MAXIMIZING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP & VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT
1. ASL Services
   ● We’ve assigned two ASL interpreters for today’s event: **Raquel Pawlik** and **Natalie Clairin**
   ● Pin their windows for ongoing interpretation services
   ● To ensure high-quality interpretation, they will switch off every ~10-15 minutes, and will announce the transition beforehand so you can pin the new interpreter

2. Captioning
   ● Attendees can click the “CC” button at the bottom of their screen to see real-time subtitles
GUIDE PURPOSE

Provide community organizations with the tools and resources needed to increase their positive impact by forging strategic partnerships that bring new resources, contacts, experience, and capabilities to the table.
A partnership is more than a transactional agreement. It is a relationship that requires give and take, authentic sharing, listening, learning, and keeping the health of the partnership top of mind as you craft a plan to work together.
IN THE GUIDE

Lay the Groundwork
Understand Your Community and Assess Your Ability To Meet Its Needs

Increase Impact
Increase Capacity For Impact Through Partnerships and Volunteers

Reflect
Evaluate, Evolve, and Share Your Stories
01 Understand Your Community and Assess Your Ability to Meet Its Needs
Each community is unique and has its own history, culture, dynamics, assets, and challenges. Understand these factors to ensure your efforts to meet community needs are relevant and effective.

- Involve community members from the start
- Neighborhood level understanding can clarify key issues and disparities
To truly understand a neighborhood and its needs, there is no substitute for connecting with community members and listening to their experiences and frustrations.

- Reflect on local issues & knowledge gaps
- Address knowledge gaps using surveys, listening sessions, etc
- Engage all relevant community stakeholders
TIPS TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL INPUT

- Invite candid feedback
- Be open to both praise and criticism
- Make it clear you are there to listen
- Have a strong facilitator
ASSESS COMMUNITY NEEDS

Starting point for structuring discussion with community members and stakeholders.

- What community needs are met well? Who is meeting them and how?
- What community needs are not being met sufficiently?
- What resources are already available locally?
- Are community members aware of all the key local resources?
- What barriers prevent these needs from being met? Are there other local resources that help address these barriers?
- Are there certain groups or populations that are not receiving sufficient support? If so, what is preventing them from receiving the support they need?
- Are there other neighborhoods that better meet these needs? How do they do it? Which organizations are most effective?
While understanding the needs and deficits in a community is critical to planning, it is equally important to identify the strengths and assets that a community can harness to meet those needs.

- Include community members
- Use a strengths-based approach
- Deepen community self-awareness
### ASSET MAPPING

List existing assets or resources in the neighborhood and facilitate connections between orgs.

My organization will work with _____(neighborhood)_______________ on ______(issues)___________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Institutional</th>
<th>Governmental</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Local Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider resident skills and talents. Are there any individual leaders in the community?</td>
<td>Are there any local institutions that may be able to provide social, physical resources and/or access to volunteers</td>
<td>Are there any current government initiatives in the neighborhood? Who and where are your electeds?</td>
<td>Does your neighborhood have any historic landmarks, museums etc.?</td>
<td>What are some grassroots and local groups that are active in your neighborhood?</td>
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</table>
ASSESS YOURSELF AND MAKE A PLAN

Understanding the greatest needs and how your organization is uniquely positioned to support your community will help maximize your impact.
REFLECT ON ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS AND ASSETS

➔ What has our organization done really well to address, or try to address, some of the community’s articulated needs?
➔ What are some key organizational strengths that we can lean on and build on?
➔ What challenges can prevent our organization from delivering on our mission and supporting our community?
➔ What have we tried that hasn’t worked well? What have we learned?
➔ What are our organization’s core competencies that we are uniquely poised to offer?
➔ What community needs are we ill-equipped to meet? Are there gaps in our organization’s capacity?
➔ Could we meet those needs through partnerships with other organizations or volunteers?
As you rethink how your organization could best serve the community, consider what you may need to change, build, or grow to deliver on your mission.
## OUR VISION FOR SERVING THE COMMUNITY

| CURRENT STATE: | Write down TEN HONEST WORDS to describe our organization’s current approach to address community needs. |
| ONE YEAR FROM NOW: | Write down TEN WORDS you would like stakeholders to use to describe our organization’s approach to serving the community A YEAR FROM NOW. |

| THEMES: | |
| OUTLIERS: | |

| THEMES: | |
| OUTLIERS: | |
PLAN TO INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Before jumping into action - pause, create a plan, and prepare your organization to evolve.
**PLAN AND IDEATE WITH “HOW MIGHT WE?”**

