

**Partnerships: A Workforce
Development Practitioner's Guide**

May 2013



Commonwealth Corporation strengthens the skills of Massachusetts youth and adults by investing in innovative partnerships with industry, education and workforce organizations. We seek to meet the immediate and emerging needs of businesses and workers so that they can thrive in our dynamic economy. Commonwealth Corporation is a Massachusetts quasi-public corporation within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

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Commonwealth Corporation

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INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, organizations are forming partnerships to solve complex workforce development, educational, health and other challenges at institutional, community and regional levels. Funders, including federal and state governments and major foundations, also promote collaborative problem solving through formal partnerships. Workforce development partnerships bring together multiple perspectives and complementary needs, from businesses, education and training providers, workforce organizations, and community resources to support the design, implementation and sustainability of effective workforce development interventions. Partnerships provide the opportunity to leverage the respective resources, assets, knowledge and expertise of diverse organizations around a focused challenge.

There are economies of scale and synergies associated with partnerships. Involving multiple stakeholders in the design and implementation of solutions fosters the exchange of ideas and resources, increases the likelihood of success, and creates new opportunities. Through workforce development partnerships employers gain access to skilled workers and training opportunities; training providers gain insight to shape the content and increase the relevance of their offerings; community-based organizations gain access to pathways for their clients; and individual workers are better supported in enhancing their skills, building careers and advancing in their work lives. On the other hand, building and managing partnerships takes time and effort. Managing partnerships with multiple, diverse members with varying needs can be difficult; changing direction can be slow and tedious and for some partners the costs of participating in a partnership may be too high.

Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-public workforce development agency in Massachusetts, has more than ten years of experience funding and managing industry sector-based projects that have brought together partnerships of employers, training/educational institutions, workforce development agencies, and community-based organizations to support the state's employers while creating opportunities for advancement for workers.

Through our work as funders and evaluators, we have observed what characterizes partnerships in workforce development and what contributes to their effectiveness. Some of our insights come from participating from 2006-2008 in the development of a regional nursing workforce partnership entitled Collaborating for the Advancement of Nursing: Developing Opportunities (CAN DO), which was aimed at redesigning the nursing education

system in Western Massachusetts.¹ The partnership ultimately evolved into the Western Massachusetts Nursing Collaborative and initiated the establishment of the broader Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Massachusetts.² Our dual role as evaluator and partner provided us with an opportunity to examine the workings of a partnership up close. In addition, as we have funded other partnerships through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, the Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we have paid particular attention to their experiences, surveyed partner organizations, and conducted a limited number of interviews. This Guide represents our efforts to share what we have learned with others in our field.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “PARTNERSHIP?”

This Guide is based on an understanding of the term “partnership” as the coming together of multiple organizations to recognize and pursue shared interests. Workforce development partnerships are usually composed of workforce development intermediaries (e.g., Workforce Investment Boards or career centers), businesses or industry associations, training/educational institutions and community-based organizations. In Commonwealth Corporation’s experience with industry sector-based projects, partnerships ranged from 4 to more than 40 members.

As we use the terms in this Guide, “partners” are organizations that are formal members of the partnership. “Members” refers to individual representatives from “partners.” “Stakeholders” refers to external stakeholders such as funders, political and government leaders and community leaders. “Leaders” or “leadership” refer to leaders of the partnership, often representatives of one of the partners, or an individual with responsibility for staffing the partnership.

In Commonwealth Corporation’s work with industry sector-based projects, we observed three models of partnership organization:

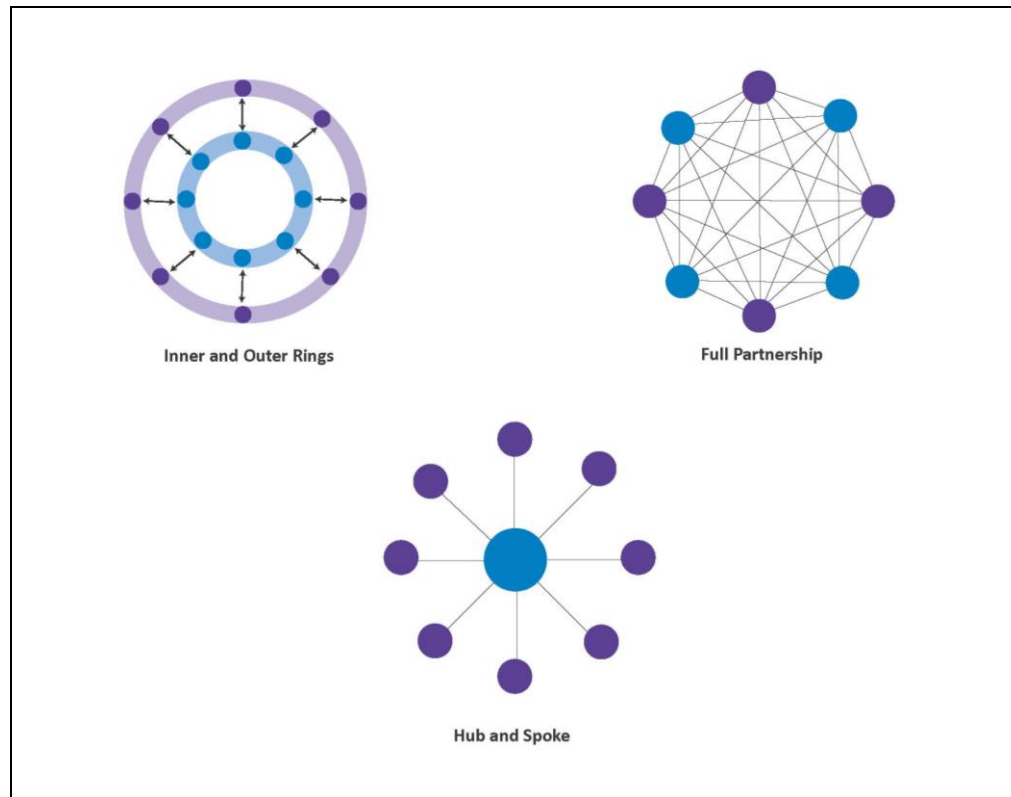
1. **Inner and outer rings:** In this configuration, a small core group meets frequently for decision-making, particularly related to the operation of a program. The small core group meets less frequently with the larger partnership for input and discussion of larger industry issues. Relationships are stronger among the small core group, which also pursues systemic change within the sector.
2. **Full partnership:** In this case, all partners play a more or less equal role and meet on a regular basis. Decisions are made by the full group of partners and relationships are built across partner organizations.
3. **Hub and spoke:** The focus in this arrangement is on the development of relationships between the lead agency and both training entities and businesses, with more emphasis

¹ CAN-DO was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Partners Investing in Nursing’s Future Program operated by NorthWest Health Foundation.

² For more information on the partnership please see website: <http://www.rebhc.org/industry-initiatives/healthcare/>

on program design and operation and less focus on developing relationships among employers and affecting change within the sector.

Figure 1
Partnership
Organization
Models



The “structure” of a partnership may be influenced by the goals for the partnership, the nature of work that a partnership is undertaking, and the number of organizations involved. In Massachusetts, the “hub and spoke” model appears to be preferred in situations where a workforce intermediary or training institution approaches a group of businesses to identify common training needs and develop a training program that will address the needs of both businesses and a target population. In such situations, the focus of the partnership is on individual relationships between training and business organizations and finding common ground; there is less emphasis on achieving system level change. Where a partnership involves a large number of organizations, for practical reasons some partnerships establish a core leadership group to make decisions, which are then vetted with the “outer ring” of other partnership members. The “full partnership” model has been useful in cases such as the Nursing Collaborative of Western Massachusetts, which is working to effect system level change among healthcare and educational institutions within the region.³ In order to implement changes within and across institutions, the partnership uses the “full

³ http://www.rebhc.org/uploadedfiles/healthcarepartnership_finalfinal.pdf?PHPSESSID=e5ff73bae568dfd7c0fb776c6687b030

partnership” model to ensure that each organization has opportunities to provide input, ensure “buy in” and carry out implementation.

Successful partnerships are those in which partners share in both investment of resources (time or money) and rewards or benefits of partnering, and where partners have mutual trust and respect. Perhaps the most important outcome of a successful partnership is that the partnership achieved more than the individual organizations alone could have, as expressed by these stakeholders in Massachusetts partnerships:

“There are lots of real business needs that go unmet when employers try to solve problems on an individual firm basis. When you can work with [other] employers to identify common needs and wants, you can begin to do things in a sector that would have been very difficult otherwise.”

— Bill Ward, President, Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc.

“The work done through the partnership minimizes the negative labor market effects of competition while enhancing the positive effects of collaboration. New pipelines exist that would otherwise not exist, and this helps the industry as a whole.”

— Jean Jackson, Vice President, Workforce Planning & Recruitment, Baystate Health

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Successful workforce development partnerships in Massachusetts achieved the following types of benefits for partners:

- Employers had training opportunities to upgrade skills for their existing employees;
- Businesses accessed new sources of qualified employees;
- Education and training providers were able to align education and training capacity to industry needs; and
- Participants built new working relationships with other entities (businesses, training providers, workforce development entities) interested in workforce development issues.

FRAMEWORKS FOR ANALYZING AND UNDERSTANDING PARTNERSHIPS

To supplement our own experiences and help guide our analysis of partnerships, we reviewed literature on partnerships in other domains, such as education, public health and environmentally-focused organizations. As is evident from the literature, the development of a partnership is dynamic and takes time as organizations come together around a shared purpose, establish effective ways of working together and share their resources to achieve commonly agreed-upon goals. In the literature, three frameworks emerged as relevant.

One⁴ describes the evolution of an inter-organizational collaborative in phases of activity, from (1) form and focus—the point of coming together around a shared interest, through (2) organize and act—developing structures and plans, to (3) achieve and transform—institutionalization, sustainability and systems change. (The phases and associated tasks are presented in Appendix 1-A at the end of this Guide.)

Other researchers, such as Woodland (née Gajda)⁵, Himmelman⁶ and Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey⁷, have described partnerships on a continuum of integration of the partners. The members work in different ways as relationships are strengthened, and organizational boundaries become less rigid. These frameworks show how leadership, processes, decision-making, levels of trust and resources require change as the level of integration of the partnership increases. (See Appendices 1-B and 1-C for summaries of Woodland and Himmelman’s frameworks.)

Finally, the work of Interaction Associates on “facilitative leadership” offered a valuable lens, as the importance and nature of leadership of a partnership emerged as significant to understanding partnerships. Interaction Associates defines facilitative leadership as a process that taps into “the power of participation” as facilitative leaders “empower people to work together to achieve a common goal.”⁸ As they help a group work toward achievement of goals, facilitative leaders must simultaneously attend to the results, process and relationship aspects of a collaborative unit and its work.

WHAT IS IN THIS GUIDE?

In the past decade, through our work in supporting and evaluating workforce development partnerships, we have observed a few key elements of effective partnerships. We have supplemented our observations with a review of the research literature and identified the following key elements of partnerships:

1. Establishing a Partnership
 - ✓ A clear purpose and set of agreed upon goals for partnering
2. Leadership and Staffing
 - ✓ Strong leadership
 - ✓ Designated staff and resources to support partnering
3. Processes for Running a Partnership
 - ✓ Clear processes for governance and decision-making
 - ✓ Clear and regular communication
 - ✓ Shared definitions and measures of success among partners
4. Sustaining a Partnership
 - ✓ A thoughtful approach to sustainability

4 Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential. E. Taylor-Powell, B. Rossing, & J. Geran. University of Wisconsin – System Board of Regents and University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension, 1998.

5 R. Gajda, “Utilizing Collaboration Theory to Evaluate Strategic Alliances,” *American Journal of Evaluation*, no. 25 (2004): 65-77.

6 A. Himmelman. *Collaboration Defined: A Developmental Continuum of Change Strategies*. Minneapolis, MN: Himmelman Consulting, 2004.

7 P. W. Mattessich, M. Murray-Close, B. M. Monsey, *Collaboration: What Makes it Work*, Fieldstone Alliance, Minneapolis, MN 2001.

8 Interaction Associates. *Facilitative Leadership: Tapping the Power of Participation*. Boston, MA: Interaction Associates. 2007.

The same elements are used as the structure for this Guide. Each section describes elements of partnering, presents tools for use with partnerships, and concludes with a set of questions for consideration and suggested action steps.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This Guide is intended to serve as a tool for individuals working in or seeking to develop a partnership. The target audience therefore includes directors and staff of Workforce Investment Boards, career centers, other workforce development intermediaries, employers, training/educational institutions, and community-based organizations whose leaders are interested in maximizing the potential of partnerships to address pressing workforce issues.

This Guide may also prove to be a useful resource for partnerships and collaboratives in other fields. While the examples are all from workforce development, the checklists, tools, and templates were designed more broadly and may be applied to various situations.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The Guide contains the following elements designed to be useful for practitioners:

“Things to Remember” at the end of each chapter include **“Key Questions to Consider”** and **“Action Steps”** on the topics in the chapter.

“Sample in Practice” indicate an example from a partnership.

“Take It To Go” includes tools and templates that may be readily copied and reproduced or otherwise used by practitioners.

“Tips” provide suggestions for practitioners.

“Tables” in the text include examples as well as useful lists.

“Case Study” provides an in-depth look at a particular example.

We have provided additional resources at the end of the Guide:

- A list of publications and resources.
- Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are frameworks for classifying partnerships that we found useful.
- Appendix 4 provides a sample Memorandum of Agreement from CAN DO.
- Appendices 5, 6 and 7 offer surveys that Commonwealth Corporation developed to obtain feedback on participation in workforce development partnerships.
- Appendix 8 is a survey developed by Sherril Gelmon and Linda Norman, evaluators for Partners Investing in Nursing’s (PIN) Future, a collaborative partnership between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation to invest in

partnerships between local and regional grant-making foundations and nursing leaders to encourage sustainable nursing workforce solutions.



Partnership Profiles⁹

While many partnerships contributed to our learning and understanding of collaborative work, four partnerships in particular provided us with opportunities to gain additional insights and are often referred to through examples within this Guide.

The **Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium** was convened in 2010 by the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) to bring together healthcare, workforce and education stakeholders to help build the skilled, diverse workforce needed by Boston's healthcare sector. The Consortium includes representatives from employers or employer associations, institutions of higher education, workforce development partners, as well as representatives from public health, college access organizations, and foundations. The Consortium seeks to improve the alignment between job opportunities and educational pathways so that individuals can be well prepared for the demands of the healthcare workforce. With funding from Commonwealth Corporation through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Consortium oversaw the provision of training services to prepare individuals for healthcare positions, including medical assistants, medical interpreters, ophthalmic assistants, patient care technicians and pharmacy technicians. The Consortium also researched and published a report on key systems issues and identified workforce development priorities. This led to a successful grant application from the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services for funding from the US Department of Labor to develop pipeline programs focused on lab-based occupations important to both healthcare and the broader life sciences field. The Boston PIC provides staff support to the Consortium, since the Consortium continues to meet every other month to share labor market information, collaborate and identify best practices.

The **Intercare Alliance** is a partnership of non-profit and family-owned long term care facilities that seek to provide a well-coordinated continuum of quality services to residents and their families in the Greater Worcester, Massachusetts area. The Alliance was formed more than 15 years ago with the original aim of reducing costs. Facilities recognized that they could have more bargaining power with vendors if they acted as a single entity. Over time, and in response to a shared need to increase the supply of well-trained frontline healthcare workers, the Alliance expanded its focus to include skills training for Certified Nursing Assistants and eventually for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). With members drawn

⁹ Learn more about these partnerships at the following websites:
<http://www.bostonpic.org/policy/boston-healthcare-careers-consortium>
<http://www.intercarealliance.com/>
<http://www.wmntma.org/>
http://www.rebhc.org/pages/healthcare_nursing_news_publications.html

from the leadership of participating facilities, the Alliance has been driven by the firm belief that an educated workforce contributes to the overall quality of the services they provide. The Alliance has received public grants through sources such as the Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative (ECCLI) to support some of its training initiatives but continues to be funded through membership dues, which have been used to support LPN students as well as the development of an education center to provide academic skill-building and English language for individuals entering the nursing pipeline.

The Regional Precision Manufacturing Partnership in Hampden County Massachusetts formed when a group of business owners and workforce development leaders recognized that individual manufacturing firms acting alone could not address their need for skilled workers. Working initially under the leadership of the Western Massachusetts chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association, employers worked to raise the visibility of precision manufacturing as a critical regional industry, promoted manufacturing as a viable career choice, and identified the need to create a collaborative and flexible regional workforce training delivery system that would prepare workers for the skill demands of the industry. With the support of a John Adams Technology Innovation Award in 2008, the Regional Precision Manufacturing Partnership was created with a full-time coordinator and included members from manufacturing firms, the local workforce investment board (the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County) and educational institutions. The Partnership conducted research and planning and subsequently received state funding through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund to offer training to unemployed individuals and incumbent workers. The Partnership later received additional grants to continue its capacity building, business development and community awareness efforts. The Partnership continues to serve as the focal point for all workforce and capacity building initiatives related to the precision manufacturing industry in the Pioneer Valley region.

