

Collaboration Guide

Communities can face several challenges that cannot be tackled alone. This is where collaborations fit in to use the resources and expertise of government agencies, nonprofits, schools, and businesses to meet essential goals. These partnerships can vastly improve the health and welfare of families and communities.

Starting a Partnership

- Determine the need for a partnership: what are your goals and how could a partnership meet them?
- Look for the collaboration where the greatest need is.
 - Do you want your program to reach schools with lower test scores, underserved communities, etc.?
- Research organizations in the area that could be potential partners
- Talk with stakeholders (interested party) about potential partners.
 - Do your organizations have similar goals in the community? Do they serve the same demographics? Are leaders in the organization “bought in” to this project/partnership and its potential for growth?

Collaboration Planning

- Be clear about program goals and expectations: what, how, who, where, and when.
 - What are the benefits of this partnership to us and our community?
 - What skills and resources do we bring to the table?
 - Do we have a shared vision and/or goals?
- Familiarize yourself with your partner organization: get to know the staff and their passions.
 - Schedule meetings to introduce yourself and the program to staff members
 - Utilize icebreakers and ‘get to know you’ activities
 - Showcase potential program activities and get partner feedback.
 - Ask partner staff what they want to see in the program
- Start communicating early!
 - Ask the partner their preferred mode of communication: calendar invites, in-person vs virtual, email, etc.
 - Clarity, transparency, and honesty are essential.

Potential Barriers

- Lack of clear purpose or goals
- Failure to communicate
- Lack of financial input or time commitments
- Surface-level relationship with partners and stakeholders