Use How Might We questions to guide ideation and brainstorming and create actionable ideas. The How Might We format encourages you to expand your thinking to generate more ideas and actionable next steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW MIGHT WE?</th>
<th>POTENTIAL IDEAS/SOLUTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How might we better leverage our strengths to increase our community impact?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How might we bridge or close some of the gaps we and the community have identified to fulfill our mission?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How might we....</td>
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02

INCREASE YOUR CAPACITY FOR IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERS
STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

- Look for a shared sense of purpose
- Create shared value and expand your ability to meet your org’s mission and goals.
- Build shared infrastructure that sustains engagement
IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**NYC Service**

nyc.gov/service

**Orgs aligned with your issue and focus areas**

**Personal and Community Networks**

**Current Funders and Partners**
Fill in your priorities for a potential partner to customize this checklist.

- Demonstrated knowledge of issue area and/or community
- Strong reputation
- Gaps in service that my organization can fill
- Leaders and points of contact that are passionate and candid
- Complementary skills, knowledge, and competencies
- Aligned or complementary goals and values
- An aligned approach to work or method of working
- Connections to communities and contacts that are of interest
- The capacity to invest in a new partnership
- Willingness to collaborate and some flexibility in planning
Long-term partnerships are often more efficient and effective

- Less ramp-up time
- Greater potential for lasting change

Evaluate if a partner is equipped for longer-term engagement

- New or smaller orgs may lack the infrastructure or resources required for a longer-term commitment
- These orgs may be a better fit for short-term or even one-time pilot engagements
- Leverage learnings from short-term initiatives to determine whether/where/when to ramp up to a longer-term partnership or coalition in the future.
Every organization has unique assets and resources to share with the community and with its partners.

What do most orgs look for in a Partnership?

- Shared value
- High community impact
- Visibility, reach, and access to new and relevant audiences including communities, funders, other partners, etc
- Credibility in an issue area or with a new community
- Cost-sharing and efficiency
- Opportunities to engage employees and/or community members
PREPARE YOURSELF

Take the time to understand the potential partner organization and the communities it serves.

- Research and learn about the organization’s mission, work, capacity and how it operates.
- Invite your partner to share insights on clients, communities, and the specific opportunities and challenges it faces.
THE FIRST MEETING

Setting the right tone

- Emphasize relationship building
- Be willing to explore different ways to collaborate
- Listen well and learn about the org’s needs, immediate gaps, and how you may be able to help
- Showcase your own org’s assets and skills, and how you can create shared value together
- Share high-level thinking of what a partnership might look like
- Ask your partner to share their goals for a partnership
- Define next steps and make a plan to stay in touch
FIRST MEETING CHECKLIST

Before you dive in to a partnership, it is essential to understand as many aspects of the potential partner’s work as possible.

- Organization history, work, approach, needs
- Top motivations for partnerships
- Community history, dynamics, etc
- Staffing, org structure and capacity
- Learnings from previous partnerships
- Types of volunteer projects org is experienced with or interested in
- Organizational commitment; any foreseeable challenges
- Project/program costs
- Other organizational priorities
- References
A partnership is more than a transactional agreement. It is a relationship that requires mutual commitment and respect.

- Approach each partnership as unique
- Be respectful of your partner’s knowledge, expertise, work, and impact
- Ensure equity and a fair division of responsibilities
- Welcome honest and direct feedback and input
- Grow healthy partnerships to longer-term and deeper relationships
HOW you engage with your nonprofit partner is just as important as the outcomes of your partnership.
LISTEN WITH INTENTION

Open and equal communication is critical to the success of all partnerships

● ALL parties have a wealth of knowledge and expertise
● Listen to each other’s needs to understand how to best support each other’s work
● Seek out their perspective AND share yours
TIPS FOR BEING A GOOD LISTENER

01. Ask about past partnerships - what worked and what didn’t
02. Always ask the partner what is best for them. Don’t assume.
03. Invite them to be candid and open about expectations AND reservations
LEAD WITH TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is critical for any successful partnership.

