Mitigating Risk: Questions to Consider to When
Serving a New At-Risk Population

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As our organizations have worked to develop or enhance programming to serve new populations, we have identified these 8 themes to consider, and a number of questions related to each theme. We encourage you to discuss these questions with your team:

1. **Risk Environment:** What are the risks we are trying to mitigate, eliminate, or transfer?
    a. Which of these risks apply to all populations? Are there any that are unique to this new population?
    b. What options are there for mitigating risk?
    c. Are there options for transferring or eliminating risk?

2. **Program Fit:** Are our programs a good fit for this population? Are they relevant or applicable for the population? Does the population we would like to serve need or want the programs we are interested in offering?
    a. What training or awareness building does our staff need to determine the answer to this question? What experts can we consult to help us answer this question? This is different than training about how to serve this population – this is about familiarization to understand the population to determine goodness of fit with our program.

3. **Experts:** What experts or resources can we rely on to support us through this process? Are there other organizations out there doing this?
    a. If we are serving local participants, who else in our community is serving the same population we would like to serve?
    b. How is what we are providing complimenting, enhancing or differing from what they are providing?
    c. What are their policies?

4. **Staffing & Implementation:** What do we need to do to accommodate the needs of the new population we plan to serve?
    a. Who will be implementing this program? Do we need their input about the logistics of implementation?
    b. What training do we need in order to effectively create or adapt our program?
    c. What training do we need to provide for the people delivering the program?
    d. Do we need to make adjustments with how we staff the program? Are there credentials our staff or volunteers must have to serve this population? Do we need to adjust our instructor- to-participant ratio?
    e. Do any of our field practices or policies need to be adjusted? Does our field emergency response plan need to change?

5. **Partners:** If our organization works with partners or subcontractors, what do we need to communicate to them or provide for them to facilitate our joint work with this new population?

6. **Policy and Insurance:** Do our insurance needs change as a result of choosing to serve this population?
    a. Do any of our field practices or policies need to be adjusted? Does our field emergency response plan need to change?
    b. Are we able to accommodate this population within our current policies? If not, can we change our policies/procedures to integrate this new population, rather than making them an exception?

7. **Screening:** Does our screening process need to be adjusted or enhanced?
    a. Do we have guardrails about who, within the population we would like to serve, we can or cannot accommodate with our program? This can change as we continue our work with this population. We may choose to start with more conservative guardrails and then expand them as we gain experience.
    b. What is the most effective way to gather information about individual participants? Do we need to ask different questions on an application or a medical screening form? Do we need to conduct interviews? With whom? Do we need to gather feedback from others who know or work with the participant (Orientation and Mobility Instructor, Case Worker, etc.)

8. **Communication and Support:** How will we communicate with new audiences, and what additional support do we need to provide to participants, parents, families or caregivers?
    a. What is our mechanism for communicating expectations to each constituent group: participants, parents/caregivers, staff/volunteers?
        a. Will our current communication mechanisms serve new groups, or will we need to rethink them?
    b. Should we provide any new or different pre-program training or resources for our participants?
    c. Do we need to adjust any pre-program information we provide for parents, families or caregivers?
    d. Do we need to provide any additional or unique support to parents, families or caregivers during the program?
    e. Do we need to adjust or enhance post-program support for participants, parents, families or caregivers?