

## Goal setting

Let's put first things first and ask the guiding question: by the end of National Literacy Action Week (NLAW), what do you want to have accomplished?

The key to event planning is a strong focus. Consider the mission of your organization and think about how NLAW events can help you achieve your goals. Do you want to raise awareness in your local community about the literacy needs that exist there? Is there an issue in education that you want to organize around to affect change? Whatever your decision, it is crucial that your NLAW goals and plans are consistent with your mission. Every event that you plan should have a specific purpose. And remember that it is better to do two events well than to hold seven events that no one attends. Again, the question to ask yourself is, "Where do we want to be when these events are over?"

## Planning

Everyone who is involved or affected by the efforts of your organization should be invited to participate in planning for NLAW. Having input from tutors, learners, community partners and other stakeholders is vital. Broad participation in planning will increase everyone's sense of ownership and will ensure that your NLAW events address the real needs of your community and program. Make sure to reap the benefits that a diverse group of stakeholders will bring!

## Leadership

Planning a National Literacy Action Week program is a large undertaking, and it is important to remember that one person cannot take care of all the responsibilities. The key is to have different people be responsible for different parts of the week. Delegate, delegate, delegate!

Here is one possible way to share responsibilities:

- **NLAW Coordinator** - responsible for the overall workings of the week. He or she also is the spokesperson for the event as well as the contact person for SCALE.
- **Event Coordinators** - responsible for the logistics, time, date, and place of a specific event as well as leading the team that carries out the event.
- **Media Coordinator** - responsible for contacting the press before, during, and after National Literacy Action Week. He or she is also responsible for sending media clippings to SCALE after the week is over.
- **Fundraising Coordinator** - responsible for the fundraising aspect of NLAW. Fundraisers may include a benefit concert, T-shirt sales, or a house party.

## Campus Groups Who Can Help

Once you have a clear idea of who is going to guide the development of the week, it is important to involve a diverse group of stakeholders from the beginning. Besides the members of your organization, you might want to consider contacting other groups and individuals on campus who have different viewpoints or talents. Your campus community consists of a wide range of people from all walks of life. Networking is the key. Diversity in a leadership team can help you reach more people.

Following is a partial list of people and groups that might be able to help you with different aspects of NLAW. This list is not an exhaustive list of all the resources your campus has, so please don't assume that these suggestions are your only options.

- **Student Union** - This is a great group to contact if you are trying to find out how to work with your university. They are pros at sponsoring concerts, movies, speakers, etc. and can direct you to the right people on campus.
- **Student ethnic and cultural groups** - African-American, Latino, Asian-American, Native-American and others. These groups may have suggestions for event ideas or even offer to co-sponsor one.
- **Campus religious groups (all faiths)** - These groups often have campus centers that they may allow you to use free of charge. These groups may have suggestions for event ideas or even offer to co-sponsor one.
- **Literary societies** - They could help you select reading materials for certain events. They also could help get in touch with local authors and poets who might be willing to participate in an event.
- **Student Government** - This group has the money and the person power. It often has delegates from many student organizations on campus. They are usually well organized with a lot of resources, including connections with administration, supplies for copying, faxes, etc.
- **Community service organizations** - Other service organizations on campus or in the community with similar values might be willing to lend a hand.
- **Residence hall associations** - This is another good way of reaching a large part of the student population. Do not forget scholarship halls.
- **Pan-Hellenic and Interfraternity councils** - Sororities and Fraternities can be a good source of money and people. Each house usually has a philanthropy chairperson who works with local community service agencies. These officers often have discretionary funds that they use to donate small amounts of money to local community service groups or events. If you approach them early, they might even be willing to hold a fundraiser for your group.
- **Women's groups** - You may want to set up a panel discussion to focus on women and literacy. This group will probably know whom to contact in the region about women's issues.

Some of these people you may call just to ask questions. Others might be interested in helping to organize NLAW from the beginning. Again, do not be limited by this list and don't be shy. Most of the people in these groups will be willing to help, but only if you ask. Be creative and strategic about whom you work with and what you do, and make sure you feel comfortable with the values of the group. Your school's union probably has an organizations and activities office that has a complete listing of student groups as well as contact numbers. Use it!

### **Individuals Who Can Help**

There are a number of individuals, not affiliated with any particular group, who can be useful organizers and participants in your NLAW planning as well. Among the mix of good candidates are:

- **Journalism students** - Journalism students might be willing to write press releases or work with the campus paper to cover your group and your NLAW efforts.
- **New readers** - Adults or young adults who have recently learned to read should be an integral part of the planning process. They are the true literacy experts.
- **Graphics arts students** - They could help with the design of T-shirts, posters, flyers and banners. Students will often do work for free so they can build their portfolios.
- **Theatre students** - Consider approaching theatre students about staging a drama written by a new reader or a dramatic reading during an event.
- **Faculty** - Make sure your professors know about your work in literacy. They might be willing to devote class time to discuss literacy, give you class time to talk to students, or possibly even mobilize their classes to assist with NLAW.