The **Western Massachusetts Nursing Collaborative** is a coalition of nurse leaders from education and service providers that focuses on the critical role of the nursing workforce in providing quality care. The group works to ensure that the region's supply of high quality, diverse nurses is sufficient to meet community needs. The Collaborative was originally launched in 2006 as CAN DO, Collaborating for the Advancement of Nursing: Developing Opportunities, through a Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN) grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation. CAN DO sought to: a) increase the supply of qualified nurses and nurse faculty in the region, b) increase access and seamless progression in nursing education at all levels, and c) retain the existing nursing workforce. During its first phase as CAN DO, the partners developed a strategic plan to address the regional nursing shortage and implemented two pilot programs. The *Nurses Succeed* program provided case management, coaching and training to help advance underrepresented Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in their nursing studies. The *STAR Faculty Development Program* provided financial support and mentoring to advanced degree nursing students interested in becoming nurse faculty. The Collaborative continues today as part of the broader Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Massachusetts, which also seeks to address skill gaps and shortages in allied

health occupations. Originally funded through local and national foundation grant support, the Collaborative has been sustained through a co-investment model whereby each of the partners has provided financial support for partnership infrastructure, 50% of which is matched by a local foundation.



CHAPTER 1. ESTABLISHING THE PARTNERSHIP

The different scenarios in which a partnership is formed have great influence on *how* a partnership gets shaped. We suggest that practitioners consider which of these four different scenarios most closely matches their situation:

1. A funding opportunity is made available from the federal, state or local government, or through a foundation or government-foundation collaborative. Depending upon the opportunity the lead applicant may be a business, an education or training provider, a workforce intermediary, a state/local agency and occasionally another foundation.
2. A business or an industry association initiates a partnership based on industry needs, often associated with changes in technology or the aging of the workforce and the population.
3. An educational institution or training provider initiates a partnership in order to explore the opportunity to expand or improve existing programs.
4. A workforce development intermediary, such as a state or local workforce board or agency, anticipates or recognizes a need in the economy and takes the initiative to convene prospective partners to explore working together to address the need.

The first, a partnership triggered by a funding opportunity, is worth considering in some detail as it is more common and has a few distinct characteristics:

- There is finite time available to develop the partnership, which can be an advantage as all the potential partners are very focused and have to make relatively quick decisions about the purpose of the partnership and organizational commitment. The downside is that there is often insufficient time to work through all the differences among various partners. Issues may arise later in the partnership's life if key elements have not been defined or resolved in the early stages.
- If the proposal or opportunity gets funded the partners are either able to hire staff or pay one of their members to staff the partnership management function. Otherwise securing funding and dedicating staff to move the activities of a partnership along can be one of the most challenging aspects at the early stages of a partnership.

- The goals and desired results of the partnership provide the opportunity to plan for and achieve early and short-term wins, which can be extremely important to demonstrate the value of the partnership to the partners and within partner organizations.

MISSION AND GOALS

It is important to have a clear purpose for establishing a partnership. However, arriving at a clear purpose that represents a consensus of the members is not always easy. It can be a long and iterative process to start with the goals of various organizations and arrive at the goals of a partnership. Each organization must understand the purpose of partnering with other organizations (as opposed to tackling an issue by itself), the goals that the partnership seeks to achieve, and the potential benefits of becoming involved. For the individual or organization taking the lead on establishing a partnership, it is important when meeting with potential partners to be able to clearly articulate the broad goals of the partnership and the likely benefits to each. In the absence of a funding opportunity potential partners may lack the urgency to arrive at a shared purpose and goal in a short period of time. While it is important that partners spend sufficient time to develop a purpose and goals that are acceptable to all members, establishing timelines can be very useful in the absence of external deadlines.

As a partnership is brought together, partners may express to organizers what sound like similar goals. However even if they use the same language partners may not always have identical goals and they may differ dramatically on what they view as the best way to achieve those goals. Lack of agreement on goals and strategies for achieving goals can completely derail a collaborative process. It is therefore essential that partnership leaders allot sufficient time for explicit discussion of goals and strategies for achieving them. Goals can be used to develop a mission statement, which can serve as a guidepost to maintain the focus of the partnership's work. Goals can also be used to establish measurable objectives.

SELECTION OF PARTNERS

The composition of a partnership is critical, since it determines the perspectives represented within the partnership, the resources available to the partnership, and the potential points of leverage. It should be based on the overall mission of the partnership and the particular context(s) in which the partnership will operate. It is helpful to consider all stakeholders who might be affected by the changes and improvements the partnership seeks to make, as well as those who might contribute knowledge and resources to carry out the work of the partnership and support implementation of the desired change. There are a couple of important decisions related to membership that may have to be made at this stage. They are: (a) geography that a partnership will cover,

and (b) the industry or occupational need. Expanding the geography or the industry or sectoral definition may result in a loss of focus while generating broader membership.

**TIP**

In workforce development it is especially important to have an “anchor” business, industry association or set of businesses that are committed to the idea of the partnership, can build support for it among their own network of contacts, and may contribute – or identify – resources to support partnering work.

Finally, it is important to engage key decision makers from the partner organizations. A partnership that generates valuable recommendations for improvements but lacks the organizational commitment and support represented by each member organization’s leadership is likely to face difficulties and result in frustration for those involved. While it may be difficult, or impractical, to expect a CEO or leader of an organization to attend all partnership meetings, it is essential that representatives for each partner organization be individuals who can exercise influence within their organizations, including with organizational leaders who control resources and can implement or impede changes in policy and/or practice.

Ideas for considering stakeholders and identifying current and potential partners are outlined in the table that follows.

Table 1
Stakeholder
and Partner
Identification

Stakeholder and Partner Identification	
Identifying Stakeholders¹⁰ • What are the perspectives necessary to credibly and effectively define problems/issues and create solutions? Who can speak for these perspectives? • What interests must be represented in order to reach agreements that can be implemented? Who can speak for these interests? • Who are the people, interest groups, or organizations that are necessary to implement solutions, control resources and have the ability to block action? • Who is affected by the problem and would be affected by solutions to it? • Who are the people who, if they could reach agreement on problems and solutions could generate the political and institutional will to bring about significant change?	
Identifying Potential Partners¹¹ • Be clear about your purpose for partnering. • Create an inventory of your current partners. • Think broadly about potential new partners. • Add to your current list the names of other, potential partners who might share your purpose or are interdependent with the work of your organization. These might include: – Organizations with which yours is part of a <u>supply or process chain</u>. This might include: businesses that provide training, educational institutions, career centers, and community-based organizations. – <u>Parallel or peer organizations</u> that have goals or processes similar to those of your organization. – Organizations that have different but <u>related levels of power and authority</u>, such as regional or state groups that are related to your work or partnership goals. – Any other organizations that are a combination of the above, or which have no current affiliation to your organization but might share some common goals. • Assess the nature of your relationship with different organizations: identify those with which you might develop or strengthen a relationship to help you and your partnership achieve its goals. • As you identify and assess each potential partner, also identify individuals within the organization who are best suited to represent their organization on the partnership.	

¹⁰ Adapted from *Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference* by David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

¹¹ Adapted from "Developing Partnerships with Purpose" by Lee Teitel in *Collaborative Leadership in Action: Partnering for Success in School*, Shelley B. Wepner, & Dee Hopkins, eds. New York: Teachers College Press, 2011.

OUTREACH

Establishing a partnership requires an initial investment of time and effort in getting to know potential partners and their needs. The individual(s) launching the partnership must reach out to potential partners, and engage them in discussions on the purpose of partnering and the connection of the partnership to each organization. At this stage, these leaders should:

- Articulate an initial theory of how the partnership could benefit all of its prospective members including the specific organization they are talking to;
- Assess the needs of prospective partners and determine if and how they relate to other partners' needs;
- Determine the resources and capacities a prospective partner might contribute to a partnership; and
- Learn how each organization views its potential role in a partnership.

Discussions with a potential partner can shed light on the labor market conditions in the region or industry and provide insights into differing organizational cultures that can affect the processes of working together as a partnership.



There is no substitute for face-to-face meetings especially in the early stages to build relationships with decision-makers and other key staff in partner. Such conversations help to define the purpose of a partnership's work and lay the groundwork for partnering and the development of relationships over time.

Researchers on collaborative work have identified the importance of understanding the diversity of partners jointly pursuing collaborative work in order to most effectively draw on that diversity in working toward common goals. Four aspects of each partner may be particularly worth exploring¹²:

- Customs – particularly regarding meetings and communication;
- Language – including terms used in a particular industry, as well as the different meanings associated with key concepts such as partnering or collaboration;
- Preferences – specifically around ways of working and relating to others; and
- Powers – the expertise and resources that partners can bring to the partnership.

The more a partnership leader understands about each partner, the easier it will be to find common ground, suggest acceptable ways of working together, and identify opportunities and resources among partners.

¹² Adapted from *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey* by Michael Winer and Karen Ray. Saint Paul, Minnesota: Fieldstone Alliance, 1994.

After meeting separately with each partner organization the leader or leaders should convene the organizations to establish the partnership and agree on goals and key parameters for the partnership. A leader who is recognized to be neutral and to stand for the larger purpose or mission or even an external facilitator may facilitate the process to develop the mission and goals of the partnership.¹³

PLANNING FOR PARTNER SELECTION

The **Take It To Go** chart that follows provides a framework for planning the selection of partnership members, incorporating both existing and potential organizational relationships.

13 U. S. Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Innovative Collaborations between Workforce Boards and Employers Helped Meet Local Needs." January 2012



Use this table to analyze current and potential partners

Plan for Partner Selection				
Organization Name	Type of Organization	Nature of Current Relationship	Key Individual(s)/ Representative(s) with Decision Making Authority or Influence	Possible Interest in Partnership or Perspective to Contribute

Use the following key for Nature of Relationship:

- 1=Already working together/history of working together
- 2= Have strong contacts/know staff well
- 3 = Have weak contacts/some knowledge of staff
- 4 = no current relationship

PARTNER COMMITMENT

Partnership leaders should assess and communicate at the outset the time and resources likely to be required by partners to achieve the partnership's goals. The commitment needed will vary from partnership to partnership, depending on the nature of the work to be undertaken. For example, an industry sector partnership that forms to help create and support a grant-funded training program might require a substantial initial investment of time to design, develop and implement the program. The investment of time required by partners may then be slightly reduced as partnership efforts move toward program maintenance and oversight. As the program moves toward the end of its grant, partners may be called upon to commit financial and other resources to ensure the sustainability of the program beyond the grant.

For a partnership that forms around a strategic issue, such as reform of an educational system, participation may require a regular sustained commitment to participate in strategic thinking, and ultimately, a commitment to implementing change at the organizational level. When inviting organizations to join a partnership, leaders should articulate expectations regarding the level and nature of commitment.

The most important aspect is getting a formal commitment from each partner to participate in the partnership. This should not merely be in the form of general support for the partnership but a commitment to play specific roles and often in the form of staff time and resources for the activities of the partnership.

The nature of the work will also determine the investment needed in the first phases of partnership development. In its first phase, as CAN DO, the Western Massachusetts Nursing Collaborative needed to create a strategic plan that reflected the partners' collective knowledge about the nursing workforce and its challenges, regional strategies and potential resources held by partners. Each participating institution had to see clear evidence that its interests were represented within the plan in order to support it. Arriving at the understanding and compromises necessary to achieve such a state required significant time and effort in developing and sustaining both the relationships and processes of the partnership.

Not every partnership is charged with the same sort of task as CAN DO and thus may not require the same level of investment in partnership development (although attention to the process and relational aspects of any partnership is important regardless of the nature of the desired results). In some instances, a partnership plays an advisory role, offering input and reaction but not necessarily engaging to jointly design a product. Often workforce development partners come together to support the implementation of a specific program and have specific roles as trainers, employers and workforce development intermediaries. An important first step of launching partnerships is thus to consider the general role of the partnership and its purpose. The more specific the goals and activities of the partnership, the greater the time needed for partnership development and for getting agreement on goals and strategies. Individual

organizations may require varying levels of internal engagement to get the desired commitment from their leadership based on resources required, perceived benefits and internal decision making structures.

Many partnerships choose to develop formal agreements among partners. For example, after initially working as an informal and voluntary partnership, members of the Intercare Alliance, a partnership of long-term care facilities in Central Massachusetts, formed a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). This arrangement allowed the group to act as one body when approaching vendors for services and facilitated management and spending of funds collected through membership dues. Membership dues also represent another way of demonstrating and ensuring member commitment. Many partnerships develop some form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which clearly states the commitments expected of partners and helps to foster both buy-in and accountability within member organizations and across the partnership. A sample MOA, developed for the CAN DO partnership, is provided in Appendix 4. This example clearly states expectations for different categories of partnership members. The table below outlines key elements for signed agreements among partners. Regardless of whether it is formalized through an MOA, ongoing organizational commitment must be cultivated and maintained by the partnership leader.

Table 2
Outline for a
Signed
Agreement
Among Partners

Outline for a Signed Agreement Among Partners	
1.	Introduction - Statement of partnership purpose and overarching goals - General responsibilities of partners
2.	Specific member responsibilities – may include: - Meeting attendance - Financial or other resource contributions - Activities required of partnership members and their respective roles - Participation in evaluation activities
3.	Specific benefits to members – may include: - Access to training - Access to graduates of training program - Access to meetings with key stakeholders
4.	Time period of the agreement
5.	Partner (Organization Representative) Signatures and Dates
<i>Adapted from Richard W. Clark's, Effective Professional Development Schools, Jossey-Bass, 1999, in Collaborative Leadership in Action, by Shelley B. Wepner & Dee Hopkins, (eds.) New York: Teachers College Press, 2011.</i>	

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Depending on the purpose of the partnership, roles will likely include: convening the partnership, leading program design, providing resources to support the partnership, participating in strategic planning, serving on a committee, providing training, providing input into training content or curriculum development, hiring training participants, or evaluating the work of the partnership. When negotiating roles and responsibilities with organizations, it is important to keep in mind their capacity and resources in order to help ensure both their willingness to sign on to the expected tasks and their ability to carry them out. (See the Sample Memorandum of Agreement developed through CAN DO in Appendix 4 as an example of how to outline member roles within a partnership).

TIME AND RESOURCES: SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Carrying out collaborative work takes a significant amount of time and resources that must be planned for. Expectations regarding participation should be shared with members up front. For those organizing and leading a partnership time is required to bring partners on board, and to understand their needs. Once partners have been identified, more time is needed to clarify goals and activities of the partnership, identify roles and responsibilities and determine the resources required from each partner to support the partnership and its activities.

It is important at this stage to work with partners to develop a work plan and an associated budget. Elements of a partnership budget might include:

- Staff time for partnership manager, leader and coordinator;
- Meeting expenses (space, refreshments, equipment);
- Printing costs for meeting materials and any products created through the partnership;
- Fees for external services such as facilitation or evaluation; and
- Other expenses related to projects undertaken by the partnership, such as consultant fees for development of a report or processing of data.

Before funds are procured for the partnership and formal commitments are made, organizations may contribute staff time and internal resources in the exploratory work and the work of establishing the partnership.

DEVELOPING PARTNER CATEGORIES

Partnerships can have a large number of members, representing different perspectives and types of organizations, and with varying degrees of commitment to the mission of the partnership. Some partnerships may seek equal or similar levels of participation. Others may develop multiple partner categories in order to allow for different levels and degrees of commitment, engagement, and participation. Here we offer one such example to illustrate how such a structure may be set up.



In its work with the Precision Manufacturing Regional Alliance, a partnership that oversaw a recent project to support the enhancement of regional manufacturing workforce training capacity, the Regional Employment Board (REB) of Hampden County, Massachusetts applied its own process for analyzing potential partners. In its leadership role for the project, the REB identified three categories for its partners that related to their level of engagement in the project:¹⁴

1. **Strategic Partner** – an entity engaged in planning and implementing a project. These organizations, which included educational institutions and businesses, had the greatest level of involvement working with the REB on the project. These partners signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), provided guidance on curriculum content and design of the project’s training programs, agreed to hire participants, and served as on-the-job training (OJT) sites. These organizations committed to seeing the project through until completion of its implementation.
2. **Collaborator** – an entity working to connect the project’s goals and actions but not required to sign the project MOU. A collaborator attended partnership meetings

¹⁴ Precision Manufacturing Regional Alliance Project (PMRAP): Lessons From a Sector-Based Capacity Building Project, Regional Employment Board (REB) of Hampden County, May 2011.

and supported the development and implementation of the project. Collaborators included businesses that could contribute to the project by hosting tours of training participants to visit their workplaces, hosting an internship, visiting classes to speak about working in the industry, and reviewing the design of the training programs created through the project.

3. **Cooperating Agency** – an entity that supports the project’s mission and planned outcomes with minimal involvement. These organizations would send representatives to attend meetings and were aware of the goals of the project, but were not expected to have a strong role in project implementation and were not asked to sign the MOU for the project. Cooperating agencies included community-based organizations that supported project outreach by identifying potential participants and directing them to project recruitment and assessment services. In addition, these agencies would provide case management services to a limited number of participants who were deemed to be in need of these services. Cooperating agencies added value to the manufacturing project through their support and specific, limited role.