- Share motivations and expectations up front, and questions and concerns along the way
- Discuss budgets and resourcing in detail
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FOSTER COLLABORATION THROUGH OPEN COMMUNICATION</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set the tone</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parties have something to offer and something to gain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clearly assign roles and responsibilities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Everyone should have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and how they collaborate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Share leadership and decision-making</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider viewpoints from all sides of the partnership; be clear about decision makers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Craft a shared vision</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bring all relevant leaders to the table to create a clear shared vision for the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adapt and be flexible</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Remain open and flexible to adapt to circumstances and ensure maximum impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set a cadence for staying connected</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure regular check-ins with consolidated points of contact</td>
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</table>
TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION SUCCESS

**01**
Be proactive: don’t wait for misunderstandings to occur. Check in with your partner regularly to ensure potential challenges are addressed quickly

**02**
Model open communication: be candid and honest and actively invite your partner’s feedback

**03**
Read signals: if your partner seems hesitant or doubtful, check in with them to learn what concerns them. Work with your partner to find appropriate solutions
ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers add value and help achieve organization goals if they are cultivated, supported and managed thoughtfully:

- Volunteers can expand your org’s capacity and impact
- Volunteers can serve as ambassadors to increase your org’s visibility and network
- Volunteers can lead and innovate if they are motivated and have the tools they need
DESIGN VOLUNTEER PROJECTS WITH PURPOSE

1. Assess your organization’s needs
2. Determine which needs to address with volunteer support
3. Think through logistics
4. Develop clear volunteer role descriptions
5. Establish success metrics
Skills-based volunteer (SBV) activities leverage professional skills and talents of volunteers. SBV often generates significant value and satisfaction. SBV does require thoughtful planning and close ongoing management.
TOP PRACTICES FOR MANAGING SBV

➔ Be specific about the need and clearly define the project parameters including time commitment
➔ Identify a primary point of contact for the volunteer
➔ Set clear expectations for both the volunteer and the organization
➔ Promote opportunities to org’s existing volunteer base first
➔ Start small (especially for orgs new to SBV)
➔ Invite feedback from volunteer(s)
➔ Share the impact of the work with volunteers and colleagues
RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

- Look deeply within your community to find untapped resources and opportunities
- Consider avenues to reach those who have relevant interests and professional skills
- Set criteria to ensure a good match
RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

- Ensure your information is easily accessible
- Engage community stakeholders to help get the word out
- Spread the word through your organization’s existing online networks
- Identify relevant networks and coordinate with them to promote and publicize your volunteer opportunities
- Keep volunteer intake brief and simple and be sure to respond to interested volunteers promptly
ONLINE RECRUITMENT RESOURCES

NYC Service
nycservice.org/register

Idealist
idealist.org/login

Humbler
humbler.co/

New York Cares
https://www.newyorkcares.org/community-partners/register

VolunteerMatch
volunteermatch.org/recruit-volunteers
SET YOUR VOLUNTEERS UP FOR SUCCESS

- Leverage staff management best practices
- Dedicate time and resources to volunteer management

IN ORDER TO:

- Engage and retain volunteers
- Increase organizational capacity and get maximum value from volunteer programs
- Build a loyal base of volunteer ambassadors who gain value from their volunteer activities
JOURNEY MAPPING

Visualize the journey a volunteer takes from when they first hear about the opportunity through to when they complete their volunteer experience with your organization and move forward. This will help you anticipate potential hurdles and plan for our volunteers to have the best experience possible.
ONBOARD AND MANAGE YOUR VOLUNTEERS

- The first and early days of a volunteer’s engagement sets the tone for their experience with your org
- Onboarding and managing volunteers thoughtfully and intentionally adds value for volunteers and for your organization
CHECKLIST FOR ONBOARDING VOLUNTEERS

- Block time on calendars to welcome new volunteers on their first day
- Make them a part of the team
- Give them a tour
- Orient volunteers to their workspace
- Educate on organizational culture
- Review role description
- Inform them of any training opportunities or other resources they will need
- Set up regular check-ins
CHECKLIST FOR MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

