

# UCLA Abstracts for NCS Research Day

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## Lessons Learned from Community Outreach in a Large Multi-ethnic Urban Study Location

**Introduction:** The size and diversity of Los Angeles County pose special challenges for community outreach and engagement for the National Children's Study. Our first 9 months in the field were marked by two key balancing acts: 1) top-down versus bottom-up engagement, and 2) broad-based versus targeted outreach.

**Methods:** Top-down engagement consists of working with organizational leaders, key stakeholders, and community champions, whereas grass-roots or bottom-up engagement reaches out to community residents directly. Broad-based outreach involves increasing awareness in the larger community, whereas targeted outreach focuses efforts on specific segment or potential eligible preconception or pregnant women.

**Results:** There was an association between increases in depth of community partnerships over the course of the recruitment phase and enrollment rates. Large outreach events yielded hundreds of attendees but very low numbers of eligible participants, whereas more targeted events held at schools located within the segments yielded higher attendance of eligible participants. Baby showers appear to be particularly effective at targeting eligible participants.

**Discussion:** Response rates are directly related to the depth of community partnership. Top-down engagement works well in communities with strong institutions. Grass-roots or bottom-up engagement works especially well when residents are not well connected to institutions, but is difficult when there is no sense of community. Large outreach events attracted large number of attendees but few eligible study participants and were not cost-effective; thus our community outreach efforts have been redirected toward more targeted approach.