While REB staff strive to move as many *collaborators* and *cooperating agencies* to the *strategic partner* category as possible, they recognize that all three partner categories have value and contribute to a project partnership. They also highlight the importance of engaging partners at a level at which they feel comfortable and which seems appropriate for their situation and resources. REB staff note that partners may choose to change their position over time. For instance, a partnership that works to implement several projects over time may find that some strategic partners move to the *cooperating agency* category if their availability changes, while others may move to the level of strategic partner if the project goals are more directly related to their interests and they are able to fully engage in the work. The REB’s approach to partnering clarifies the expected role of a partner from the outset of a project but allows partners to adjust as circumstances change.

INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

While the work of partnerships is often carried out by the individuals who literally sit “at the table,” it is important to develop connections that go beyond those individuals by engaging organizational leadership, frontline workers and a range of individuals and departments. If a single individual is the sole connection between an organization and a partnership, there is a risk that the individual’s departure could jeopardize that organization’s involvement in the partnership. Change and turnover within partners – individuals who attend meetings, CEOs who provide top-down support for partnership participation, frontline workers who do the day to day work or others – is inevitable. Partnerships must anticipate and prepare for it.

It is therefore important for individual partner representatives to communicate at multiple levels within their own organizations about the partnership and its goals and

activities.¹⁵ This can help build buy-in for the work of the partnership throughout the organization and creates a group of knowledgeable individuals who can fill in for partner representatives. Partnership leaders can support this organizational integration by attending staff meetings within partner organizations to clarify the goals and expectations of the partnership and address any questions or concerns.

Partnerships often take on issues that require some level of institutional change, such as policy changes or establishment of agreements across institutions. Individuals often cannot bring about these changes alone. Such changes require institutional buy-in, investment and action at a variety of levels. Building understanding of the partnership within partner organizations can be accomplished by several means:

- Providing updates on the partnership during internal meetings;
- Rotating the location of partnership meetings to partner sites;
- Involving multiple staff members from partner organizations in different working groups of the partnership focused on different topics;
- Informing and engaging supervisors and managers when incumbent workers are trained or new workers are hired; and
- Inviting staff not directly involved to attend and observe partnership meetings and events.

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As long term care facility administrators were engaged in the Intercare Alliance, they recognized that staff would benefit from developing relationships and sharing resources and support across facilities. A structure of sub-groups, including one each for Directors of Staff Development, Directors of Nursing, and Human Resources professionals began to form. These connections below the highest levels of management helped to increase knowledge of the benefits of partnering, strengthened the fabric of the partnership, and have contributed to its 15-year existence.

PROGRAM PLANNING AND DESIGN

Last but not least, the core work of the partnership relates to the workforce development need or problem it intends to address. While setting up a partnership may require significant energy, time and resources, the bulk of the effort is likely to be related to planning and design of a workforce development program. It is important after an agreement has been reached on the purpose and goals that there is detailed discussion to plan and design the program.

¹⁵ Paul W. Mattessich, M. Murray-Close, B. R. Monsey, "Collaboration: What Makes It Work" The Fieldstone Alliance, Minneapolis, MN, 2001, references "multiple levels of participation."

Developing a detailed plan and program design will also provide a more reasonable and realistic understanding of the personnel, time and costs required to implement the program and its activities.

The kind of factors to be considered for program design include:

- The workforce needs of specific businesses;
- The kinds of training or educational programs to be designed or conducted;
- The instructors required;
- Training material required;
- Curriculum available or plans to design or customize curriculum; and
- The number of individuals from or for each business to be trained.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Establishing the Partnership



Questions to Consider

1. What is the need for a partnership? Is there a funding opportunity?
2. What is the mission or purpose of the partnership? What goals does the partnership seek to achieve?
3. Is the partnership going to target a specific industry sector and/or a specific region?
4. What are the different perspectives and stakeholders necessary to define the problem/need and to create solutions?
5. Who needs to be a member for the partnership to achieve these goals? What level of decision-making power will be required to allow the partner to help affect desired change?
6. What are appropriate avenues or networks for reaching out to prospective members?
7. What is the expected value or benefit of participation for each partner?
8. Who should reach out to prospective partners?
9. What are appropriate roles for the partners participating in the partnership?
10. What resources will be required to support the work and the operation of the partnership?
11. What resources are already available for this purpose?
12. What are expectations for participation in the partnership (e.g., attend meetings, provide financial support, etc.)? What kind of commitment of time and resources are expected?
13. What kind of formal agreement is necessary? Is it necessary or desirable to have different partner categories?
14. What are partners expected to do within their own organizations, to build buy-in, increase involvement, to change policies or practices, etc.?
15. Once the partnership has been established and begins its work, pose the question, "Who else needs to join us to help us achieve our goals?"



Action Steps

1. Meet individually with prospective partners to understand their needs, their interest in partnering, and potential contributions.
2. Use information from these meetings to develop an initial statement of goals for the partnership and potential benefits to partnering in order to invite the interest and commitment of potential partner organizations.
3. Determine the need to be addressed and draft broad mission and goals for the partnership.
4. Determine the industry and regional focus if any and identify stakeholders and potential partners. Identify any

'anchor' industry association or business.

5. Obtain preliminary commitment from prospective partners and identify individuals to represent the partners.
6. Support prospective members to obtain commitment to the partnership by providing details of potential benefits and the potential responsibilities, and resource and time commitments of member organizations.
7. Convene a meeting of all partners to formally agree on goals, key (program) activities, and structure.
8. Determine the roles that need to be filled to help the partnership function and work with partners to ensure that all roles and responsibilities have been clearly assigned to at least one partner organization/individual.
9. Determine the need for resources to support the partnership. Develop a budget that includes staff time for planning/coordination, meetings, materials and other needs.
10. Establish a schedule of regular meetings.
11. Plan and design the core work of the partnership to address the key purpose of the partnership – the policy or program design.
12. Develop plans for deeper institutional engagement with member organizations across multiple levels and departments/functional areas.



CHAPTER 2. LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING

Strong leadership is crucial. Without effective leadership, a partnership may lack direction and cohesion and may not achieve its intended goals. Leadership roles must therefore be clearly established and supported. It is important from the outset to determine what entity(ies) and individual(s) will lead a partnership and what “leadership” means in the context of each partnership.

Dedicated staffing is equally important. It is an essential investment for advancing relationship building, carrying out work plan activities, and assessing progress toward partnership goals.

LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND COORDINATION

The process of “leading” and staffing partnerships really comprises three types of roles: leadership, management and coordination:

“Leadership” includes activities that set the direction for the work of the partnership, such as creating a vision for the group, as well as efforts to mobilize support for the partnership and attract members to join it.

“Management” of a partnership focuses more on getting the work of a partnership done such as designing, developing and operating workforce development programs to ensure the partnership meets its goals. Management may include tasks such as designing and facilitating strategic planning processes, gathering and analyzing ideas and input from partners, developing benchmarks for measuring partnership progress, reporting on partnership activities, and cultivating and maintaining relationships with partners.

“Coordination” includes logistical tasks such as setting up meetings and sending out agendas and meeting notes, as well as gathering and sharing information related to partnership.

The management and coordination roles are “staff” roles, although in our experience both are critical to maintaining a cohesive partnership that effectively leverages the commitment of its members. The leadership role in workforce development partnerships is often assumed by an industry or business representative, especially during the formative stages of a partnership when it is important for industry to articulate a need and help shape the vision of the group.

The division of leadership, management and coordination responsibilities will vary across partnerships and likely depends on the capacities and resources of the members. These three roles may be combined in the role of a single individual; they may be separated among 3 or more individuals; or they may be combined in different ways.

The table that follows provides examples of specific activities associated with each role.

Table 3
Key Roles and
Activities in
Partnerships

Leadership	Management	Coordination
- Establish or lead the process to establish a strategic vision for a partnership - Relate to diverse ideas and be able to synthesize for the larger good - Build initial and on-going support for the partnership, especially among employers - Identify resources to support partnering - Provide overall direction for the work of the partnership - Lead in planning for partnership sustainability - Advocate and communicate, especially with political, industry and workforce development system leaders - Engage and communicate with partner organizations	- Articulate and share goals for the partnership - Develop, monitor and maintain relationships with partnership members - Manage partnership resources - Work with partners to establish benchmarks of progress - Monitor and report on progress toward benchmark/goal achievement - Lead development of meeting agendas - Plan meeting activities based on agenda topics - Obtain feedback on meeting agendas and activities - Manage internal and external communication about partnership activities and achievements - Facilitate the exchange of information on trends and opportunities in sectors directly connected to the work of the partnership - Lead evaluation activities - Participate in planning for partnership sustainability	- Maintain contact information for partnership members and other stakeholders - Set up meeting times, locations and needs such as equipment and refreshments - Prepare and distribute agendas and other materials for meetings - Produce and distribute a record of meeting proceedings - Catalog materials produced for and by the partnership - Provide other support for internal and external communication on partnership activities

The Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium is chaired by a representative from a business partner (Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center) and staffed by the local Workforce Investment Board (the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC)). The leadership role of the Western Massachusetts Nursing Collaborative is carried out by a team of prominent health care and nursing school leaders in the region, in conjunction with the partnership director, who is based at the local Regional Employment Board, which also provides additional staff to support the partnership coordination function.

Many partnerships establish a “steering committee” or an “executive committee” to help make day to day decisions.

Based on their experience in the manufacturing sector, the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County offers suggestions on establishing a steering committee¹⁶:

- A partnership Steering Committee should be developed, and if possible, chaired by the owner of a regional sector company. Representatives from industry, education, regional economic development entities, and other interested partners should be members of the Steering Committee.
- The partnership manager should meet individually with each member of the Steering Committee to explain the project, establish a realistic level of engagement, and answer any questions that may impact their commitment to the project.
- The Steering Committee should meet regularly and develop a communication process that will keep them appropriately informed and engaged.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Inherent in partnerships is the idea that multiple perspectives and capacities contribute to the goals and accomplishments of a partnership. Consequently, leadership of a partnership necessitates a facilitative, rather than directive, approach. Partnership leaders also have to be able to bridge diverse cultures and span multiple organizations.¹⁷ Facilitative leaders create the conditions that allow people to work together toward a common purpose. Interaction Associates suggest that facilitative leaders demonstrate three essential attributes:¹⁸

1. **Collaborative:** They create opportunities for people to work together; share decision-making power; and promote the value of win-win solutions.
2. **Strategic:** They remind others of the “big picture” and overarching goal(s); keep attention focused on high leverage issues and activities; and provide perspective at critical moments.
3. **Receptive and Flexible:** They actively encourage the contributions of others; accept others’ ideas, perceptions and feedback without being defensive; and adjust plans to meet changing needs.

¹⁶ Precision Manufacturing Regional Alliance Project (PMRAP): Lessons From a Sector-Based Capacity Building Project, Regional Employment Board (REB) of Hampden County, May 2011.

¹⁷ Roz D. Lasker, Elisa Weiss, and Rebecca Miller, “Partnership Synergy: A Practical Framework for Studying and Strengthening the Collaborative Advantage.” *The Millbank Quarterly*, Vol 79, No. 2, 2001.

¹⁸ Adapted from *Facilitative Leadership: “Tapping the Power of Participation.”* Boston, MA: Interaction Associates, 2007.

While individual leaders should demonstrate these qualities, partnership governance structures can also promote collaboration. Generally speaking, a facilitative approach to leadership is the most effective way to approach partnership work in order to engage and benefit from the multiple perspectives of multiple constituencies and different members.

RESULTS, PROCESS, AND RELATIONSHIPS

In their work on Facilitative Leadership, Interaction Associates¹⁹ describe a framework for planning and measuring success that incorporates three key areas: *results*, *process* and *relationship*. This framework is highly relevant to leading a partnership, which requires attention to the combination of these three areas.

A group working together cannot meet its full potential if its members are unclear or in disagreement about their purpose or the results they are aiming for, if members do not understand and agree to the processes to be utilized, or if they interact in ways that do not foster trust, understanding or respect for what members can contribute to the partnership. For example, a strategic plan developed without the input, support and buy-in of all partnership members would have little or no chance of being implemented successfully.

The leaders of a partnership have to maintain a balance between focusing on results, processes and relationships, and put in place mechanisms to ensure that attention is paid to each area, even as the emphasis among the three areas changes over time. The relevance of each area is described below.

“Results” are what a partnership actually accomplishes – establishing and implementing a training program, developing a regional workforce plan, designing and implementing a plan to reform an education system. The achievement of results is probably the most important for demonstrating and reinforcing the value of partnering, internally, to maintain partner engagement over time, and externally to garner support and even resources to sustain the partnership. In addition to having clarity about goals to be achieved, partnerships have to establish processes to support goal achievement and identify clear benchmarks to assess progress.

“Process” in partnering includes establishing: a shared sense of mission and purpose, acceptable modes of communication, agreements for how the work of the partnership will be carried out, explicit roles and responsibilities, transparent and agreed-upon means of decision-making, and a governance structure that keeps the onus of responsibility with the partnership and not solely its “leader.” Well-designed processes are clearly outlined, make good use of the resources and insights that partners can offer to the group, and keep the work of the partnership moving forward toward achievement of its goals. Processes also provide structure to support the relationship aspect of collaborative work.

19 Facilitative Leadership: “Tapping the Power of Participation.” Boston, MA: Interaction Associates, 2007.

*“**Relationship**” in partnering refers to the ways in which people interact and relate to the lead organization, how they feel about their involvement and contributions, how they feel about the decisions made by the partnership, and the level of trust and respect among partnership members. Failure to address tensions and conflict can inhibit honest discussions, limit the contributions made by partners and prevent the partnership from carrying out its work. Taking steps to recognize partner contributions and celebrate success can motivate members and sustain their engagement in partnership efforts.*

The **Take It To Go** that follows provides a set of possible reflection questions related to results, process and relationship for partnership leaders to review throughout the life of a partnership.



As you work with
your partnership,
review these
questions periodically

Results, Process & Relationship Leadership Self-Assessment

The questions provided here should not be considered an exhaustive list. Space is provided for you to add your own questions in each area. These questions can be used as a self-assessment for partnership leaders and can be used to develop evaluation surveys of your partners.

Results

1. Has the partnership clearly articulated and agreed upon a set of goals and/or a mission statement?
2. Have all members demonstrated support and commitment to the goals?
3. Have we balanced achievement of our long-term goals with the possibility of success in achieving short-term goals?
4. When was the last time that we reviewed these goals as part of our work together?
5. Has the partnership established clear benchmarks and processes for assessing progress?
6. Are we making progress toward achievement of our goals? How do we know this is the case?
7. How will we report on our progress to the partnership?
8. How and to whom will we report on our progress externally?

Add your questions here:



As you work with
your partnership,
review these
questions periodically

Process

1. Has the partnership established agreements for how we will work together?
2. Do we have processes for deciding on goals?
3. Have we been able to decide on what we need to do to accomplish our goals?
4. Have we established clear rules for decision-making?
5. Is information on partnership work being communicated to partner members in a timely fashion?
6. Are there areas of conflict or tension that could disrupt or are already impeding our work?
7. Have we established processes that encourage openness and the handling and resolution of disagreements and conflict?
8. Are we using meeting time effectively?
9. Are we getting input into meeting agendas?
10. Are we allowing sufficient time for agenda items?
11. Are we being respectful of partner schedules by starting and ending on time?
12. Could we benefit from an external facilitator for any of its upcoming work?
13. Does the group have access to the information it needs for decision-making and other activities?

Add your questions here:



As you work with
your partnership,
review these
questions periodically

Relationship

1. Are we taking the time to establish, build and foster relationships among the partner organizations and individuals?
2. Are we providing opportunities for all members to contribute to the work of the partnership?
3. Are meetings proceeding in a way that is respectful of differences among members?
4. Are any members expressing dissatisfaction with the partnership (verbally, non-verbally, within or beyond the partnership)?
5. Are we periodically soliciting feedback on each member's satisfaction with the operation of the partnership and using that information to shape our work together?
6. Are we recognizing the achievements, hard work and special contributions of partnership members? Are we taking time to celebrate success?

Add your questions here:

REQUIRED SKILLS FOR PARTNERSHIP LEADERS

It is important for partnership organizers to understand the skills necessary to carrying out leadership, management and coordination roles. These roles are likely to be spread over more than one individual and it is not necessary for one individual to possess all these skills. These core skills and examples of their application to partnerships are outlined in the table below.

