



Networked Partnerships

Tips for Overcoming Challenges and Increase Partner Engagement

Partner Engagement Challenge	Suggestions to Increase Engagement
Staff turnover	<p>Suggest that at some meetings, both partners bring a new member of the team to ensure that both agencies get to know a range of staff. Outline roles and responsibilities of each partner to welcome and orient new members and support the continuous gaining and sharing of relevant knowledge.</p>
Competing priorities	<p>Be sensitive to high-stress times and situations for your partners. For example, understand when your partners' grant applications, reports, and site visits occur and lighten the load in terms of your "asks" of them during those times.</p> <p>Prioritize similarities between goals or other activities that might support a partnered approach.</p> <p>Discuss the projects and priorities that are the primary focus, even if these are separate from the work of the partnership. This can enhance transparency and understanding of barriers.</p> <p>Be specific in your requests and cognizant of the time required. Consider the areas in which partners' resources (e.g., time, energy, and contributions) will be most beneficial without requiring more than the partner can commit. For example, instead of asking your partner to attend monthly meetings that only occasionally require their input, send monthly meeting updates and clarify which meetings will be most important for them to attend.</p>
Limited time to engage in meetings, coalitions, and projects	<p>Get creative with the ways you ask for partners to contribute. Consider using virtual collaboration tools that partners can engage in when it is most convenient for them (e.g., Jamboard, Mural, Miro, Google Docs, Sharepoint). Plan short, more frequent check-ins, and offer to do them virtually or by phone.</p>
Power differentials	<p>Take the time to get to know the people you are partnering with, beyond what they can bring to the project. Express interest in staff's life outside of work, understand their constraints, and</p>
Levels of stress and burnout	<p>Identify, remember, and respect stressful times of year for partners (e.g., when their biggest grant report is due).</p>
Too many "asks"	<p>Take opportunities to offer something without asking for anything in return. For example, offer free seats to several partnering organization's staff to attend a training you are hosting.</p>