Successful Outreach Methods with AI/AN Communities: Tips for Title VI Programs
Events
Ideas from past MIPPA grantees:

• Health fair with a booth and/or presentation about Medicare
• Tribal elder conference in conjunction with a larger pre-existing conference
• “Medicare day” in conjunction with the local county - guest speakers, people to answer questions and provide assistance with paperwork
• “Wellness gathering” – guest speakers on different topics related to elder needs, and exercise sessions, games, meals
• Webinars or town-halls
• Facebook Live – such as this event by the Greater Lakes Inter-Tribal Council
• Presentations at congregate meal sites
• Information tables at Indian Health Service centers, powwows, Tribal summits, and other community events, with a tri-fold info board, brochures, fact sheets, etc.
• One-on-one counseling sessions in partnership with the State Health Insurance Assistance Program
• Medicare bingo – incorporating Medicare facts, terms and information (can be done in a parking lot for social distancing)
• Placemats – provide a list of potential topics of discussion, and elders can select which interest them
• Drive-through event - distribute bags with promotional items and literature from various tribal and surrounding community programs, and boxed lunches
• Sponsor events – pass out informational materials/promotional items at events such as a wellness walk, tribal fair, conference, etc.

Did You Know?
You can utilize MIPPA funds for:
Refreshments/meals for a MIPPA outreach event; advertisement costs; Staff travel and transportation costs for elders to attend an outreach event

Materials
Informational materials could include:

• Overview of Medicare, Medicare savings, low-income subsidy, Medigap, preventative services
• Contact info for: MIPPA, your SHIP Office, your IHS Benefits Coordinator, anyone who can answer questions and assist with filling out forms
• FAQ sheet
• Calendars with key Medicare dates and preventative services information related to monthly commemorations (e.g. mammograms during Breast Cancer Awareness Month)
• Videos from CMS
• Tri-fold display
• PowerPoints, YouTube videos, or recorded short Facebook Live events on loop on TV in congregate meal areas or community centers

Promotional items could include:

• Tote bags/insulated bags
• T-shirts
• Hand sanitizer
• Masks
• Medication pill box
• Pens and notepads/folders
• Fridge magnet

Messaging Tips💡

• Be explicit about the amount they might save (e.g., Medicare Savings Programs can give you back $170 each month)
• Emphasize services/assistance is free (“We’ll help you apply at no cost to you”)
• Emphasize how benefits can help elders remain independent and healthy
• Explain the timing – “open enrollment” can be confusing
• Clearly explain Medicare Advantage plans
• Raise awareness about fraud and scams
• Utilize SHIP office to provide unbiased information about Medicare to elders and their caregivers
Outreach Strategies

Consider various outreach channels and identify the options that make the most sense for your target audience:

- Email or text communications
- Flyers/posters
- Add flyers to home-delivered meals
- Have flyers available at congregate meals or pick-up meal sites
- Posters in the clinic, senior/community centers, post office, casino or bingo hall, grocery store, bus kiosks, churches, etc.
- Radio – announcements or call-in hour for “Ask About Medicare” where listeners can get their questions answered
- Social media (i.e. tribe’s Facebook page)
- Word of mouth – event/network marketing: announce events at public meetings, social gatherings, and other events where elders congregate (e.g. church, traditional events, etc.)
- Local newspapers
- Partner with local community organizations – such as Patient Financial Assistance, Alternate Health Resources, Outreach and Enrollment, or other departments who are willing and able to assist elders.
- Implement an Ambassador Program to reach rural populations in their communities from a trusted source across Alaska such as Federally Facilitated Health Organizations, Tribal Health Centers, and Senior Centers.

Tips for Outreach

- Utilize places and media platforms frequented by elders
- Utilize your Elder Benefits Specialist, if possible – send a letter to everyone turning 65 each year to tell them the importance of enrolling in Medicare
- Elders are more likely to respond to face-to-face engagement so, whenever possible, communicate your message in-person to help build stronger relationships, boost the effectiveness of your outreach efforts, and ensure you’re getting your message across clearly and concisely.

Things to Consider

- Aim to write materials at an 8th grade reading level (or below). As we age, our reading comprehension and retention are impacted.
- Use larger font size, dark text on a light background, and leave white space around text.
- Include graphics and photos wherever possible, specifically to reflect your community (i.e. people and places/landscape to reflect your area).