Table 4 Necessary Skills for Leading and Managing Partnerships

Type of Skills Needed	Potential Application
Strategic Thinking	Identifying a need or goal or establishing a vision or rallying support for vision and goal
Advocacy	Building support for the vision or goals of the partnership among (potential) members as well as among external groups
Ability to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty	Maintaining an optimistic view as processes are established, resources are mobilized and the partnership works toward goal achievement – and “bumps” are encountered along the way
Organizational	Organizing meetings, setting agendas, managing reporting and communication activities, managing timelines
Communication	Meeting with partners, conveying information about partnership goals and activities within and beyond the partnership, developing materials to describe the partnership and document its work
Planning	Working with partners to: establish goals, processes, benchmarks and timelines; outline key steps necessary to achieve goals; monitor progress toward goals while attending to external constraints and available resources
Problem-solving	Locating space and other resources; managing changes in partnership composition; dealing with miscommunication about partnering work
Inter-personal / Relationship Management	Relating to partners as people and being accessible to others; maintaining contact with partners to stay abreast of challenges and opportunities within their organizations that might affect the partnership; structuring and monitoring the participation of members to ensure that voices are heard and contributions recognized
Facilitation	Listening to and understanding each member’s needs and integrating input into decisions and actions; managing multiple points of view and enabling the group to converge to shared perspective
Openness and Ability to Learn	Learning about the industry or domain of the work of the partnership, about innovations that can support the partnership, and from mistakes

BROADENING LEADERSHIP BEYOND SINGLE INDIVIDUALS

One of the risks that partnerships may encounter is the possibility of excessive dependence upon one or two individuals. Effective leaders find ways to cultivate leadership among other partners, providing opportunities for others to take leading roles in partnership activities. For example, the Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium rotates leadership of a regular segment of their meetings. Many partnerships form committees around particular tasks such as researching an issue or preparing a publication. Such an approach not only allows the partnership to draw more fully on the resources and talents of its members, it also helps to promote stability for leadership and management in the event that individuals filling those roles need to step down.

SUPPORTS TO LEADERSHIP

Supports may be material, such as office space or access to computers and copy machines, or include supportive functions, such as administrative assistance. Perhaps the most fundamental support is dedicated staff to fill these roles. Dedicated staff, distinct and separate from the staff within partner organizations, with the necessary skills to manage and coordinate the work of the partnership, should be a priority and can be critical to its success.²⁰ Supports may also take the form of small advisory groups, such as a steering committee or evaluation team, or outside consultants to assist with specific areas such as strategic planning processes or management of relationship issues within the partnership. The nature of supports will, of course, depend on the resources available to the partnership, but they should be considered and clearly outlined at the same time that leadership of the partnership is designed and expectations for leadership and members are established. As the situation changes and the partnership evolves the resources and supports available will change.

Finally, it is important for leaders to have the trust of the various members of the partnership. This trust can be fostered by openness, consistency, follow-through on commitments, and demonstration of having the qualifications to perform an assigned role.²¹

In the early days of the CAN DO partnership, the leadership benefitted from several supports. First, an administrative staff person took responsibility for logistics and coordination. This allowed the partnership director more time to engage in relationship management and partnership activities directly contributing to achieving its goals.

Second, an evaluation partner provided an opportunity for the project director to reflect on the process of collaboration, as well as benefit from on-going formative evaluation of the partnership's process and relationships.



²⁰ John Kania & Mark Kramer, "Collective Impact, Stanford Social Innovation Review," Winter 2011

²¹ SkillWorks Partnerships: Their Structure, Evolution, and Effect on Outcomes. Boston, MA: SkillWorks, June 2009.

Third, at a critical time for the partnership, when the project director was trying to solidify member buy-in, the workforce board's executive director and a local philanthropic leader leveraged their senior level contacts and relationships. They each reached out to the chief executives and leaders of the member organizations to secure support for the partnership. This reinforced the efforts of the project director, and supplemented the internal efforts by organizational staff working on the partnership.

MAINTAINING AN OPEN PROCESS

Researchers on collaborative leadership²² have noted the importance of establishing an open, credible process to build trust and strengthen relationships among members of a collaborative. To do so, they suggest that leaders keep the following in mind:

- Accomplishing the objective is more important than who is in charge.
- Making good decisions is more important than whose interests are served.
- Being open is more important than projecting a "good image."
- Keeping behind-the-scenes activity minimal to nonexistent is essential.

Regardless of how leadership roles are organized among individuals, partnership leaders must aim to work transparently, focusing on the larger goals of the partnership.

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²² Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference by David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers (p.82).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Leadership and Staffing

? Key Questions to Consider

1. What organization(s) and individual(s) will lead the partnership?
2. How will leadership, management and coordination roles be distributed for the partnership?
3. Will the leading organization(s) participate in decision-making or remain neutral?
4. What resources are available to support leadership for the partnership?
5. What kind of supports might be needed for leadership?

✓ Action Steps

For establishing leadership of the partnership:

1. Select individuals with the combination of required skills, including: strategic thinking, organizational, communication, planning, problem-solving, interpersonal and relationship management.
2. Assign individuals to roles of management and coordination according to experience and capacity.

For carrying out the leadership and management roles:

1. Be strategic: reflect on the overarching goals and “big picture” of the partnership’s work as the work of the partnership proceeds and share that perspective with partners to help keep work moving forward.
2. Be collaborative: create opportunities for partnership members to work together and share in decision-making. Invite partners to share in leading meeting segments or activities.
3. Be receptive and flexible: encourage others’ contributions, avoid a defensive stance and adjust plans based on the needs of the partnership and its work.
4. Be transparent about your motivations and activities.
5. Develop mechanisms to manage and balance results, processes and relationships.
 - Work with partners to determine indicators of progress.
 - Gather feedback regularly on the effectiveness of processes used in working together.
 - Establish and enforce meeting norms that promote respect among partnership members.
 - Recognize members’ contributions to the partnership’s process and results.
6. Delegate tasks. Identify and develop potential leaders.
7. Maintain contact with individual partners through conversations, visits and phone calls to stay attuned to their situations and any changes that can impact their participation.
8. Celebrate successes!



CHAPTER 3. PROCESSES FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Once the partnership is established there are a number of activities that need to be carried out to manage and support the work of the partnership over its life. Steps should be taken to establish norms for communication, manage goals and major activities, design and plan programs and activities, establish benchmarks for progress, set up methods for working together, and measure progress towards goals. These on-going processes of partnering reinforce leadership's attention to the combined aspects of process, results and relationships and contribute to partnership success and member satisfaction.

The purpose of many of the processes mentioned in this chapter is to support relationship management and to avoid some of the risks inherent in the process of building and running partnerships. In particular, better processes for communication, governance and decision making, conducting meetings, anticipating and managing change will address many of the challenges partnership conveners are likely to face in managing relationships among many organizations and individuals.

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MISSION AND GOALS

Many partnerships find it useful to formalize a mission statement that can be visible to all members as the work of a partnership proceeds. As new challenges and opportunities emerge and decision points arise in the work of a partnership, there is a risk that efforts can focus on only a small portion of the group's mission, or may deviate from it altogether. A formal mission statement provides a gauge against which to measure activities to ensure that they remain aligned with the agreed-upon focus of the group.

As an example of how to keep the partnership's mission in the forefront, the CAN DO partnership provided each individual partner with a laminated card with the mission/vision printed on one side and the group's consensus decision making process on the other. The cards could be used by members as reminders of the group's mission as the group made plans and decisions, and members raised their card at any point when it seemed that the partnership was taking a step that was not in alignment with the mission.

Clearly articulated and agreed-upon goals are vital to the work of any partnership. Like mission statements, formal goals serve to communicate to external stakeholders who might want to join the partnership, provide resources for it or benefit from its work. Internally

goals provide focus to the activities of the partnership.²³ Table 4 has examples of the goals of two sector partnerships.

Over time, as circumstances change and the partnership evolves, goals should be revisited and revised to ensure that they continue to address the needs and interests of the partners. Partnership goals may change over time as new information or opportunities become available, or new challenges are encountered. Leaders will find it useful to monitor the relevance of goals to the partnership to ensure continued support and to stay attuned to the possible need for goal adjustment. The revision of goals can also provide the opportunity for members to evaluate the value of the partnership and for each of them to recommit to the partnership.

Table 5
Sample
Workforce
Development
Partnership Goals

Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium	Regional Precision Manufacturing Partnership
- Improve labor market information exchange among area employers, academic institutions, and other interested parties. - Better coordinate pre-college assessments, courses, standards, and curricula across public education system. - Encourage health care employers to actively participate in the development of their workforce. - Work together to make more resources available to support matriculated and prospective students.²⁴	- Increase industry wide awareness of the Pioneer Valley Region as an innovative and agile high technology precision - manufacturing region. - Strengthen cluster development and increase business competitiveness. - Build a well-educated technologically skilled workforce.

QUICK WINS

Sometimes achievement of major partnership goals, such as building a nursing workforce career ladder, from Certified Nursing Assistant to Licensed Practical Nurse to Registered Nurse, can be a long process requiring multiple years. One of the potential tensions between members during the early stages of a partnership is between those who focus on long-term goals and those who focus on short-term goals.

It is helpful to identify and capitalize on the achievement of short-term goals, or “quick wins.” In workforce development, these might include development of new curricula, successful implementation of short-term training projects, development of articulation or

²³ See “The Governance and Management of Effective Community Health Partnerships: A Typology for Research, Policy and Practice. Shannon M. Mitchell and Stephen M. Shortell. The Millbank Quarterly, Vol. 78, No. 2, 2000, pp. 241-289.

²⁴ Critical Collaboration: Improving Education & Training Pathways to Career in Health Care. Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium, November 2011.

coordination agreements among educational institutions, and publications or reports produced by the partnership. These “wins” provide tangible evidence to members of the value of partnering and help to sustain partner engagement over time as the partnership continues to pursue its long-term goals. Quick wins also provide evidence to external stakeholders of the value and effectiveness of the partnership.

PROGRAM PLANNING, DESIGN, AND IMPLEMENTATION

A substantial amount of the time and effort of the partnership will be focused on its core activities — program design and implementation. It is important that all partners are engaged in major decisions associated with program design and implementation.

Partnerships may establish committees or working groups for different aspects of program design and implementation. For instance, at the same time that the full CAN DO partnership was involved in strategic planning for the nursing education system, committees took on oversight and management of two pilot programs, one aimed at diversifying the long term care nursing workforce and the other supporting graduate nursing students to become nurse faculty. Committees met separately but reported regularly on their activities and progress in full monthly partnership meetings.

The Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium has also developed detailed work plans. An excerpt from their plan on the next page shows how activities can be planned and designed to meet the goals of a partnership.



Excerpt from the Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium Workplan	
Priority Area #1	Improve labor market information exchange among area employers, academic institutions and other interested parties Currently there is no consistent method for employers, academic institutions and others to talk with each other about labor market needs. Improvement of communication in this area should lead to better alignment of academic and other programs to workforce need. As a result, more graduates will find jobs expeditiously and relevant programs will be sustained and supported.
Activities	Identify topics/occupations to pilot LMI information sharing
	• Through regular exchange, develop a structured, consistent method to share labor market information (LMI) • Create a written record of this LMI research • Review official vacancy data and compare to actual experience • Share information pertaining to the impact of Massachusetts and federal healthcare reform • Explore career ladders across different types of institutions (e.g., from community health centers to hospitals)
Impact	• Develop a model for sector information sharing and collaboration • More effective utilization of public resources for education and training
Use of consortium meeting time	• Data presentations • Conversations around respective needs • Research into practice across types of healthcare facilities
*Potential activities if incremental investment	• Creation of annual public forum/event • Development of new or revised programs to address labor market needs
*Potential activities if unlimited investment	• Fund new or revised courses/program grounded in LMI projections • Designated staff to convene and coordinate regular ongoing regional dialogue and collaboration

Source: Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium Workplan, Draft 2011

Working with partners to plan the program design and implementation activities of a partnership will help to ensure that activities are in sync with both the goals and resources of the partnership.

The **Take It To Go** table that follows has a framework for partner roles in the development and implementation of a workforce development training program.



List all the partners, the role each plays in the partnership and check the activities each participates in.

PARTNER ROLES IN PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION											
Partner Name	Role in Project	Attend regular partner-ship meetings	Provide guidance on the overall direction of the project	Participate in on-going strategic planning for sustain-ability	Contribute financial match to the project	Provide input on training content/ curriculum	Provide training for the project	Participate in training provision	Participate in training provider selection	Recruit participants	Interview, hire or offer internships to participants
Ex. Monroe Community College	Training provider	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		
Ex. Cogswell Cogs	Employer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓ interview internships

COMMUNICATION

One of the cornerstones of collaborative work is communication. Communication in partnerships begins with outreach to potential partners and continues throughout the life of a partnership, with internal and external dimensions. Internally, leaders and managers must communicate with members about activities, progress toward goals, and any issues that emerge, ensuring as much transparency as possible. Communication to members about meetings is essential and includes meeting agendas sent out prior to meetings, documentation of meeting proceedings, decisions made, and feedback on actions taken, following meetings. Mechanisms must be in place to promote communication among partners during and beyond meetings, and formal communication mechanisms should be established to allow partners to communicate with leadership between meetings. Technology offers multiple options to support communication among partners, through e-mail, web-pages, on-line discussion groups and remote participation in meetings. Whatever the means used, communication for partnership work should be clear, concise and timely.

While clear communication among members is essential for collaborative work, communication about partnership activities must also extend beyond the individuals who attend meetings to include others within partner organizations. To help build and maintain buy-in within organizations, both leadership and partner representatives should share information on partnership activities with staff of partner organizations, especially senior managers and those units and departments that are engaged in the partnership and its programs. Individuals who attend meetings should in turn, convey any concerns or information related to the partnership that are expressed by their own organizations.

Externally, partnership leaders and members should share information on the partnership with other stakeholders, such as professional associations, foundations and other community groups. It is particularly important to share news of partnership achievements and successes in order to help maintain support for its efforts.

Successful partnerships develop standards, rules, and working agreements about communications, and standardized communication products and channels about and for the partnership. Partnerships may designate an individual, such as a communications professional from a partner organization, to lead external communications and develop material about the partnership and its program for dissemination.

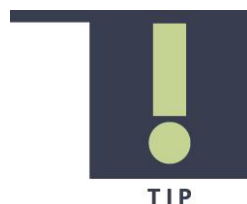
Documenting the work of the partnership

As part of the communication of partnership activities, a system for documenting major activities and decisions should be established by the partnership manager. Collecting and sharing such information helps to ensure transparency of the partnership's efforts and contributes to the collective memory. Documentation of the partnership's work should include:

- Meeting notes, particularly about decisions made,
- Work-plans and other planning documents,

- Data gathered through partnership efforts,
- Evaluation plans, tools and reports,
- Reports or presentations about the partnership, its members, activities and outcomes,
- Press releases, brochures and promotional materials, and
- Publicity (e.g., newspaper articles) about the partnership and its activities.

As an example of a structure for sharing documentation, CAN DO partnership members each received a binder that contained a statement of the mission and goals of the partnership, a timeline for its work, key elements of the strategic plan as it was created and evolved, statements of key decisions made, reports from pilot program subcommittees, reports prepared for the partnership, and information gathered about other nursing partnerships around the country whose work was helping to inform that of CAN DO. These binders created a shared set of information accessible to all members. Increasingly projects are setting up web-sites or utilizing document sharing sites.



It is a good idea for leaders to work with members in the early stages of a partnership to establish some rules and expectations for communication. For example, some partnerships explicitly discourage individuals from discussing partnership related concerns outside the partnership, and instead, encourage members to share their concerns with the group so they can work together to find solutions. With respect to communication outside the partnership, there may be times when a particularly sensitive topic must be discussed and members would prefer that their comments not be shared beyond partnership members. Members should be encouraged to preface any sensitive comments with a request that information not be shared beyond the group, and such requests should be honored faithfully.

Good communication becomes extremely important in the event of a crisis. Over the life of a partnership unanticipated events can occur that may require ‘damage control.’ It is worth identifying key individuals besides the leaders who would be engaged in such a contingency. To prevent such a situation from destroying a partnership, several possible actions should be taken:²⁵

- Address questions in a straightforward and honest manner, readily providing important information
- Reach out to key constituencies so that they can hear news directly from the partnership leaders, rather than from some other source
- Provide a clear and consistent message
- Explain how the partnership will examine and improve practices to avoid problems in the future.

²⁵ “Sustaining Partnerships” by Diane Yendol-Hoppey, David Hoppey, and Ted Price in Shelley B. Wepner and Dee Hopkins (Eds.) Collaborative Leadership in Action: Partnering for Success in Schools. New York: Teachers College Press, 2011.

WORKING AGREEMENTS

As noted previously, the leaders of a partnership must attend to the process as much as the results of the partnership's effort. Explicit agreements on *how* the members will work together provide a valuable means of supporting both good relationships among partners and the successful achievement of partnership goals. Processes and working agreements may address the following areas:

- Roles, responsibilities and expectations for organizations' participation in the partnership,
- Means and timing of communication,
- Accountability to particular stakeholders,
- Meeting attendance,
- Ground rules for discussion and acceptable meeting behavior,
- Documentation of meetings,
- Decision-making processes,
- Norms for use of cell phones or other personal technology,
- Confidentiality of information exchanged within meetings,
- Plans for managing disagreement or conflict,
- Plans for managing absences from meetings, and
- Plans for transitions of individual partnership members and on-boarding of new members.

It is best to establish these items early in the life of a partnership, review them frequently, and revise them as needed over time. It is also important to document these agreements so that they are clear to everyone involved and can be referred to as the work of the partnership proceeds. It may be useful to identify a process expert or facilitator to guide this work²⁶.

During one of its early partnership meetings the CAN DO Partnership defined a set of tenets of a collaborative process to help guide their process of working together.

