

Step 1:  
Determine Need

Step 2:  
Develop Partnership

Step 3:  
Evaluate

Step 4:  
Sustain

# Partnership Tool Kit: Program Version

Partnerships are an important mechanism for building and sustaining capacity among Division of Cancer Prevention and Control (DCPC) programs. Partnerships bring together a diversity of skills and resources for more effective outcomes. By making the best use of different but complementary resources, partnerships can increase program efficiency. To be successful, partnerships must have a clear purpose, add value to the work of the partners, and be carefully cultivated and evaluated.

## What Is a Partnership?

A partnership can be defined as an organization of organizations working together for a common purpose (Himmelman, 2002).

## How Do I Use the Partnership Tool Kit?

The tools can be used in a variety of ways depending on the level of development and the priorities of the program's partnerships. There is no set way to use the Tool Kit. It is intended to be used to talk about partnerships in general. However, it can also be used to further explore a single partnership.

## What Is in the Partnership Tool Kit?

The Tool Kit includes four tools developed to reflect the continuum of partnering: Determining the Need for a Partnership, Developing a Partnership, Evaluating the Partnership, and Sustaining the Partnership. These four stages of partnering are also reflected in the header on each page of the Tool Kit. To determine when to use each of the tools, it is important to identify the partnership's current stage:

- If your program is *considering a new partnership*, then the **Determining the Need** tool likely would be most applicable.
- If your program has *already identified a new potential partner* or is *already involved in a partnership that it would like to strengthen*, then the five-action **Developing a Partnership** tool is a good starting point.
- Because evaluation should be an integral part of all partnerships, programs with partnerships at any stage can benefit from the **Evaluating the Partnership** tool. Using this tool is an excellent way to start programs thinking about existing relationships and opportunities for further improvement.
- The probes found in the **Sustaining the Partnership** tool provide critical information to begin a dialogue about this topic and its importance.



<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nccp>





# *Determining the Need for a Partnership*

The purpose of this step toward partnership is to determine what an organization can and, more importantly, cannot accomplish by itself. One goal of partnering is to expand the expertise available to develop a solution for the problem at hand. This tool will help guide programs through this process. These questions are intended to prompt discussion within the program about the need for new partnerships. Potential partners do not need to be engaged in this part of the process but will be engaged in later stages of partnership development.

### Potential Questions:

- In what ways have you assessed your program’s readiness to engage in a new partnership without damaging the quality of your current organizational commitments or relationships?
- What have you learned from previous partnerships that should be considered or applied to a new partnership?
- What could serve as a possible purpose or mission statement for a new partnership?
- What specific outcomes or products does your program hope to achieve through partnerships?
- In what ways do you need partnerships to achieve the identified outcomes or products?
- How would partnerships provide additional expertise vs. duplicate expertise in your program?
- To what extent do the perceived benefits of partnerships outweigh the perceived costs?

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# 2



## Developing a Partnership

### Action 1 of 5: Assess Potential Partnerships

Finding the right organizations to partner with is a critical part of the partnering process. Effective partners often bring to the partnership qualities or capabilities that complement those represented by the organization seeking partnership. The goal of this action is to assess potential partners and make sure the best candidates are selected.

#### Potential Questions:

- What potential partners has your program identified?
- In what ways could nontraditional partners\* be helpful in a new partnership?
- What does your program aim to achieve by working with these potential partners?
- Are there historical or significant trust issues that should be addressed before creating a new partnership?
- How are your program goals and values compatible with these potential partners?
- How will these potential partners complement and strengthen your program?
- What might be some potential drawbacks to working with these potential partners?
- How would these potential partners help your program better achieve your goals and objectives?
- What might your program and the potential partners gain through this partnership (e.g., increased visibility, increased access to priority populations, increased networking opportunities, opportunities for staff development, technical assistance, connections to key stakeholders, funding, improved image, exposure to influential others)?
- What specific resources\*\* will these potential partners contribute to the outcomes or products expected from the partnerships?
- What resources\*\* does your program have available to contribute to new partnerships?
- Does your program have a history of good relations with these potential partners?

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\*Nontraditional partners include organizations that serve constituents with whom your program may not usually work (e.g., people with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered [LGBT] populations; racial and ethnic minorities).

\*\*Shared resources can include a variety of human, financial, and technical contributions, including program or community knowledge; staffing; stakeholder time; physical property; and access to people, money, and others (Himmelman, 1996).