- Provide clear direction
- Communicate regularly
- Provide feedback
- Make your volunteers a part of the team
- Build trust with volunteers
- Listen to your volunteers
- Recognize your volunteers
BUILD COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

→ Build moments of connection into each volunteer activity
→ Host weekly or monthly happy hours or trivia nights
→ Hold virtual “office hours” for volunteers
→ Create channels for volunteers to connect with one another
→ Build awareness and educate volunteers on relevant issues with guest speakers
→ Celebrate and acknowledge volunteers
→ Ask volunteers to share stories about their experiences
03

EVALUATE AND EVOLVE
BUILD IN EVALUATION EARLY

It is easier to build evaluation methods into your partnership plan early on than to try to figure out how to measure impact once the partnership is underway.

- Work backwards and think about what you will want to report on in a year
- Determine how you will measure success
- Align on key milestones and regular reviews
- Evaluate your impact on an ongoing basis
- Work with stakeholders
- Align on a cadence for reporting and what type of information you want to receive
- Build in informal points of evaluation
USEFUL EVALUATION TOOLS

Partner Questionnaire
A survey provides one more avenue for feedback that may deliver helpful insights.

Volunteer Survey
Get feedback from volunteers. Survey volunteers on the activity itself and the experience leading up to it.
BE SELECTIVE ABOUT WHAT TO MEASURE

- Measurement and evaluation should be well planned and properly resourced
- Keep it simple and hone in on key indicators of success
- Think about the key indicators to evaluate program outcomes and impact
- A combination of quantitative and qualitative metrics will provide both data points and stories
- Prioritize which metrics are most important to both parties and determine how best to measure
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reflection Questions to Evaluate Your Partnership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner Relationship:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>➔ We have a key point of contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>➔ Our key point of contact responds quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Our partner organization openly communicates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Our partner organization respects our point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Both organizations have learned from each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer Engagement and Experience:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Volunteers felt their work had an impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Our volunteer activity was well organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Volunteers had the necessary tools and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Volunteers plan to return and recommend this engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner Infrastructure:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Our goals are clear and measurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ Roles and responsibilities are clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ We understand how decisions are made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ We all raise concerns and ideas freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Impact:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ We can articulate the measurable impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ We are see the impact of our work in our community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔ The community is supportive of our efforts and engaged in evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFLECT AND EVOLVE

Data collected through evaluation only benefits those who take the time to analyze the findings and reflect on how they can improve

- Review data and feedback regularly and consider changes you can make
- Build in internal conversations and reflection sessions regularly with key stakeholders
SHARE YOUR BEST STORIES

Storytelling amplifies the impact of your organization’s work in many ways

- **External:** Increase your organization’s visibility, build support and awareness in your community and beyond, potentially attract more funders
- **Internal:** Recognize your team’s contributions, reinforce a positive organizational culture of recognition and pride, fuel employee morale and retention
TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING

- Use great images
- Invest in training a team member
- Keep stories to less than 500 words
- Front load stories with key details
- Use quotes to tell to personalize stories
- Leverage social media
- Use stories to strengthen partnerships and volunteer programs
- Post slide shows of recent events and accomplishments on screens
- Don’t wait to change the world to tell your story
- Challenge yourself to tell at least one story a month
06 APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL TOOLS
ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND INFORMATION

- **Volunteer programs 101**
  - Basic range of volunteer activities
  - Best practices for Engaging Volunteers
  - Best practices for Virtual Volunteerism
  - Nonprofit SBV toolkit by Common Impact
  - GVMS: SBV
  - Best practices for volunteer events including Day-of checklist

- **Ensuring a DEIA lens in your partnerships and volunteer management**
SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE!

1. **REFLECT** with your breakout group on your experiences developing partnerships around volunteer engagement. What was a memorable success and a real challenge - what was the lesson learned?
2. **COMPILE** a list of best practices from your breakout group’s experiences.
3. **SHARE** one not yet covered best practice with the larger group so we can all benefit from your wealth of experience.
QUESTIONS?

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