For CAN DO members, the collaborative process:

- Is inclusive, with participants reflecting the diversity of perspectives and demographic
- Makes explicit the relationship between the process and formal decision-making,
- Makes participants responsible for ensuring success,
- Involves participants in the design of the process,

²⁶ David Straus, recommends a "process facilitator" in *How to Make Collaboration Work: powerful ways to build consensus, solve problems and make decisions*. Berrett-Kohler Publishers, San Francisco, CA,



- Builds a common sense of purpose,
- Allows participants to define the issues,
- Encourages participants to educate each other,
- Identifies and tests multiple options,
- Uses consensus-based decision making,
- Involves participants in implementing solutions,
- Keeps people involved,
- Focuses on collective problem-solving, and
- Requires that participants actively listen to one another to try to understand different perspectives.²⁷

GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

A very important and often potentially complex area of working collaboratively is governance and decision-making. Partnerships with a large and varied scope of work should establish governance structures and committees or working groups. The purpose of the governance structure is to ensure there is clarity on reporting among committees and a clear structure and process for coordination and oversight of the entire body of work of the partnership. Working groups and committees can be created for specific projects, topics or issues and may be time-bound or last for the duration of the partnership. Workforce development partnerships working on industry pipeline issues may choose to create separate committees for different occupations or types of occupations. Each committee tackling a specific issue may have representatives from a different mix of partners but not necessarily all the partners. It is usually advisable to have one group that represents all partners, and may be referred to by different names –some may call it the “Board of Directors” others might call it a “Board of Advisors.” CAN DO began with a group that represented all members and later formed an advisory board with the CEOs and Presidents of each of the partner organizations.

While there may be no single “right” way of approaching decision-making, Interaction Associates suggest some factors to be considered in determining how to involve multiple voices in making decisions²⁸:

- **Stakeholder buy-in:** To what extent do stakeholders need to be involved to support implementation of the decision?
- **Time:** How much time is available to spend on the decision?

²⁷ Source: CAN DO Meeting Notes, October 30, 2008.

²⁸ Adapted from Facilitative Leadership: Tapping the Power of Participation. Boston, MA: Interaction Associates, 2007

- **Importance:** How important is this decision to the partner organizations?
- **Information needed:** What information is needed to support a quality decision?
- **Capability:** How capable and experienced are the partners as decision-makers?
- **Building Teamwork:** What is the potential value of this decision to build a stronger team?

Based on answers to these questions, there are different ways of making decisions²⁹:

- Leadership (i.e., partnership leader or manager or steering committee) decides and announces,
- Leadership gathers input then makes a decision,
- Leadership gathers input and the group decides, or
- The decision is delegated to someone/sub-group with appropriate parameters.

It is important for leadership to propose and for the partners to agree upon what process is to be used to make different types of decisions and why those processes are chosen.

The **Take It To Go** provides a template for planning meetings and decision making for different goals and activities or groups.

²⁹ Adapted from Facilitative Leadership: Tapping the Power of Participation. Boston, MA: Interaction Associates, 2007



PLANNING MEETINGS AND DECISION-MAKING					
Dates	Meeting or Activity	Goal	Required Preparation	Deliverables / Decisions to be Made	Decision Making Process Planned

“Consensus is achieved when each of the stakeholders agrees that they can live with a proposed solution, even though it may not be their preferred solution.”
Barbara Gray

There will likely be times when the partnership as a whole, or committees and working groups must make a decision. In such cases, the decision may be reached in different ways:

- The group may seek a consensus around an issue. A group achieves consensus “when each of the stakeholders agrees that they can live with a proposed solution, even though it may not be their preferred solution.”³⁰
- Partnership members may vote with a majority rule to establish the decision, or
- The group may agree to abide by a “super-majority” decision that might involve two-thirds or three-fourths majority.

It may not be practical to expect all decisions to be made unanimously or by building consensus among all partners. The partnership may also choose different criteria for different types of decisions – some that require all partners, some that can be made by an executive/steering committee and some that can be made by the partnership director.

MEETINGS

Meetings offer opportunities for members to get to know each other and work together, which in turn, can build trust and understanding. Meetings serve as a venue for planning and decision-making, communication on partnership activities and new information gathered through or by the partnership, and an exchange among members of information on things going on in their own organizations or the environment. Effective meetings will also allocate time for review and follow-up on action steps and items from previous meetings.

As valuable as they can be, meetings take time out of professionals’ already busy schedules, so it is important that for each meeting there is:

- A clear purpose,
- An agenda prepared with input from members, and shared in advance of the meeting,
- Identification of facilitators and recorders in advance,
- Effective use of time,
- Discussion of next steps or assignments for between-meeting activities,
- A review of meeting minutes and notes from previous meetings,
- A report out or review of action steps and assignments from previous meetings, and
- A brief evaluation to obtain feedback on meeting content and process.

A clear and well-planned agenda is the foundation for a good meeting. To support collaborative work, agendas should be developed by a meeting leader or facilitator, or steering/executive committees, with input from members on topics and procedures. Suggestions and templates for developing effective agendas are provided below.



³⁰ Barbara Gray's Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989.

Meetings may be in-person, or ‘virtual’ using teleconference facilities, Skype® or other web-based sharing tools. We recommend in-person meetings in the early stages of a group to enable members to get to know each other. Leaders and facilitators should also learn some of the skills necessary for facilitating virtual meetings where a few or all of the members are participating by teleconference or the internet.



The Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium uses a consistent agenda format for its monthly meetings which includes the following topics:

- Updates
- Work-plan Discussion and Future Activities for the Consortium
- Introductions (for any new partners present)
- General Announcements
- Consortium Decision-making
- Labor Market Information Sharing
- Best Practice Presentation.

Consortium partners are invited to take responsibility for leading parts of the meeting and take turns offering a best practice presentation.

The **Take It To Go** table provides a checklist and tips for preparing a meeting agenda and a sample meeting agenda template.



Use these suggestions to help prepare your meeting agendas.

Preparing a Meeting Agenda

Your basic meeting agenda should:

1. Indicate the date and location (including directions and parking).
2. Note the meeting's start and end time and a call-in telephone number and website for teleconferences and web-enabled meetings.
3. State the purpose of the meeting.
4. Make clear the desired outcomes of the meeting.
5. List the order of topics to be addressed, responsible party, process and time allocated for each topic.
6. Allow time and opportunity for members to provide updates or bring issues and topics for discussion.
7. Provide for meeting closure, including articulation of next steps and a brief evaluation.
8. Be distributed to participants in advance of the meeting to ensure members come prepared.

Tips to Make it Better

1. Include a quick review of the agenda to allow for any modifications at the start of the meeting.
2. Be realistic about how many topics you can cover in a single meeting.
3. For the topics listed, you may wish to indicate if the topic is an item for:
 - information sharing
 - discussion/dialogue
 - action item or decision point³¹
4. Ensure that there is review of and follow-up of action items or next steps from previous meetings.
5. Facilitators should provide sufficient opportunities for virtual participants to speak or draw attention to their online comments and input.
6. Ensure that there are clear expectations about preparing for the meeting, e.g., gathering input from within a member's organization on a partnership matter before the meeting.
7. Provide some opportunity for a meeting evaluation. Even a quick chance for participants to list "what worked well" and "what could be improved" can be valuable for future planning. (See the Sample Meeting Evaluation that follows.)
8. Rotate facilitation among members.

³¹ See Effective Meeting Management: How to Run Focused Meetings that Get Results by Ann M. Delehant, Center for Competitive Management, May 1, 2009. Available at: <http://www.c4cm.com/handouts/documents/CCMMeetingManagementFinal.pdf>



Sample Agenda Planning Templates³²

Template A.

Desired Outcomes:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Time	Activity	Person Leading

Template B.

Topic	Information/ Discussion/ Action (I,D or A)	Desired Outcome	Person Responsible/ Facilitator	Time

³² Table adapted from Delehant, 2009.

Keeping a record of meeting proceedings provides an opportunity to document group activities and decisions for future reference as well as for reporting out to others. These records can also be used in orienting new members. Sometimes members rotate the responsibility of taking notes. The record should be sent out to members for review and any necessary revisions.

A basic structure for meeting notes includes the following components:³³

- Name of Partnership and committee or working group
- Date of Meeting
- Names of Attendees
- Name of Recorder
- What Happened and How
- Decisions/Action Items
- Next Steps (task assignments, plans for next meetings, future agenda items, etc.)

It is important to get feedback from participants about each meeting. This process can be as simple as a group discussion/brainstorm about “what worked well” and “what could be improved.” A written (or on-line follow-up) evaluation might be more appropriate if leaders have any concerns over members’ comfort level in sharing their reactions, or if more lengthy feedback is required.

A sample meeting evaluation is provided in the **Take It To Go** section that follows.

³³ Adapted from *How to Make Meetings Work* by Michael Doyle and David Straus, New York: Berkley Books, 1976.

Establishing the Partnership



Sample Meeting Evaluation					
Put a check mark (✓) in the appropriate box to indicate your feeling about each statement below.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided or Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I had the information and time to prepare for this meeting.					
I understood why this meeting was taking place (e.g., information sharing, planning, problem solving, decision-making, open discussion, etc.) and what specific outcomes were expected.					
I understood what was expected of me and of other participants in the meeting (including the leader, facilitator, recorder, etc.).					
Before the start of the meeting, I understood how the meeting was intended to flow (agenda, activities, etc.) and when it would end.					
All those in attendance had an opportunity to participate in the meeting.					
Most participants listened carefully to each other.					
Most participants expressed themselves openly, honestly, and directly.					
Agreements were explicit and clear.					
Conflicts or disagreements were openly explored and constructively managed.					
The meeting generally proceeded as planned and achieved its intended purpose.					
My participation contributed to the outcomes achieved by the meeting.					
Overall, I am satisfied with this meeting and feel that my time in it has been well spent.					
What did you like best or find most valuable about the meeting?					
What would you change about how future meetings are conducted?					
What topics would you like to see on future meeting agendas?					

Adapted from Frank Burns and Robert L. Gragg's "Meeting Evaluation Scale" from *The Pfeiffer Library Volume 12, 2nd Edition*. Copyright ©1998 Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer

EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND THE PARTNERSHIP

Evaluation serves as a valuable support to partnering. It can provide the means for monitoring both progress against the goals of a partnership and how well its members are working together. Partnerships should develop measurable objectives or outcomes for which the members hold themselves accountable. Depending on the nature of the work undertaken, these outcomes may include items such as:

- Establishment and implementation of new educational programs,
- Number of participants trained,
- Increase in number and percentage of degree completions,
- Setting up of new agreements between partners (such as articulation agreements),
- Changes in business practices to support the career advancement of workers in a sector, and
- Number of trainees hired by business partners.

Once partners determine *what* is to be measured, the partnership should develop a plan for *when* and *how* progress toward outcomes should be measured (e.g., annually, every quarter or six months).

Partnerships should also regularly evaluate the well-being of the partnership itself. It can be helpful to assess the process of a partnership at periodic intervals, such as every six months or a year. Evaluation mechanisms can be used to assess the following:

- Process elements, such as
 - understanding and agreement on goals,
 - satisfaction with the progress made, and
 - comfort with decision-making mechanisms.
- Relationship issues, such as
 - members' feelings about their involvement and contributions to the partnership,
 - the level of trust among members, and
 - otherwise undisclosed areas of tension.
- Results
 - degree to which each partner organization's goals are being met,
 - the degree to which partnership goals are being met, and
 - benefits to partners.

Evaluations can also assess the level of integration among partner organizations. (Appendices 5, 6 and 7 provide examples of surveys that can be used to gain insight into the

collaborative process and its impact on partners.) The **Take It to Go** also provides a template for evaluating or measuring progress against the goals of a partnership.

DATA AS A SUPPORT TO PARTNERING

The importance of data to the partnering process is often underestimated. Members may lack clear information or may have inaccurate perceptions about different topics or workforce issues. Relevant data can help to focus discussion on the facts, from which strategies and solutions can be developed. The data can be prepared and presented by external parties, or by partners that may have staff who can provide the data. Partnerships also provide a valuable opportunity for members to benchmark against their peers.

For example, the Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium compiled an inventory of healthcare providers, vacancy data for specific targeted occupations, and training programs in the Boston area³⁴. The CAN DO (Western Massachusetts Nursing Collaborative) partnership gathered information on the region's need for registered nurses and compared it with the current output of regional educational programs in nursing to provide information on the nursing shortage in the region and build a business case to garner support for systemic change³⁵. The presentation of data, in both Boston and Western Massachusetts, provided objective data and a focus for partnership discussions. For the Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium the inventory also represented an accomplishment, in terms of a product, of the partnership.



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Nursing in Western Massachusetts: Key Data Elements	
Full-time Equivalent Nurses in 2009	8,058
Nurses Needed by 2015	9,077
New nurses entering the workforce in 2009	315
New nurses needed in 2015	639
Projected annual shortfall of nurses if supply is not increased	354
Additional faculty needed to accommodate additional students	53
Average nursing salary (Hampden County)	\$66,630

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

There are at least two major dimensions to relationship management in the on-going work of partnerships. One is the connection that leaders must maintain with each of the partner organizations to help sustain participation and stay attuned to new developments, potential

³⁴ See Profile of the Current Educational & Training Opportunities for Boston's Healthcare Workforce. Available at: <http://www.bostonpic.org/policy/boston-healthcare-careers-consortium>

³⁵ See the Healthcare Workforce Partnership of Western Mass: Building a Skilled Workforce to Deliver Quality Care. Available at: http://www.rebhc.org/uploadedfiles/healthcarepartnership_finalfinal.pdf?PHPSESSID=e5ff73bae568dfd7c0fb776c6687b030

opportunities, and constraints. Leaders should therefore continue individual meetings, phone calls and emails with partnership members throughout the life of the partnership.

The second dimension to relationship management is the maintenance of effective relations among the individual members of the partnership. In the early stages of a partnership, members may not know each other well, or may even make assumptions about each other based on common (sometimes inaccurate) perceptions. It is helpful to allow some time and activities for members to become better acquainted as individuals and as representatives of their organizations. As members begin to work together and pursue joint activities or investments, they will have to be able to trust and respect each other. Partnership leaders can foster respect by establishing an environment in which the contributions of all organizations are given equal acknowledgement and recognition.³⁶ Leaders can incorporate into regular meetings activities designed to facilitate members getting to know each other. Partnerships may also choose to organize informal events, especially to celebrate the achievement of major milestones.

Conflict

One challenging aspect of the relational side of working collaboratively is the need to manage conflict or disagreements. Conflict might emerge in a variety of areas, including the perceived balance of power among member organizations, the choice of direction of a partnership, content of partnership-created publications, or use of partnership resources. If left unresolved, conflict can damage trust, create divisions within partnerships and even lead to their dissolution.

In one of the popular models describing how groups form – “Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing”³⁷ it is acknowledged that conflict is inevitable in the formation and development of group activity. In this model, conflict is considered to be necessary and healthy as competing ideas and viewpoints are tackled in the early stages. Conflict will likely emerge in later stages too. It is important therefore for a partnership to develop some kind of process for identifying, addressing and resolving conflict. In their work on collaboration, Winer and Ray offer suggestions on how to approach managing conflict³⁸:

- Determine what issues need to be resolved in order for the partnership to pursue its work.
- Establish who (e.g., group member or outside facilitator) will facilitate the process for resolving conflict.
- Separate the conflict from notions of “right” and “wrong” to help the group avoid personalizing issues.
- Be sure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard in conflict resolution discussions.

³⁶ See The Partnership Toolbox World Wildlife Federation. Available at: <http://www.wwf.org.uk>

³⁷ Bruce Tuchman (1965) “Developmental sequence in small groups”. *Psychological Bulletin* 63 (6): 384–99 retrieved from Wikipedia!

³⁸ Michael Winer and Karen Ray, *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey*. The Fieldstone Alliance, 1994.

- Establish rituals for healing and forgiveness and use humor where appropriate.

ANTICIPATING AND MANAGING CHANGE

In partnership work, as in life, change is inevitable. There are four areas in partnerships where change can be anticipated and even planned for:

- Turnover among individual representatives to a partnership,
- Leadership changes,
- Change in organizations participating in a partnership, and
- Changes in the environment in which the partnership is operating.

Change among individuals representing partner organizations can be destabilizing to a partnership in a number of ways. The member may take with him/her knowledge, skills, contacts and resources that are needed by the partnership and the organization he/she was representing. If no other ties are created to that individual's organization, the organization may no longer see value in the partnership and may withdraw from it. Without any background, the person designated to replace a member may have difficulty integrating with other members and may weaken the link between his/her "home" organization and the partnership. While individual transitions may be unavoidable, the leaders of a partnership can establish mechanisms to integrate new organizational representatives as they enter the partnership and, more important, can ensure that individuals build understanding and support across their own organizations so that multiple individuals within the organization have an understanding of the purpose and work of the partnership.

Potentially more destabilizing to a partnership are transitions among those who hold leadership positions. In many cases, partnerships benefit from the vision and passion of one or two individuals who mobilize others around a critical issue. When a leader steps down from the partnership, the direction and energy of the partnership may be jeopardized, unless efforts have been made to prepare and cultivate leaders among other members of the group. This is discussed in the leadership section. Partnerships should develop transition plans for leaders and partnership activities should include opportunities to develop successors.