## 2

**Action 2 of 5:  
Determine the  
Appropriate Level  
of Partnership**

Once the need for partnership has been established and potential partners have been identified, it is important to start thinking about the ways in which the partnering organizations will work together. This section suggests definitions for four basic working together strategies. These strategies are best understood and applied when considered as equally valid and appropriate after assessing the relevance of time, trust, and turf issues. For example, networking requires the least amount of time and trust and no shared turf in working relationships, whereas collaboration commonly requires considerable time commitments, high levels of trust, and extensive sharing of turf.

Step 1:  
Determine NeedStep 2:  
Develop PartnershipStep 3:  
EvaluateStep 4:  
Sustain*Developing a Partnership***Working Together Strategies**

- Networking:** Exchanging information for mutual benefit.
- Coordinating:** Exchanging information and altering activities for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.
- Cooperating:** Exchanging information, altering activities, and sharing resources (e.g., staff, financial, technical) for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.
- Collaborating:** Exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources (e.g., staff, financial, technical), and enhancing the capacity of another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.

*For more information about each of these working together strategies, see Himmelman (1996, 2001, 2002).*

**Potential Questions:**

- Have you determined the appropriate working together strategy (i.e., networking, coordinating, cooperating, or collaborating) between your program and each of your potential partners?
- Is the anticipated goal of any of your program's partnerships likely to go beyond informal information exchange?
- How extensive are the anticipated resources (e.g., time, trust, interdependence) required by your program and each potential partner?

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## Action 3 of 5: Determine a Mission, Goals, and Objectives for a Partnership

In a partnership, it is vital for partners to have strong commitments to a common mission and to share accountability for implementation of goals and objectives. Determining the partnership’s mission involves reaching a consensus about the basic purpose of working together. This consensus should be based on a dialogue about the values motivating the proposed efforts and an agreement about the definition of the issues that the partnership will address. Clear partnership goals and objectives will focus the work of the partners and help them determine what resources will be necessary to successfully implement their action plans.

# Developing a Partnership

### Potential Questions:

- What does your program most want to accomplish through partnerships?
- What is the mission statement of your partnership?

*A **mission statement** can be defined as a simple, clear statement of purpose that is also a call to action (Himmelman, 2001).*

**Example:** The Mission of the Colorado Cancer Coalition is to bring together and coordinate cancer prevention, early detection, treatment, support, and research efforts to improve the quality of life of everyone in Colorado.

- What are the goals and objectives of your partnership?

*A **goal** can be defined as a long-term activity to implement a mission statement and as a measure of progress toward achieving a mission statement. An objective can be defined as a short-term activity to implement a goal and as a measure of progress toward achieving a goal (Himmelman, 2001).*

**Example:** Increase the proportion of Colorado citizens who appropriately access and use screening services to diagnose cancer at early stages.

- Key stakeholders, including recipients of intended products of the partnership, are important to consider when defining the goals of a partnership. Who are the key stakeholders of your program’s partnerships?
- Has your program engaged a variety of stakeholders through your partnerships?
- How can key stakeholders be engaged in the process of developing partnership mission statements, goals, and objectives?
- Is there a shared understanding of and commitment to agreed upon goals among your program and all partners?
- Are program partnerships operating at the appropriate level (see Action 2 of 5) given the identified goals?

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# Developing a Partnership

## Action 4 of 5: Assess Resource Needs Based on Partnership Mission

One purpose of partnerships is to bring together groups and organizations with complementary resources so that, collectively, they can accomplish a determined goal. Once the goal has been agreed upon, programs should engage their partners in an assessment to determine the resources necessary to meet the goal. The process of determining resource needs for a partnership provides an opportunity to clarify the level of resource commitment necessary by each partner.

### Potential Questions:

- ❑ Resources can include a variety of human, financial, and technical contributions, including program or community knowledge; staffing; stakeholder time; physical property; and access to people, money, and others (Himmelman, 1996).
  - What human resources are necessary to effectively engage in partnerships for this program?
  - What financial resources are necessary to effectively engage in partnerships for this program?
  - What technical resources are necessary to effectively engage in partnerships for this program?
  - What other resources are necessary to effectively engage in partnerships for this program?

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## Action 5 of 5: Initiate or Enhance Partnerships

The initiation period is the time for programs to negotiate operational aspects of their partnerships, such as governance processes, capital investments, human resources, finances, and management practices (ONA, 2004). This is the time to establish organizational roles. Documentation and institutionalization of agreements reached at this stage may be helpful in monitoring agreements and ensuring compliance over the span of the partnership.

