

Partnership & Collaboration

What is Partnership and Collaboration?

A partnership or collaboration is an association of two or more entities working to produce something. Partnership and collaboration are looser forms of mergers and can begin with sharing ideas or resources but can also relate to any aspect of an organisation's activities including Administration, Fundraising, Campaigning, Service Delivery and can result in cost savings and a better service.

...*"It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too). Those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed"* - Charles Darwin.

What is the value of Partnership and Collaboration?

- **Knowledge and ideas** - access specific knowledge or approaches as well as broaden input regarding a problem and therefore increase quantity and quality of possible solutions.
- **Skills or competencies** - technical or experience based
- **Status** - social capital
- **Relationships** - utilise established relationships
- **Assets** - physical and intangible e.g. Intellectual property on how best to undertake particular delivery or information sets and expertise
- **Funding** - more funding opportunities

Things to Consider

- What are your strengths?
- What are the benefits?
- What are your clients looking for that currently isn't happening?
- What would improve your service?
- How different is the future vision and the current situation?
- What changes are required to bridge the gap?
- Is there sufficient support to explore?
- Do you have the legal capacity to make the change?

What to look for in a potential partner

- Similar/complementary goals, purpose and benefits
- Potential for a relationship where there is trust and respect
- Strong effective leadership
- Effective governance

Potential Obstacles

- Power inequality or imbalance
- Poor accountability and responsibility arrangements
- Lack of investment (in commitment to the process, resources, staff time, finance, effort)
- Differences in organisational 'culture'
- Location - are the organisations geographically close?

Essential Components

- Listen and consult
- Be flexible/cooperative
- Work towards a trusting, respectful, equal relationship
- Generous with knowledge/expertise
- Give the necessary time
- Value all parties' contributions

Partnership and Collaboration Resources



Partnerships Resources Webpage

There are many online resources available to assist community services to work in partnership. The Illawarra Forum have selected some of the most comprehensive, NSW focused resources to assist you to navigate the maze of working together. You will find useful guides to walk you through the process with checklists, templates and examples of governance structures in the resources listed below.



Working With Other Organisations

Provides not for profit law information. Thinking of forming a partnership, creating an MOU or merging/amalgamating? Find out what your options are and how to make the partnership legal.



Formalising Partnerships

Provides a step by step guide to forming a partnership, including resources, information, checklists and case studies.

Formal Collaboration and Governance

Explores issues that may impact on effective governance of formal collaboration arrangements between NFP organisations.



Partnership Practice Guides

Provide information, tools and resources covering the three stages of partnering as well as an overview of governance, partnership models and leadership.

Guide 1: [Preparing to partner \(PDF\)](#)

Guide 2: [Commencing the partnership \(PDF\)](#)

Guide 3: [Sustaining the partnership \(PDF\)](#)

Guide 4: [Partnership governance, models and leadership \(PDF\)](#)



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