Partnerships may also experience change in their organizational composition. Organizations may experience downsizing, restructuring, leadership changes, and even changes in missions that affect their ability or desire to participate in a partnership. A partnership may pursue a direction that no longer aligns with an organization's own goals for participating in the group. Or, once an organization's goals are achieved the organization may not find sufficient value to sustain its commitment and participation in the partnership.

Partnerships can help manage organizational transitions by periodically providing partners with an opportunity to reconsider their participation and opt out if necessary. By establishing and agreeing upon a mechanism, such as a periodic review and renewal of commitment, organizations can withdraw without damaging relationships, and the

partnership can anticipate and better manage the change in composition that results. In addition to allowing organizations to “opt out” smoothly, the partnership should allow for the addition of organization members by periodically assessing whether all the entities that might be key to success in achieving goals are represented. If any are missing, the group should have a strategy for engaging those important additional partners.

The fourth area of change that is important to partnerships is that of the economic environment, which can pose both opportunities and challenges. For example, a recession can alter the landscape of opportunity both for businesses and for workers. These changes require partnerships to re-examine their original goals and strategies, and in some cases may lead to changes in partnership composition. Changes in the environment of a partnership can also present new opportunities, such as the availability of new grants, new training institutions, and increased attention and funding aimed at supporting new industry sectors. It is important therefore for partnership leaders to keep abreast of changes in the external environment by using the networks and resources available through partnership members to gather information. In turn, partnership leaders need to regularly make time in meeting agendas to share and discuss such information with members.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

On-going Processes of Partnering



Questions to Consider

1. Now that we are working together toward achieving shared goals, who else needs to be at the table to help ensure our success?
2. Who are important stakeholders, internal and external, who should be informed of the progress and activities of the partnership on a regular basis?
3. What activities are required to meet partnership goals? Who will be responsible for each of the major activities and what role does each partner have in these activities?
4. What communication is required to keep the leaders and all the partners informed about the partnership and its activities?
5. What are major activities for which working agreements should be put in place?
6. What are the different committees and working groups that should be established to achieve the goals? How should each of these report to the leadership and the entire partnership?
7. What kind of decisions will the partnership have to make? What is a reasonable approach to making decisions to ensure multiple perspectives and the engagement of partners?
8. What is an appropriate meeting schedule for the partnership and its committees? How can we ensure meetings are run effectively and efficiently?
9. What is our capacity for evaluation – for monitoring progress toward our shared goals? How can we draw on partnership resources in this area or reach beyond the partnership to meet our needs?
10. What kinds of data would be helpful to the work of the partnership?

11. How can we ensure the effective management of the relationship between leaders and members and among members? What formal or informal mechanisms should be set up for that?
12. Are we willing to voice our disagreements? How should we manage disagreements and conflict?
13. What kind of change should we be prepared for – in personnel, in the environment, among partners? How should we prepare for it?



Action Steps

Mission and Goals

1. State the mission and goals for the partnership in writing and present them to the partnership for input and approval.
2. Make the final statement of goals, or a mission statement, visible during meetings. Use it as a guidepost for keeping partnership work focused on achieving those goals.
3. Be prepared to revisit and revise goals as circumstances change, new opportunities arise and some goals are achieved.

Program Planning Design and Implementation

1. Work with partners to develop a strategy or approach for achieving each of the goals.
2. Identify roles and responsibilities for partners in achieving different goals.
3. Establish a detailed workplan, with timelines and a clear indication of who will be responsible for carrying out each activity.

Communication

1. Establish routines for communication among partnership members. With members' input, decide on the most appropriate means of communication – e-mail, web-pages, on-line discussion groups, a newsletter, etc.
2. Identify one or more individuals to lead external communications and establish rules and working agreements for communications, especially external communication.
3. Develop standard material (information sheets, paragraphs) on the partnership, its activities and results, for use among partners as well as with external audiences.
4. Notify funders and community stakeholders (including elected officials) of events and successes related to the work of the partnership.
5. Develop contacts with local media to publicize events.
6. Determine how results, activities, decisions, etc. will be documented.

**Action Steps (continued)****Working Agreements**

1. Establish working agreements early on to address the following:
 - a. Discussion rules,
 - b. Roles and responsibilities,
 - c. Accountability,
 - d. Decision making,
 - e. Confidentiality of information shared at meetings,
 - f. Plans for managing disagreements, and
 - g. Plans for managing absences.
2. Revisit and revise these agreements periodically or as needed over time.

Governance and Decision-Making

1. Identify the committees and working groups that are needed to manage the work of the partnership and determine how they will report to the leadership and the entire partnership.
2. Identify the key goals, decisions, and deliverables that each group is responsible for.
3. Develop acceptable methods for reaching decisions for the entire partnership as well as for committees and working groups.

Meetings

1. Plan meetings well in advance and circulate an agenda prior to the meeting. Send out information on meetings with no less than one week's notice. Share meeting notes within a week of a meeting taking place.
2. Ensure that a number of members have the training and tools needed to plan and facilitate effective meetings, including conference calls and web-based meetings.
3. Develop clear objectives for each meeting and ensure that activities are suited to meeting those objectives.
4. Design activities that engage and provide active roles for partnership members. (Avoid simply presenting information all the time.)
5. Close each meeting by outlining next steps and assigning any appropriate tasks to members.
6. Solicit and use feedback on meetings to improve their value to members.



Action Steps (continued)

Evaluation

1. Plan for evaluation that addresses the three areas of results, process and relationships. Evaluate all three areas on a regular basis and share results with the partnership.
2. Work with partners to establish indicators of progress and goal achievement. Establish a timeline with benchmarks to monitor progress.
3. Develop mechanisms for collecting data/information as needed to monitor progress and delegate responsibility among partners as appropriate.
4. Use evaluation results to highlight areas of success and/or change course as indicated.
5. Communicate progress on goal achievement both within and outside the partnership.
6. Conduct periodic surveys of the partnership to gain insight into how members are working as a group and the types of benefits that they are experiencing through their participation.

Data

1. In conjunction with partners, identify the types of data (not just numbers, any valuable information) that would assist the partnership in making decisions and carrying out its work.
2. Determine what is necessary to obtain the data. Identify capacity and resources within the partnership that can help with data acquisition.
3. Leadership and staff can prepare data to present it to the partnership; however, members should be engaged in the discussion and analysis of any data presented to the partnership.
4. Decide on the best means for sharing data within and, if appropriate, beyond the partnership.

Relationship Management

1. Recognize that partnership members may not know each other well. Build ways for members to get to know each other as representatives of organizations and as individuals. Consider rotating the venue for meetings, inviting tours of facilities, or simply allowing short presentations at meetings for members to talk about what they do.
2. Create opportunities for members to build trust. Assign tasks to small groups of members so they can get better acquainted and demonstrate their interest in collaboration.
3. Encourage sharing of information and members across committees.
4. Encourage mutual respect by recognizing the value and contributions of all members to the partnership.
5. Establish mechanisms for dealing with disagreement and conflict. Identify experts and facilitators who could help.

 Action Steps (continued)**Managing Change**

1. Work with members to communicate about the partnership within their own organizations. Provide information and be available for on-site meetings with staff as needed to help build buy-in and understanding of the project beyond individual members.
2. Establish clear procedures for orienting of new partnership members. For example, develop a standard packet of reading materials and an outline of areas to be covered in an orientation process. Invite current members to participate in the process.
3. If partners are forced to withdraw due to organizational challenges, invite the organization and/or the individual member to rejoin the partnership when the situation has changed.
4. Establish periodic processes through which organizations can elect to withdraw from, join or rejoin the partnership.
5. Establish meeting agenda items or other ways of sharing information and strategizing on how to react to current or potential changes in the environment of the partnership.



CHAPTER 4. SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are dynamic entities that can change over time in composition and purpose. To support sustainability partnerships must continue to demonstrate value to internal and external stakeholders. Sustaining partnerships requires maintaining the engagement and commitment of partners over time, continuity/stability of leadership, clarity of purpose and goals, and resources to support continued collaborative work.

Workforce development partnerships are often initially funded through government programs or foundations with the expectation that if successful, partners will be willing to contribute funds and seek alternate resources to sustain the effort. Leadership and members should begin early to plan for sustainability.

However, in some cases, partnerships are a means to achieving certain time-limited goals. Once the goals of the partnership have been met and the workforce development problem has been addressed it may be appropriate to bring the activities of the partnership to an end. At an appropriate time leaders must work with members to determine whether it is necessary to continue the partnership, and if so, to plan for sustainability.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

Maintaining the engagement of partners over time requires that they see a continued benefit or value to their participation. If partners continue to see value in their participation that is greater than their cost or effort, they are more likely to stay committed and engaged in the work of the partnership. In addition, they are more likely to be able to mobilize additional resources or convince others of the value of the partnership.

Below are examples of the types of benefits reported to Commonwealth Corporation by members of sector-based workforce development partnerships in Massachusetts:

- Accessing training opportunities for current employees,
- Accessing new sources of qualified employees,
- Aligning education and training capacity to industry needs,
- Strengthening regional training capacity,
- Gaining new knowledge about the industry sector,
- Strengthening the reputation of participating organizations, and

- Building new working relationships with other entities (employers, training providers, workforce development entities) interested in workforce development issues.

The question of value or benefits of partnering can be explored through surveys and partnership discussions. (See Appendices 5, 6, and 7 for sample surveys to assess partner benefits.) Leaders should share what is learned from such surveys about the benefits of participation with partners and stakeholders. Partnership leaders should use any survey results that suggest that partners are not obtaining benefits from their participation as the basis for discussions on how to improve the operation and impact of the partnership.

SHARED VALUES

Partners may come to the table for a number of reasons, including a desire to address a pressing need. Over time, having a set of shared values can contribute to the longevity of a partnership and the commitment of partners. The Intercare Alliance is a partnership of long-term care providers operating for 15 years in the Worcester area. Nursing facilities, which are the partners in the Alliance, were initially drawn to the partnership as a cost-containment strategy. As the members faced a business need to build a nursing pipeline, it became apparent that partners shared a commitment to supporting the advancement of their existing Certified Nursing Assistant staff in order to provide the highest level of care to their clients and residents. This commitment led partners to invest their own resources in sustaining the partnership, and these shared values are one of the factors cited by partnership leaders as contributing to its long existence.

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LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY

Strong and stable leadership is often noted as a factor contributing to the longevity of lasting partnerships.

In the chapter on leadership we have discussed broadening leadership to prepare for transitions and succession. This is particularly important for sustainability and stability of leadership. To help ensure stability of leadership over time, the Intercare Alliance established a rotating chair position. Chairs are drawn from the core group of long-term care facility leaders who have been involved with the partnership for several years. Thus, knowledge about the partnership, its activities and culture is spread among several individuals who alternate a leadership role in close coordination with the Alliance's finance committee, which makes recommendations for key policy decisions on the use of the group's resources.

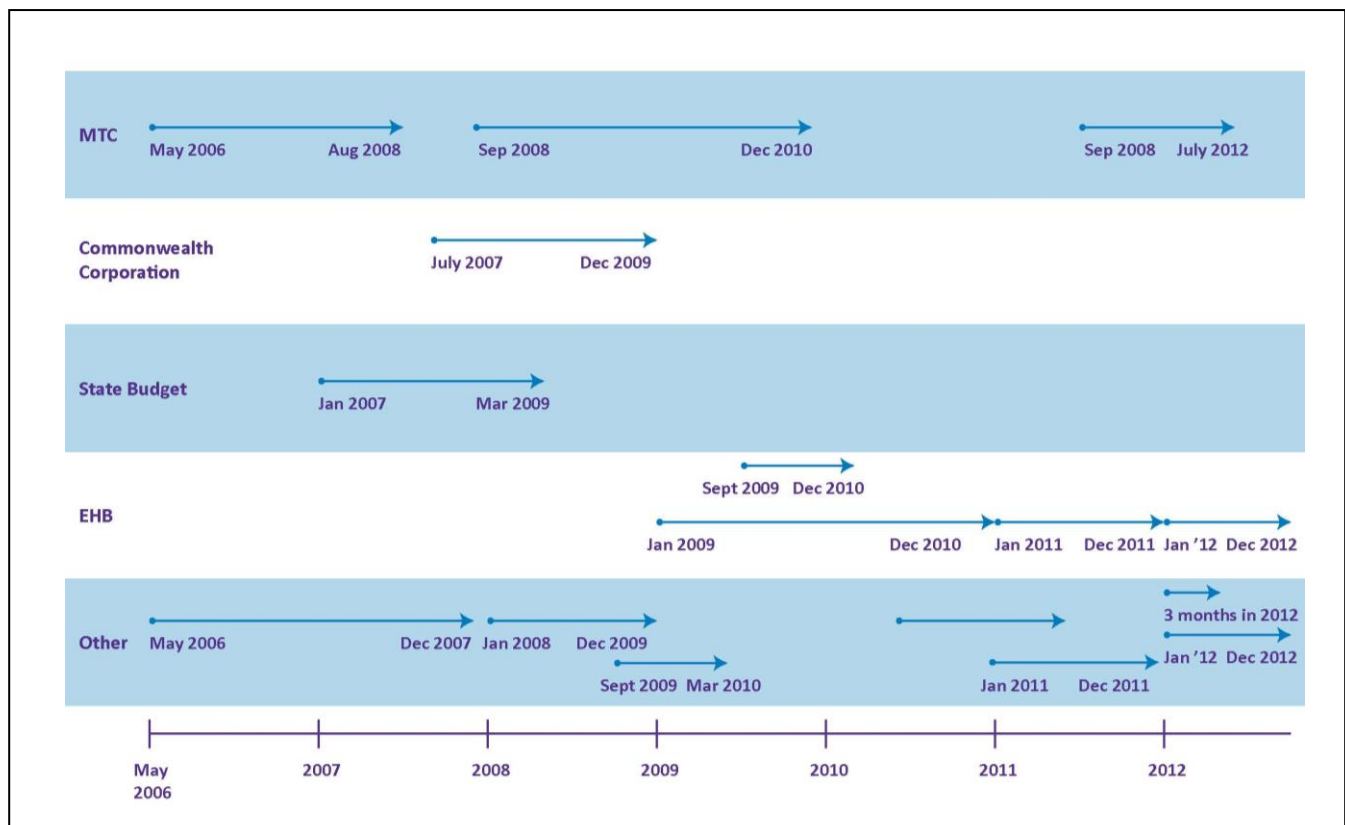
RESOURCES

Even with the best of intentions and strong shared values, it is difficult to sustain partnerships without dedicated resources to support convening and key activities. Partnerships find different ways of supporting their work. In some cases, partnerships are supported through workforce development program grants for a period. Sometimes a

portion of the funds obtained to run a program may be used to help support a staff position to manage the partnership. The challenge faced by partnerships is often to find support beyond individual grant opportunities.

Demonstrating and sharing successes and achievements of the partnership both among partner agencies and beyond the partnership is important for building support for putting resources into sustaining it. Because of its demonstrated success in addressing nursing workforce issues, the Western Massachusetts Nursing Collaborative was able to secure financial support following the two years of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funding for the CAN DO partnership. Member organizations and local foundations each contributed to cover the costs of staffing the partnership through its “project director” and an additional staff member. Thus far, funding has continued for 3 years beyond the initial grant.

Figure 2 Regional Precision Manufacturing Partnership Funding



The Regional Precision Manufacturing Partnership of the Pioneer Valley obtained funding from multiple sources over time. There have been four major funding sources over a period of six years: the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, Commonwealth Corporation, the state budget and the E. Herbert Burk Fund. In addition, a number of other sources provided smaller grants.

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Partnerships may come to an end for a number of reasons, including lack of resources, interest or availability of organization partners. It is also possible that a partnership has achieved its aims and is no longer necessary.

Effective partnerships designate time to step back and assess their goals and purpose and confirm or revise their direction. For example, if the goal of a partnership is alignment of the healthcare industry needs with education and training, the purpose of the partnership will be refined as the industry demand for specific types of workers or skills changes. Or, if the partnership has achieved its goals and has no new goals or need to continue, the members should make a formal decision to disband or suspend the partnership.

Even when partnerships cease to meet on a regular basis, they often leave behind lasting relationships that may serve as a foundation for future collaborative endeavors.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

It is essential to obtain input from partners to determine which activities of a partnership are to be sustained and the resources necessary to sustain them. The following questions are based on elements that have been identified as critical for achieving a stable base of fiscal resources that can help sustain community initiatives:³⁹

1. **Vision.** What is the vision that drives the work of our partnership? To what extent has that vision been realized? What is left to be accomplished in achieving that vision?
2. **Results Orientation.** What has the partnership accomplished that demonstrates our ability to be a successful entity in moving toward our goals?
3. **Strategic Financing.** What resources will be required to continue the work of the partnership going forward? What sources have we drawn upon for support? What avenues can we pursue to provide additional/alternative support?
4. **Adaptability to Changing Conditions.** How have the economic, political or other relevant contexts changed since our partnership began our work? What external trends or anticipated changes are likely to influence/have an effect on our efforts in the future?
5. **Broad Base of Community Support.** Who cares about the work of our partnership? Who is benefitting from it? Who would miss the partnership if it ceased to exist?
6. **Key Champions.** What leaders in business, government and other important institutions believe in our work, are committed to our vision and are willing to use their power and prestige to garner support for our efforts?

