

## *Identifying Community Partners*

Here are some examples of possible community partners, depending on the issue you are addressing.

- Groups that are working on the same issue (e.g., other organizations serving the homeless, other volunteer mentoring efforts, etc.)
- Groups that may be competing with you for the same resources (including groups that may be working on the same issue)
- People who are most directly affected by the issue you are addressing
- Elected officials, such as the mayor or county administrator
- Government professionals, such as the community development staff of your city or county
- Young people
- Chamber of Commerce representatives and local business leaders
- Arts organizations and artists
- Neighborhood associations
- Religious organizations
- Parks and recreation department
- Universities and colleges
- Community foundations
- Hospitals

# Community Partnership Roster

<b>INDIVIDUAL, GROUP, OR ORGANIZATION</b> <i>(Name)</i>	<b>SELF-INTERESTS</b> <i>(How the group would benefit from participating in the partnership)</i>	<b>POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS</b> <i>(Assets they bring)</i>

Adapted from Michael Winer and Karen Ray, *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey* (Saint Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1994), p. 148.

# *Managing Risks of Community Partnerships*

<b>RISK</b>	<b>MANAGING THE RISK</b>
Demands on time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate benefits of partnership to other members of your organization.</li> <li>• Make sure there is “buy-in” from your group before making commitments.</li> <li>• Make a case for the importance of the work.</li> <li>• Run well-managed meetings.</li> <li>• Inform people about time commitments.</li> <li>• Define roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>
Making decisions without enough information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research the issue you are addressing.</li> <li>• Learn about the mission and work of potential partners.</li> <li>• Focus on identifying and collecting the information you need to make good decisions.</li> <li>• Develop a decision-making process.</li> </ul>
Not succeeding in the effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop realistic expectations.</li> <li>• Define interim goals.</li> <li>• Discuss “failure” as an integral part of learning more about what works.</li> </ul>
Possible loss of momentum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan “quick” successes to boost morale.</li> <li>• Celebrate interim accomplishments, such as more volunteers having been recruited or a new partner having come on board.</li> <li>• Keep people focused on important work that brought the partnership together.</li> </ul>

# Phases of Organizing A Collaboration

## **PROBLEM-SETTING PHASE**

- Prenegotiation in which the initial members put their cards on the table and arrive at a shared definition of the issue.
- Commitment to the process of collaboration.
- Honest, open conversation about what each partner can contribute in resources.
- Decisions about who else is needed at the table (including other stakeholders, leaders, and those who control necessary resources).

## **DIRECTION-SETTING PHASE**

- Set agenda, including how it can be changed or amended.
- Organize the work for maximum effectiveness.
- Create ways to collect information.
- Decide on course of action.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PHASE**

- Get agreement and support from organizations, groups, or individuals not directly participating in the process.
- Formally develop procedures to get the job done.
- Agree with all involved about what success should look like and how the process can be evaluated and assessed.