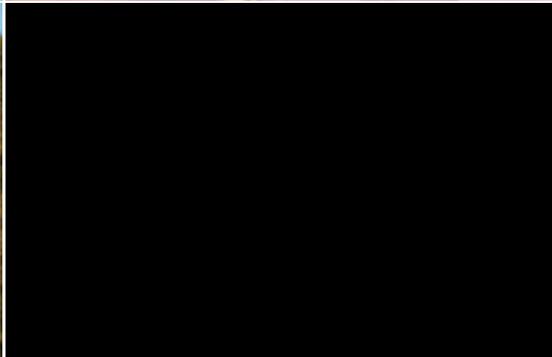
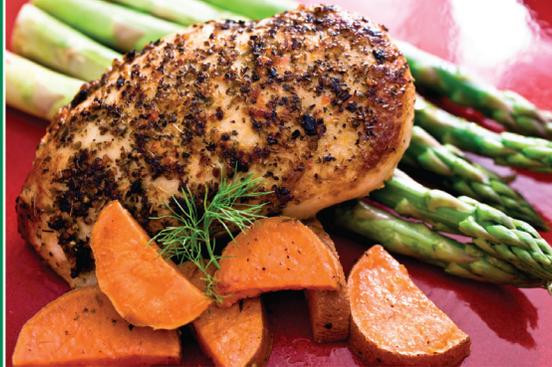
Clinical trials are part of clinical research and at the heart of all medical advances. Clinical trials look at new ways to prevent, detect, or treat disease. Researchers also use clinical trials to look at other aspects of care, such as improving the quality of life for people with chronic illnesses. **Find out if clinical trials are right for you.**

What clinical trials are open?

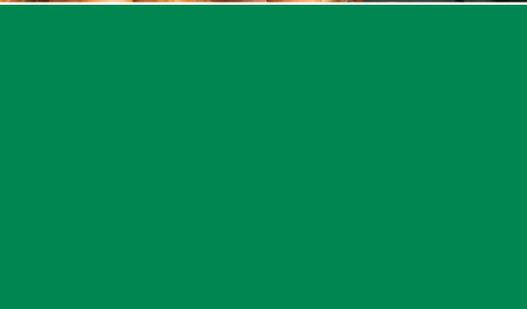
Clinical trials that are currently open and are recruiting can be viewed at **www.ClinicalTrials.gov**.

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