



---

## How to Approach Potential Community Partners

Once you decide your school's needs and have examined the assets, skills and knowledge of potential partners, it is now time to reach out! The best way to establish this contact is through personal connections. This can be through a personal letter with materials from the school, a personal visit with a packet of the school's information, or through a courtesy phone call to schedule a time to meet.

If you have no prior relationship with the potential partner, it is best that the first outreach communication be introductory and informal to allow for relationship building. After the first initial contact however, you may want to begin to further pitch your ideas for collaboration. Remember though to start small and focus on common goals first so you do not overwhelm!

Here are some suggestions in writing an initial letter:

- Find the name and address of the owner or president of the business/community organization and address the letter accordingly. If it is a large organization, you may also want to send a copy of the letter to another person within the organization to ensure your communication is received.
- Include your school's name and location.
- Describe the school's mission and goals for high standards and success for all students.
- Briefly explain your emphasis on school, family, and community partnerships.
- Describe how the partner's support can help achieve goals and benefit the community as a whole.
- Illustrate how the partnership will be mutually beneficial for both parties.
- Specify how the business or organization will be recognized for its support.
- Note that you will call or visit next week.
- Include your signature and contact information along with the principal's signature.

You may attempt sending personalized letters to all potential partners as not everyone will be able to match your schools needs or you may focus on a select few and really nurture those partnerships first.

New Mexico Highlands University. (2007). *Working Together: School-Family-Community Partnerships, a Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities*. Albuquerque: New Mexico Public Education Department. Available from <http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu/toolkit/index.html>.