³⁹ These questions are based on elements identified in Sustaining Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Key Elements for Success. Financing Strategy Brief. Washington, DC: The Finance Project, April 2002. Available at: <http://www.financeproject.org/publications/sustaining.pdf>

7. **Strong Internal Systems.** How well are we operating as an entity? Do we have effective systems for fiscal management, accounting, information, governance and other structures that support our work? What can be improved in this area?

Once the partnership has addressed these questions, a detailed sustainability plan can be developed using the **Take It To Go** Worksheet that follows.



Sustainability Plan					
What the Partnership Wants To Accomplish	What Needs To Be Sustained	Required Resources	Strategies for Obtaining Resources	Potential Challenges/Obstacles to Meeting Our Goals	Strategies to Overcome Challenges/Obstacles

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Sustaining the Partnership



Questions to Consider

1. How can we ensure that partners continue to benefit from participating in the partnership?
2. How can leadership be shared among multiple individuals or organizations?
3. What resources might we tap into to help sustain the partnership beyond its initial funding? Will partners help secure these resources?
4. How will we know when it's time to end the partnership?



Action Steps

1. Check in regularly with partners to assess the benefits they derive from the partnership. Use direct means (e.g., sharing at a meeting) as well as opportunities for partners to express their opinions anonymously (e.g., surveys).
2. Provide opportunities for partners to explore and express their values to find areas of commonality.
3. Early on, engage partners in identifying and exploring opportunities for additional funding.
4. Develop relationships and share information on partnership successes to help build a case for supporting its continued existence.
5. Develop a transition plan for the partnership leader(s).
6. Set aside meeting time explicitly for an examination of the partnership's initial purpose, its achievements, and possible future directions, as well as identification of resources to sustain collaborative work.

A FINAL WORD

In today's economy, businesses, education and workforce organizations need to be able to identify and address emerging and changing workforce needs quickly and accurately. Workforce partnerships are an important way of developing the trust, communication vehicles and action planning necessary to shift resources, create and expand education and training for needed skills and develop work and learning models that respond to pipeline and incumbent worker skill development needs. Industry leaders and workforce development practitioners who have led or participated in workforce partnerships understand the level of effort and resources that are required to build a successful and sustained partnership. Successful partnerships bring value to their members and can demonstrate results that would not be possible without the shared ownership, resources, perspectives and scale of the partnership. We hope that the contents of this document, including the various checklists, tools and templates, are useful to the industry leaders and workforce professionals who lead, participate in and staff partnerships. We would like to hear from you about how you have used the Guide. We also welcome any tools and templates and insights that you would like to share with us and a broader audience of workforce development practitioners.

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Send your feedback to Rebekah Lashman, Senior Vice President, Commonwealth Corporation: rlashman@commcorp.org



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & TOOLS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

There are a number of resources available that include activities and assessments that might be useful to your partnership. Among these are the following:

- *The Partnership Toolbox*, World Wildlife Federation WWF-UK.
Available at: http://www.wwf.org.uk/wwf_articles.cfm?unewsid=3211
- *The Partnerships Analysis Tool for Partners in Health Promotion*. A publication of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Victoria, Australia.
Available at: <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/en/Publications/VicHealth-General-Publications/Partnerships-Analysis-Tool.aspx>
- *Collaborative partnerships evaluation tool*. South Australian Community Health Research Unit.
Available at: http://www.wwf.org.uk/wwf_articles.cfm?unewsid=3211
- *Measuring the Impact of Partnerships. Partnership Evaluation Tool*. Institute of Public Health in Ireland. Available at: <http://www.partnershiptool.ie/>
- *Workforce Partnership Guidance Tool. National Fund for Workforce Solutions*
Available at: <http://www.jff.org/publications/workforce/workforce-partnership-guidance-tool/1149>
- *Collaboration Factors Inventory*. Wilder Research, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, available at: <http://www.wilder.org/home.0.html>
- *Succession Planning for Partnerships: A Toolkit for Practitioners*. SkillWorks, available at: <http://www.skill-works.org/resources-publications.php>



APPENDICES

Evaluation Frameworks

1. Taylor-Powell, Rossing and Geran's Phases of a Collaborative
2. Woodland's (née Gajda) Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric
3. Himmelman's Matrix of Coalition Strategies for Working Together

Sample Tools

1. Sample Memorandum of Agreement
2. Sample Partner Survey 1 (addressing goals, process and organizational impact) from Commonwealth Corporation, based on a survey developed for CAN-DO.
3. Sample Partner Survey 2 (focused on benefits of participation) from Commonwealth Corporation, based on a survey developed for a statewide workforce development program funded through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund.
4. PIN Partnership Survey, from Sherril B. Gelmon and Linda A. Norman, Portland State University and Vanderbilt University, with Northwest Health Foundation, 2009 developed to survey PIN partnerships. (focus on partnership operations, roles, and sustainability)

APPENDIX 1: TAYLOR-POWELL, ROSSING AND GERAN'S PHASES OF A COLLABORATIVE

Phase 1 Form and Focus <i>Getting Started</i>	Phase 2 Organize and Act <i>En Route</i>	Phase 3 Achieve and Transform <i>Arrived</i>
• Explore interests and context • Identify and mobilize stakeholders • Build capacity for collaboration • Develop working procedures and guidelines • Develop relationships and understanding • Create initial collaborative structures and clarify leadership • Institute conflict resolution process • Make intentional inter-organizational links • Create shared vision • Identify community assets and needs • Develop goals and expected outcomes • Specify indicators to measure desired outcomes	• Secure staffing and resources • Develop action plans • Design pilot and expanded interventions • Ensure support of stakeholders • Assure communication systems • Rotate membership • Create joint agreements and systems • Implement activities with collaborative involvement • Communicate progress and achievements • Build toward comprehensive strategies	• Seek larger system changes • Develop community capacity to sustain efforts • Evaluate institutionalization and sustainability • Integrate functions into ongoing organizations • Transform the collaborative through new direction • Carry out collaborative ending activity

APPENDIX 2: WOODLAND'S (NÉE GAJDA) STRATEGIC ALLIANCE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Level of Integration	Purpose	Strategies and Tasks	Leadership and Decision-Making	Interpersonal Communication
Independent (none) 0	None identified	Shared strategies and tasks do not exist	No shared leadership or decision-making structures	Non-existent or very infrequent and unplanned
Network 1	Create a web of communication Identify and create a base of support To explore interests	Loose or no shared structures Flexible, roles not defined Few clear tasks	Non-hierarchical Flexible	Very little inter-professional conflict Communication among members is planned but infrequent
Cooperating 2	Work together to ensure tasks are done Leverage or raise money	Member links are advisory in nature Few structures and shared tasks Distinct organizational missions	Non-hierarchical decision tend to be low stakes Facilitative leaders, often voluntary Several people form a “go-to” hub	Some degree of personal commitment and investment Minimal inter-professional conflict Communication among members is clear, but largely informal
Partnering 3	Share resources to address common issues Organizations remain autonomous but support something new To reach mutual goals together	Strategies and tasks are developed and maintained Tasks are delegated Documented overlaps in organizational mission	Central leadership group identified Partners share equally in the decision making process Decision making mechanisms are in place	Some inter-professional conflict Communication system and formal information channels developed Evidence of problem solving and productivity
Unifying 4	Extract money from existing organizations and merge resources to create something new Commitment for a long period of time to achieve short and long-term outcomes	Formal structures to support strategies and tasks Specific short and long-term strategies identified A shared organizational mission	Strong, visible leadership Committees and sub-committees formed Roles and responsibilities clear and designated	High degree of commitment and investment Possibility of interpersonal conflict is high Communication is clear, frequent, and prioritized

Source: Woodland, R. & Hutton, M (in press). Evaluating organizational collaborations: Suggested entry points and strategies. *American Journal of Evaluation*.

APPENDIX 3: HIMMELMAN'S MATRIX OF COALITION STRATEGIES FOR WORKING TOGETHER

Level of Integration	Networking	Coordinating	Cooperating	Collaborating
Definition	Exchanging information for mutual benefit	Exchanging information for mutual benefit, and altering activities to achieve a common purpose	Exchanging information for mutual benefit, and altering activities and sharing resources to achieve a common purpose	Exchanging information for mutual benefit, and altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing the capacity of another to achieve a common purpose
Relationship	Informal	Formal	Formal	Formal
Characteristics	Minimal time commitments, limited levels of trust, and no necessity to share turf; information exchange is the primary focus	Moderate time commitments, moderate levels of trust, and no necessity to share turf; making access to services or resources more user-friendly is the primary focus	Substantial time commitments, high levels of trust, and significant access to each other's turf; sharing of resources to achieve a common purpose is the primary focus	Extensive commitments, very high levels of trust, and extensive areas of common turf; enhancing each other's capacity to achieve a common purpose is the primary focus
Resources	No mutual sharing of resources necessary	No or minimal mutual sharing of resources necessary	Moderate to extensive mutual sharing of resources and some sharing of risks, responsibilities and rewards	Full sharing of resources, and full sharing of risks, responsibilities and rewards

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

SAMPLE Memorandum of Agreement

Adapted from Collaborating for the Advancement of Nursing:
Developing Opportunities (CAN DO)

I. Purpose of This Memorandum

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) outlines the agreement between the partners listed below to develop and implement a Partners Investing in Nursing (PIN) project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The overall purpose of the RWJF PIN program is to develop partnerships to create nursing workforce solutions that address the nursing workforce shortage.

CAN DO is addressing the nursing workforce shortage by creating a plan to restructure the nursing educational advancement system in Western Massachusetts and solidifying the CAN DO partnership. CAN DO is also implementing two pilot projects to 1) increase the nursing faculty pipeline and 2) to increase the enrollment of underrepresented students in nursing education and their potential for success.

II. Term

This MOA shall be in effect from March 15, 2007 and shall end on August 30, 2008. This MOA may be terminated prior to the effective end date upon the written approval of all the partners. It may also be extended beyond the effective end date with the full written approval of all the partners.

III. Partners

The partners committed to collaboratively working together to create a plan to restructure the nursing advancement system in Western Massachusetts include:

Local Foundation/RWJ Grantee

- (names listed here)

Workforce Development Agencies

- (names listed here)

Schools of Nursing

- (names listed here)

Service Providers

- (names listed here)

Roles and Expectations of Partners

Partner	Role	Expectation
Foundation	- RWJF grantee - Convener and Chair of Advisory Committee	- Provide project oversight and support - Identify advisory committee members - Assist with sustainability plan - Champion policy agenda
Regional Employment Board (REB)	- Fiscal and administrative agent - Project liaison with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation - Manage project	- Coordinate project implementation - Develop meeting agendas and materials, facilitate meetings and produce documentation as necessary - Provide budget oversight - Champion policy agenda
Schools of Nursing	- Serve as active partner throughout project - Represent the needs and issues of nursing education programs and nursing students - Provide leadership in project implementation	- Fully engage in the implementation of the project - Contribute to the creation of a plan for a new educational advancement system for Western Massachusetts - Identify a primary institutional representative and at least one substitute to serve on the Full Partnership - Commit to institutional representation at each Full Partnership meeting - Keep institutional leadership apprised of project progress - Participate on one pilot committee - Serve on other committees as necessary (TBD) - Champion policy agenda - Champion systemic change within academic institution
Service Providers	- Represent the needs and issues of healthcare service employers and nurses - Provide leadership in project implementation	- Fully engage in the implementation of the project - Contribute to the creation of a new educational advancement system for Western Massachusetts - Send one representative to each Full Partnership - Participate on one pilot committee - Serve on other committees as necessary (TBD) - Champion policy agenda - Champion systemic change within academic institution
Commonwealth Corporation	Serve as project evaluator	- Develop evaluation plan - Conduct evaluation activities to determine success of planning process, partnership development and pilots - Provide ongoing insights for improvement throughout the life of the project - Attend Full Partnership meetings and pilot committee meetings as necessary

General Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions of this MOA may be revised or modified at any time during the effective period of the MOA, upon written consent of all of the partners. Each partner agrees to comply with the following governance structure.

Governing Body	Responsibility	Meeting Frequency	Time Commitment
Full Partnership	- Represent all institutional stakeholder groups (Schools of Nursing, Health Service Providers, Workforce Development) - Implement planning process activities - Provide institutional perspective - Seek consensus on plan components - Contribute to the creation of new plan - Facilitate institutional commitment to planning process outcomes	1x per month Typically the third Thursday of each month from 9am-2pm	5-10 hours per month
Pilot Project Committees	- Develop pilot project plans - Implement pilot projects - Facilitate interaction with pilot participants - Oversee evaluation activities and summarize pilot lessons - Make recommendations to Full Partnership as to how to integrate pilot lessons into new plan	1x per month via conference call and other activities as necessary	2-6 hours per month
Advisory Committee	- Represent local foundation community and other stakeholder groups with interest in nursing issues - Provide high level project oversight - Provide input on sustainability plan - Identify possible funding sources to support plan implementation	4x per year	12 hours per year
Other Committees	- Developed as needed and necessary for plan development - Note: It is expected that additional committees will be required to focus on curriculum development, infrastructure, etc.	TBD	TBD

IV. Signatures

By signing this Memorandum of Agreement, each partner institution commits to the implementation of the PIN program and the goals of the CAN DO project.

Partner Organization Name: _____

Signatory Name: _____

Signatory Title: _____

Signature

Date

Partner Organization Name: _____

Signatory Name: _____

Signatory Title: _____

Signature

Date

Partner Organization Name: _____

Signatory Name: _____

Signatory Title: _____

Signature

Date

Partner Organization Name: _____

Signatory Name: _____

Signatory Title: _____

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 5: SAMPLE PARTNER SURVEY 1

[This survey is based on a survey developed by Commonwealth Corporation for use by Collaborating for the Advancement of Nursing: Developing Opportunities (CAN DO), one of the first grantees funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Partners Investing in Nursing's Future Program operated by NorthWest Health Foundation.]

We would like to assess the effectiveness of partnership building in the context of the goals of the partnership and the challenges being faced and addressed. Please provide us with your insights and ideas about the <name of your partnership> Partnership and the work it is doing to impact the nursing workforce shortage.

How long have you been participating in <name> partnership meetings? (check one)
 Longer than 1 year 6-12 months 3-5 months less than 3 months

I. PROJECT GOALS

- | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 1. I understand the goals of the <name> partnership. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 2. The partnership has developed a shared definition of the problem/issue. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 3. There has been agreement on project goals within the partnership. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 4. Partnership members have developed a shared vision for the future. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 5. I am satisfied with the progress of the partnership toward achieving its goals. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 6. Work being done at the state level on core competencies is helping to move the work of the partnership forward. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |

Comments related to project goals:

II. PARTNERSHIP PROCESS

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 4. The partnership has established an effective structure for conducting its collaborative work. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 5. In carrying out the partnership activities, plans for the group are well developed and followed. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 6. The partnership has developed an effective process for decision-making. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 7. The organizations involved in the partnership are evenly represented in partnership meetings. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 8. Leadership of the partnership is effective and shared appropriately. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 9. Feedback on the group process is solicited and used to make adjustments. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 10. There is open communication among the members of the partnership. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 11. There is sufficient trust among individual members of the partnership to allow the group to carry out its mission. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 12. There is sufficient trust among institutional members of the partnership to allow the group to carry out its mission. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |
| 13. The issue of conflict in the group has surfaced and been adequately addressed. | 5
strongly agree | 4
agree | 3
not sure | 2
disagree | 1
strongly disagree |

14. Members of the partnership are informed of the progress and achievements of the partnership in a clear and timely fashion.

5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree

15. The progress and achievements of the partnership are effectively communicated to external stakeholders.

5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree

Comments on the Partnership Process: [allow for open-ended response]

III. ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

1. My organization is benefiting from its involvement in the partnership.

5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree

2. The partnership has brought about or fostered positive relationships among participating organizations.

5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree

3. My organization has demonstrated support for the CAN DO partnership and its activities.

5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree

4. Senior leadership in my institution supports me in my participation in the partnership.

5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree

5. What new collaborative activities have taken place as a result of your organization's participation in the partnership? [allow for open-ended responses here]

6. In comparison with other similar partnership experiences that you and your institution have had in the past, using a scale of 1-5 how would you rate the overall effectiveness of this partnership experience?

1=very effective 2=somewhat effective 3=too early to tell 4=less effective 5=not effective at all

Comments related to the organizational impact of your participation in the <name> project:

[allow for open-ended responses here]

General Comments/Suggestions

What are your suggestions for making the partnership more effective?

[allow for open-ended responses here]

APPENDIX 6: SAMPLE PARTNER SURVEY 2

Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund Project Partner Survey

[This survey was developed by Commonwealth Corporation to survey members of sector-based partnerships funded through the Massachusetts Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund at the end of the project.]

You have recently participated in a workforce development project funded through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) and administered by Commonwealth Corporation. The purpose of this survey is to provide Commonwealth Corporation and your WCTF project with insights into the benefits of participation in a WCTF partnership. Please note that your responses to this survey will remain anonymous. Responses will be aggregated in our analysis, and only the summary of those responses will be shared with your project coordinator.

