Partnership Checklist

Why Funding Agencies Like Partnerships

Partnerships are increasingly being recommended or required as a strategy for developing and implementing successful interventions. Partnerships are unique in their ability to promote and leverage knowledge and skills from across multiple sectors. Most promising intervention strategies emphasize the importance of partnerships in achieving intermediate and long-term goals. Funding agencies recognize that in addition to development and implementation, partnerships help disseminate and communicate project strategies. Lastly, partnerships can reduce the duplication of efforts and/or competition, as well as maximize effectiveness. Partnerships with the ability to demonstrate success are more likely to obtain funding.

There are certain partnership attributes that affect capacity within and between organizations, which in turn affects the achievement of outcomes. This checklist provides you with a way to identify if your partnership has some of the attributes needed to be successful.

Partnership Formation		
	Yes	No
Have partners with similar visions/missions been identified?		
Have partners with similar visions/missions been engaged?		
Do your partners represent the diversity you need to be successful? In thinking about diversity it may be important to consider: • Differences in terms of type of organizations or sectors (e.g., faith communities, community based organizations, governmental leaders, neighborhood associations, community members affected by your work) • Differences in racial and ethnic background of participants • Differences in geographic region or neighborhoods		

Shared Mission/Vision and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)		
	Yes	No
Do all partners agree on the issue/problem?		
Have all partners participated in creating the vision and mission for the partnership?		
Does the mission or vision statement encourage unity behind the partnership's actions?		
Is there agreement on the best approach to create desired change(s)?		
Have all partners developed and signed a MOU or Charter document that outlines why the partnership was created, its principles, and the roles and expectations of all members in the partnership? Have MOU(s) that outline roles and responsibilities between you and the partner organization been signed?		

Leadership		
	Yes	No
Has the partnership appointed a neutral facilitator who is focused and motivated to move the partnership to action?		
Is there a strong leader committed to guiding the partnership to success?		

Decision Making		
	Yes	No
Have the partners agreed upon a decision making process? • Voting, with majority rules • Discussion, leader has final say • Discussion, reach a consensus • Fist to five or thumbs up/thumbs down method		

Roles and Expectations		
	Yes	No
Are there clear roles that describe who is expected to lead the collaboration and who is responsible for implementation of		
Are there agreed upon roles and responsibilities? Have your partners signed an MOU to make this formal?		

Partnership Functioning		
	Yes	No
Are meetings held in a timely and productive manner?		
Does the partnership have a process for recruiting new members?		
Does the partnership have an orientation session for new members?		
Do the partnership meetings have comprehensive partner representation and consistent attendance?		
Are there structures and processes in place that enable those who miss meetings to know what was accomplished in their absence?		
Are there structures and processes in place to ensure that meeting attendees share decisions made with other key leaders in their organization?		

Communication		
	Yes	No
Are all members connected through consistent communication?		
Are opportunities and information shared equitably?		

Conflict Resolution		
	Yes	No
Are disagreements dealt with immediately and in a productive manner?		
Is there a plan for resolving conflicts?		

Building Relationships		
	Yes	No
Do partners work together to create an environment that is respectful, honest, and trusting?		
Do partners contribute time and effort that is considered adequate by all members?		
Do partners share resources with other members in the partnership?		
Are structures in place to ensure that resources and funds are equitably spread throughout the partnership?		
Is the division of activities equitable between members of the partnership?		

Partnerships and the Grant Writing Process:

The partnership checklist you just completed can also help you in drafting the description of the partnership for your proposal. As you think about crafting your proposal for funding you might want to highlight those areas where you indicated yes, and give examples to provide evidence of your strengths in these areas. Most partnerships have areas for growth. For the areas where you indicate no, provide explanations of how you will build these strengths through the work you are proposing.

Have You Been in a Partnership Before?

It is also helpful for funders to know the type of partnership activities you have engaged in previously. This might be described as a range of exchanges, listed in order below:

- Sharing information Sharing referrals
- Acting individually toward a shared goal (e.g., sending letters to encourage healthy choices at school events)
- Exchanging resources
- Collaborating on planning and implementing, and evaluating change activities.

Typically partnerships that have done some of the initial types of exchange (e.g., information exchange) are seen as building a foundation for later types of exchanges. If you have only engaged in some of these initial types of exchange you might want to describe what you have been doing (e.g., the partnership characteristics you have been developing) that will enable you to successfully move to the next level.