### Potential Questions:

- Has your program identified the appropriate levels of partnership (see Action 2 of 5)?
- Written agreements provide an opportunity for partners to clarify roles and responsibilities. Does your program have a system in place for setting up such agreements (see Action 2 of 5)?
- In what ways can you describe and link needs to resources so that partners can address specific needs by offering relevant and appropriate resources?
- What has your program done to learn about the culture of partner organizations (e.g., values or beliefs that should be taken into account when working with the partner)?
- How has your program negotiated and established structural resources and processes necessary to implement partnerships?
  - Are the roles, responsibilities, and expectations within your partnerships clearly defined and understood by all partners?
  - Have the administrative, communication, and decision-making processes of the partnerships been established? Are these processes as simple as possible?
- Has your program addressed the following institutional barriers to partnering?
  - Have differences in organizational priorities, goals, and tasks been addressed?
  - Is there a core group of skilled staff who are committed to remaining involved with the partnerships in the long run?
  - Are there formal structures for sharing information and resolving disputes?
- How should power and decision making be addressed in your partnership?
- How should your partnership be structured and governed?
- How will your program monitor progress and evaluate the overall success of your partnerships?
- Are evaluation tools in place to demonstrate or document the outcomes of the collective work of your program's partnerships?

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## Evaluating the Partnership

Monitoring and evaluation are essential parts of any partnership. The goal of partnership evaluation is to improve partnership practice in progress, refine and test hypotheses regarding partnerships' contribution to performance and outcomes, and suggest lessons for future partnership work. Evaluation also offers an opportunity to assess how partnerships have changed over time and to make changes in partnership implementation as needed.

### Process Questions:

- How effective is the partnership leadership?
- In what ways have you built the partnership's collaborative leadership capacity?
- Are there specific collaborative leadership concepts and skills (e.g., facilitation, conflict resolution) that need priority attention to enhance the depth and quality of existing collaborative leadership among partners?
- To what extent are the resources your program has allocated for partnerships adequate (e.g., staff time, funding)?
- To what extent are the resources your partners have allocated for partnerships adequate (e.g., staff time, funding)?
- To what extent have your partners fulfilled their roles?
- In what ways have you eliminated barriers and resolved conflicts that made progress difficult?
- Describe any remaining barriers and unresolved conflicts that you may need assistance with in order to move forward in your partnership.
- How have partnerships solved problems that emerged during implementation?
- How have circumstances changed since each partnership began?
- To what extent has there been continuity in the staff assigned to the partnerships?

### Outcome Questions:

- What data are you collecting to determine whether the goals of your partnerships have been met?
- What data indicate whether these partnerships should be continued?

### Application of Evaluation Findings Questions:

- What specific kinds of decisions would you like to make based on your evaluation results?
- With whom (i.e., with what stakeholders) do you want to share what you learn?
- What do these stakeholders want to learn from your work (describe as specifically as possible)?
- How can your evaluation findings help sustain what is important for your organization and your stakeholder?

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## *Sustaining the Partnership*

Achieving sustainability of a partnership is an important and difficult task. Planning for sustainability must be initiated early and should be revisited frequently throughout the life of a partnership. The suggested questions should help with planning strategies to maintain effective relationships.

### Potential Questions:

- Describe the understanding that you and your partners currently have about how your partnership can achieve and maintain sustainability.
- How have key partnership stakeholders been involved in determining this understanding of sustainability?
- What questions does your partnership need to answer to determine if your partnership should be revitalized, sustained, or discontinued?
- If you determine that your partnership should be sustained, how will you incorporate a review of the partnership’s mission and goals in assessing whether sustainability efforts are moving the partnership in the intended direction?
- How will evaluation results be documented to make a case for sustaining the partnership?
- To what extent has your program identified a clear need and commitment for continuing the partnership?
- How will you ensure that resources are available from internal and/or external sources to continue the partnership?
- In what ways have new sources of funding or new (local) sponsoring agencies been investigated?

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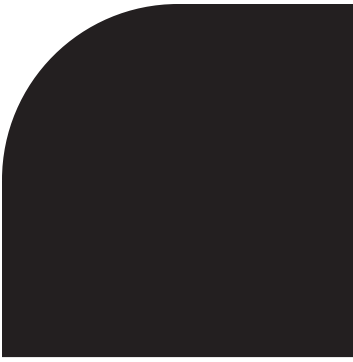
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