We greatly appreciate your taking the time to share your thoughts and experience with us. If you have any questions, please contact:

[insert name and contact info here]

Please submit your response via fax, mail or e-mail to the address listed above by [insert date]

1. What type of organization do you represent in the WCTF partnership?

☐ business/employer	☐ college/university
☐ industry association	☐ vocational technical school
☐ union/labor organization	☐ non-profit training provider
☐ workforce development entity	☐ for-profit training provider
☐ community-based organization	

2. What is your position within your organization?
 - ☐ CEO/President/Owner
 - ☐ Mid-level Manager / Shift Supervisor
 - ☐ Human Resources Staff
 - ☐ Training Director
 - ☐ Other — please specify: _____

3. What is the name of your organization?

4. Please indicate in which activities you/your organization has participated as a WCTF partner. (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ regularly attended partnership meetings
- ☐ provided guidance on the overall direction of the project
- ☐ participated in on-going strategic planning for sustainability
- ☐ contributed financial match to the project
- ☐ provided input on training content/curriculum
- ☐ provided training for the project
- ☐ participated in training provision
- ☐ participated in training provider selection
- ☐ recruited participants
- ☐ sent employees to participate in training
- ☐ interviewed/hired participants
- ☐ offered internships to participants
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Please describe 1 – 3 goals that you/your organization had for participating in the WCTF partnership and the extent to which these goals were achieved.

1.

2.

3.

6. What have been the benefits to your organization of participation in the partnership? Please check all that apply and feel free to note any benefits not listed.

- ☐ established new relationships with business (employer) organizations in my region interested in solving workforce development issues
- ☐ established links to training providers
- ☐ established links to workforce development organizations, e.g., career centers, workforce boards, others _____
- ☐ built relationships with organizations similar to my own
- ☐ strengthened our organization's reputation in the region
- ☐ gained new knowledge/information about the industry
- ☐ accessed new source of employees for company/industry
- ☐ accessed training opportunities for our employees
- ☐ observed/experienced improvements in the quality of training available in the

region

- ☐ accessed new employment opportunities for our clients
- ☐ other – please specify: _____

7. Were there any additional unintended positive consequences of your participation in the WCTF partnership? (Examples might include: changes in policies or practices within your organization/industry, changes that support workforce development or the industry in your region, or changes in relationships such as partners previously viewed as competitors now being seen as potential collaborators)
- ☐ yes ☐ no
- If yes, please describe below.

8. What, if anything, did the partnership achieve that your organization could not have achieved alone?

9. Did the benefits of participation in the partnership outweigh the effort/cost/investment required of your organization?
- ☐ yes ☐ no
- Please explain your response:

10. How could the partnership have been improved? (Please consider multiple aspects of the partnership including operation, composition, and effectiveness.)

11. Which statement best describes your organization's future plans for partnering in workforce development (or education and training)? [By partnering, we mean efforts to recognize and act on/pursue shared interests between your and at least one other organization.]

- ☐ We have definite plans to partner with our WCTF partners in the near future (If so, please describe below)
- ☐ We have no explicit plans right now, but hope to partner with our WCTF partners in the near future
- ☐ We plan to partner with other entities around workforce development
- ☐ We do not intend to partner with any organizations on workforce development in the foreseeable future

Please describe your future plans for partnering with WCTF partners here:

12. How often does your organization typically partner with other organizations on workforce development-related efforts? [By “partner,” we mean engage in efforts to recognize and act on/pursue shared interests between your and at least one other organization.]

Please select one of the following:

- ☐ We rarely partner with other organizations on workforce development. The WCTF project was an exception/new experience for our organization.
- ☐ We occasionally partner with other organizations on workforce development.
- ☐ We often partner with other organizations on workforce development.

13. If your organization has partnered with other organizations around workforce development in the past, please compare your experience in this WCTF partnership to that in other partnerships. Select one option and explain your choice below.

- ☐ Our experience in this WCTF partnership was not as good as that in other partnerships.
- ☐ Our experience in this WCTF partnership was the same as that in other partnerships.
- ☐ Our experience in this WCTF partnership was better than that in other partnerships.

Please explain your choice here:

14. Please feel free to share any additional comments on your WCTF partnership.

Thank you for completing our survey!

APPENDIX 7: PIN PARTNERSHIP SURVEY⁴⁰



PIN Partnership Survey

[This survey was developed by Sherril B. Gelmon and Linda A. Norman, Portland State University and Vanderbilt University, with Northwest Health Foundation, 2009 to survey PIN partnerships at the end of their grant period.]

The purpose of this survey is to develop insights from participants in the PIN partnerships. The survey is sent to all identified members of each partnership when the grant funding comes to an end. We are seeking your input about specific aspects of the Partners Investing in Nursing's Future (PIN) program. The findings will be used to help understand the impact of the PIN program in local communities as well as nationally. This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. All information is anonymous. Thank you in advance for your feedback.

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I. Your Role in Your PIN Partnership

1. In what year was your PIN partnership funded? (check one)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ☐ 2006 | ☐ 2009 |
| ☐ 2007 | ☐ 2010 |
| ☐ 2008 | ☐ 2011 |

2. What was your organization's primary affiliation with respect to your PIN partnership? (check one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Lead Foundation (applicant) | ☐ Nursing partner |
| ☐ Foundation partner (funding) | ☐ Foundation partner (non-funding) |
| ☐ Health organization partner | ☐ Work force/labor partner |
| ☐ Business partner | |
| ☐ Other partner (please specify) _____ | |

3. What is your primary role in your organization? (check one)

- ☐ CEO/Executive Director/President
- ☐ Program director/senior administrator
- ☐ Project coordinator/program officer/mid-level administrator
- ☐ Nursing education dean/program director/administrator
- ☐ Nursing faculty member

⁴⁰ Please cite the authors when using any questions from this survey: Sherril B. Gelmon and Linda A. Norman. PIN Partnership Survey. Portland State University and Vanderbilt University, with Northwest Health Foundation, 2009.

- ☐ Nurse executive/leadership
 - ☐ Nursing staff/service delivery
 - ☐ Other, please specify:
-

4. Please indicate your primary individual role in your PIN partnership. (check one)

- ☐ PIN project manager
 - ☐ PIN evaluator
 - ☐ Community champion to recruit additional funders
 - ☐ Community champion to recruit additional nursing partners
 - ☐ Member of a partnership working group
 - ☐ Member of a partnership advisory group
 - ☐ Communications/public relations staff/advisor
 - ☐ Other, please specify:
-

5. Are you currently the primary person responsible for overseeing the work of the PIN partnership at your organization?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. What PIN program subject area(s) did your partnership focus on? (check all appropriate)

- ☐ Diversity
- ☐ Public Health
- ☐ Faculty Development
- ☐ Retention (2006 only)
- ☐ Collaboration and Leadership
- ☐ Geriatric and Long-Term Care
- ☐ Education Infrastructure
- ☐ Primary Care (2010 - 2011 only)

7. **Foundation Partners only:** Prior to your involvement in PIN, had your foundation funded projects related to nursing? (check one)

- ☐ Yes, regularly
- ☐ Yes, occasionally
- ☐ No

8. What benefits were experienced by your organization as a result of participating in the PIN partnership? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Enhanced ability to address an important issue
- ☐ Development of new skills
- ☐ Heightened public profile
- ☐ Increased utilization of our expertise or services
- ☐ Development of new knowledge about programs in our community
- ☐ Enhanced ability to affect public policy
- ☐ Development of valuable relationships
- ☐ Enhanced ability to achieve our organizational mission and goals
- ☐ Ability to have a greater impact than we could have individually
- ☐ Ability to make a contribution to the community

9. What, if any, drawbacks were experienced by your organization as a result of participating in the PIN partnership? (check all that apply)
- ☐ Diversion of time and resources away from other priorities or obligations
 - ☐ Insufficient influence in partnership activities
 - ☐ Negative perceptions of association with other partners or the partnership
 - ☐ Frustration or aggravation with lack of progress
 - ☐ Insufficient credit for my contributions to the accomplishment of the partnership
 - ☐ Conflict between my organizational responsibilities and the partnership's work
 - ☐ Conflict between my personal responsibilities and the partnership's expectations
10. How have the benefits of participating in the PIN partnership compared to the drawbacks? (check one)
- ☐ Benefits greatly exceed the drawbacks
 - ☐ Benefits somewhat exceed the drawbacks
 - ☐ Benefits and drawbacks are about equal
 - ☐ Drawbacks somewhat exceed the benefits
 - ☐ Drawbacks greatly exceed the benefits
11. Please check any of the following RWJF national programs in which **your organization** has participated. (check all that apply)
- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Evaluating Innovations in Nursing Education | ☐ Transforming Care at the Bedside |
| ☐ Local Initiative Funding Partnerships | ☐ New Jersey Nursing Initiative |
| ☐ Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative | |
| ☐ Center to Champion Nursing state teams | ☐ Other (please specify) |
12. Please check any of the following RWJF national programs in which **you personally** have participated. (check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Executive Nurse Fellows | ☐ Nurse Faculty Scholars |
| ☐ Clinical Scholars Program | ☐ Health Policy Fellows |
| ☐ New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program | |
| ☐ Ladder to Leadership | ☐ Other (please specify) |

II. Philanthropy's Role in Local and Regional Nursing Workforce Development

NOTE: Questions 13-17 are for foundations ONLY (this includes lead foundation applicants and other foundations, funding or non-funding)

13. What role(s) did your foundation regularly play in your PIN partnership? (check all that apply)

☐ Convener	☐ Participant
☐ Leader	☐ Funder
☐ Other (please specify) _____	

14. As a result of your participation in the PIN program, is your foundation now more engaged in your community issues? (check one)

☐ Yes (continue with #15)	☐ No (skip to #16)
--	---

15. What roles are you playing in community issues? (check all appropriate)

☐ Convener
☐ Catalyst for social change
☐ Expert who can bring together key players for community problem-solving
☐ Central player in policy/advocacy
☐ Dissemination point for information about nursing workforce issues
☐ Other (please specify) _____

16. As a result of your participation in the PIN program, have you changed your approaches to grant-making? (check one)

☐ Yes (continue with #17)	☐ No (skip to #18)
--	---

17. Please describe the ways in which your grant-making has changed. (please write 1-3 phrases)

18. As a result of your participation in PIN, do you have new connections with other local/regional foundations?

☐ No	☐ Yes; please describe:
-----------------------------	--

19. As a result of your participation in PIN, do you have new connections with other national foundations?

☐ No	☐ Yes; please describe:
-----------------------------	--

20. As a result of your participation in PIN, do you have new connections with other nursing partners?

☐ No	☐ Yes; please describe:
-----------------------------	--

21. As a result of your participation in PIN, have other organizations approached you about collaborating on projects related to nursing workforce development?

☐ No

☐ Yes; please describe:

III. Local and Regional Nursing Workforce Solutions

22. The primary focus of PIN is on addressing local issues in each participating community related to the nursing workforce. Please consider the list of issues below, and for each issue indicate if this was a key issue **before the PIN grant was awarded**; if it is an issue **at present**; and if you anticipate this as a key issue for your community **in the future**. Check all that are relevant.

Nursing Workforce Issue	Relevant Before the PIN Grant	Relevant Today	Relevant Future Issue
Retention	☐	☐	☐
Diversity	☐	☐	☐
Geriatrics and Long-Term Care	☐	☐	☐
Public Health	☐	☐	☐
Collaboration and Leadership	☐	☐	☐
Faculty Development	☐	☐	☐
Educational Infrastructure	☐	☐	☐
Primary Care	☐	☐	☐

23. Please rate the contribution of each of these organizations in your community towards accomplishment of your PIN goals. If they were not involved in your work, please mark "N/A."

	High	Medium	Low	N/A
a. Local foundations	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Hospitals/health systems	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Long-term care	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Public health	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. State board of nursing	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Nursing workforce center	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Nursing academic programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. State nursing association	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Local nurse executive organization	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Other nursing associations/forums	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Workforce development/labor	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Economic development	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Chamber of Commerce	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Business	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. We made an impact on local/regional nursing workforce issues because of our participation in the national PIN program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. We could have accomplished some of our project goals with respect to nursing workforce issues without participating in PIN.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. We would not have actively pursued a project on nursing workforce issues without participating in PIN.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. What if any impact did your PIN Partnership have on local/regional nursing workforce issues?

Nursing Workforce Issue	No impact	Some impact	Substantial impact	Not relevant to our PIN partnership
Retention	☐	☐	☐	☐
Diversity	☐	☐	☐	☐
Geriatrics and Long-Term Care	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public Health	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaboration and Leadership	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faculty Development	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational Infrastructure	☐	☐	☐	☐
Primary Care	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. Was the two-year timeframe of PIN sufficient to accomplish your project goals and objectives?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Please offer any comments on your response.

IV. Partnerships to Address Local and Regional Nursing Workforce Issues

27. The following questions relate to how your partnership was organized and conducted its work. For each statement, please indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. We had clearly articulated lines of authority.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. We had clear decision-making procedures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Power was shared equitably among the partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. We had clearly articulated roles and responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. We had access to the information we needed to do our work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. We had access to the expertise we needed to do our work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. We had adequate staff to do our work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. We established ground rules and norms for how we worked together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. The partnership made very good use of partners' financial contributions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. The partnership made very good use of partners' in-kind contributions (skills, expertise, connections, and information).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. The partnership made very good use of partners' time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Each member of our partnership contributed to the best of their ability (time, in-kind, effort, resources, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below regarding the collaborative work of your partnership.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Funders and health care organizations in our community have a history of working together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The organizations involved in the PIN partnership were the “right” organizations to address our issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. The time was right to work on nursing workforce issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. People involved in our PIN partnership trusted one another.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. The people involved in our PIN partnership represented a cross-section of those who have an interest in what we were trying to accomplish.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. My organization benefited from being part of the PIN partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. The level of commitment among the PIN partners was high.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Members of the PIN partnership were willing to compromise on important aspects of our work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
i. We had opportunities to engage multiple individuals from the partner organizations in various aspects of our work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Partners were willing to consider different approaches to our work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. There was a clear process for making decisions within the partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. We were able to adapt to changing conditions that affected our collective work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. We were able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the elements of our project.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Members of the partnership communicated openly with each other.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Communication among the PIN partners happened in both formal meetings and informal ways.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Participants in the PIN partnership knew and understood our goals for the PIN project.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. The PIN partners were dedicated to this project.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. What we were trying to accomplish within PIN would have been difficult for any single organization to do by itself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

29. The following questions address the synergy of your partnership. For each statement, please indicate an answer.

By working together, the partners were able to:	Extremel y Well	Very Well	Somewh at	Not Very Well	Not At All	Unable to Answer
a. ... identify new and creative ways to solve problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. ... include the views and priorities of the people affected by our work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. ... develop goals that were widely supported among the partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. ... respond to the needs and issues of the target community(ies).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. ... implement strategies that were likely to work locally.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. ... clearly communicate the partnership's actions to the broader community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. ... obtain support to help us move forward in our work together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. ... evaluate the progress and impact of the partnership in addressing nursing workforce issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

30. Please think about the Lead Foundation partner who provided either formal or informal leadership in your partnership, and rate the total effectiveness of the leadership of the foundation in each of the following areas. **Note: This question goes to ALL except for the LEAD FOUNDATION APPLICANT.**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Unable to Answer
a. Providing vision to the partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Taking responsibility for our success.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Inspiring and/or motivating people involved in the partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Empowering people involved in the partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Communicating the vision of the partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Working together to develop a common language in the partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Fostering trust, respect, inclusiveness and openness in the partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Creating an environment where differences of opinion can be voiced.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Resolving conflict among partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Maximizing the investment of resources and skills of the partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Facilitating the partners to be creative in our work together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Recruiting diverse people and organizations into the partnership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

V. Creating Sustainable Solutions for Nursing Workforce Development

31. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. We have been able to sustain the partnerships that were developed during the PIN project.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Local partnerships will continue after the national PIN program support ends.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Our work as a PIN partnership has enhanced our ability to address important issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

32. **For everyone except philanthropy:** What insights have you gained from working with philanthropy that will be relevant in your future work on nursing or other topics? (please write a few phrases)
33. **For everyone except nursing:** What insights have you gained from working with nursing that will be relevant in your future work on nursing or other topics? (please write a few phrases)
34. What will it take to keep you and your partners working together in the future? (check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Continued funding | ☐ Leadership |
| ☐ A more formal organization structure | ☐ Relationships |
| ☐ Trust | ☐ Changes in state, local or national policy |
| ☐ Business plan | ☐ More partners |
| ☐ Other: _____ | ☐ We are unlikely to continue working together |
35. What issues will your future work together address? (check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Nursing workforce | ☐ Other health workforce issues |
| ☐ Community development | ☐ Disease-specific issues |
| ☐ Population-specific issues | ☐ Other, please specify: _____ |
36. If you have identified additional funding to continue your work, who is providing the funding? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Local/regional foundations | ☐ National foundations |
| ☐ Health-related organizations | ☐ Non-health-related organizations |
| ☐ Government funding (health-related) | ☐ Government funding (workforce-related) |
| ☐ Other government funding | ☐ We have not identified additional funding |
| ☐ Other, please specify: _____ | |

Thank you very much for your input. A summary of survey responses will be provided to PIN staff and shared with the PIN community annually.