

Building Effective Partnerships



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance



did you know?



Effective community partnerships can enhance funding applications and improve outcomes for program participants.



Effective partnerships can:

1. Increase the number and sources of program referrals.
2. Expand the range of services available for fathers.
3. Lead to joint funding applications or in-kind donations such as staff time, space, materials, or food for group sessions.
4. Build community awareness of a program.



Effective collaboration requires:

- Common understanding of purpose, goals, expected outcomes, and roles and responsibilities of each partner organization.
- Trust and openness, clear communication, and respect for contributions of all partners.
- Shared leadership and decision-making among individuals who are recognized and empowered by their organizations to build connection and resolve conflicts.
- Flexibility, investment of time, and availability to develop effective collaborations and build trust.



To be effective, partnership meetings should:

- Have a clear agenda.
- Be focused and well-managed.
- Keep people actively engaged.
- Establish follow-up tasks and timetables for completion.
- Have an experienced member responsible for summarizing decisions made and issues to be addressed at a future meeting.

REFERENCES

- *Compassion Capital Fund National Resource Center (2010). Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together*
<https://bit.ly/30MTUHI>
- *Journal of Public Health Management Practice (2006). Building Effective Community Partnerships for Youth Development*
<https://on.ny.gov/2Ny36Mc>

WHAT YOU CAN DO

IDENTIFY AND MEET POTENTIAL PARTNERS:



- Conduct a scan of community organizations to learn about services provided.
- Attend community events and serve on multi-agency committees.
- Reach out to explore whether a partnership could be mutually beneficial - be clear about what you are asking for.
- Offer to make presentations about your program for staff of interested organizations.
- Encourage interested individuals to visit and learn about your program.

BUILD AND MAINTAIN PARTNERSHIPS:



- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- Identify staff to serve as primary points of contact for each partner organization.
- Agree on expectations about the frequency and modes of communication.
- Provide cross-agency training so that key staff understand the scope of all partner services and their individual roles and responsibilities.
- Plan ahead for data sharing if it is a feature of the partnership.

DEVELOP CLEAR, WRITTEN AGREEMENTS TO REDUCE MISUNDERSTANDING AND PROVIDE CONTINUITY DURING STAFF CHANGES:



- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is helpful for establishing new community relationships and strengthening existing ones.
 - It should outline the actions expected of all parties, include a statement of purpose, and specify roles and responsibilities.
- A contract is a more formal agreement that specifies terms of a partnership.
 - This is strongly recommended when deliverables are required in exchange for a fee.
 - A performance-based contract clarifies the outcomes required to receive payment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

NRFC RESOURCES

- Forging Effective Responsible Fatherhood Partnerships: A Research-to-Practice Brief
<https://bit.ly/2zjBnqf>
- Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field/Start a Program
<https://bit.ly/2KZv55Q>

OTHER RESOURCES

- Center for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas. Community Toolbox: Creating and Maintaining Partnerships
<https://bit.ly/2zmFJN4>
- The Partnering Initiative. Partnering Toolbook
<https://bit.ly/329Aehp>

