MAXIMIZING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

SESSION 2: INCREASE YOUR CAPACITY FOR IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS
ASL AND CLOSED CAPTIONING

ASL Services

- We’ve assigned two ASL interpreters for today’s event: Andria Alefhi and David Canas
- Interpreters will be spot-lighting themselves to ensure a seamless transition and high quality services

Captioning

- Attendees can click the “CC” button at the bottom of their screen to see real-time subtitles
AMITA NAGARAJA

- Global Grant Making
- CSR
- Parent
- Corporate Philanthropy
- Cross-Sector Partnerships
- Advisor
- Experience Across Nonprofit, Public and Private Sectors

- Coach
- Independent Consultant
- Strategy Planning
- Volunteer
- Financial Services Sector
- Trainer
- Pro-Bono
- Volunteer & Community Engagement
- Queens resident
SESSION PURPOSE

TOOLKIT Objective:
- Provide community organizations with the tools and resources needed to increase their positive impact by developing new sources of volunteers and/or forging strategic partnerships that bring new resources, contacts, experience, and capabilities to the table.

SESSION Objective:
- Build organizational capacity by collaborating with other organizations to have greater impact together.
- Learn to build innovative and successful partnerships, from identifying potential partners and articulating the value proposition for all sides, to structuring and communicating effectively.
Increasing Your Capacity for Impact through Partnerships

Key Takeaways:
● Know what you bring to the table
● Listen with intention and lead with transparency
● Foster collaboration through open communication
● Evaluate and evolve

Tools:
● Potential partner checklist
● Articulate your unique value proposition
● First meeting checklist
Once you have a clear understanding of the community needs that you want to address, the community and organizational assets you can leverage, and any existing gaps, you can:

**identify potential partner organizations that support you in addressing real needs** and increase both your organization’s capacity and its impact.
WHAT MAKES STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

- Mutual goals and sense of purpose
- Shared value that expands your ability to meet your org’s mission and goals.
- Agreed upon infrastructure that expands and sustains community engagement
GETTING STARTED

- Invest time and embark on an intentional and thoughtful process
- Understand and be able to articulate your organization’s priorities and needs
- Be willing to travel outside your comfort zone, both literally and figuratively
- Explore potential partners beyond the usual suspects
THINK LONG-TERM

Long-term partnerships are often more efficient and effective

- Less ramp-up time
- Greater potential for lasting change and deepened community impact

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 these partnerships to increase volunteer engagement and then ramp up to a longer-term alliance or coalition in the future.
IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

NYC Service
nyc.gov/service

Virtual or In-person Neighborhood/Community Meetings or Work Convenings

Personal and Community Networks

Current Funders and Partners
Objective: Use the checklist to determine if a partner meet the desired qualities for a partnership. 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
Take 3 minutes to think about how you could adapt the potential partner checklist tool.

Considering what you surfaced in session 1 about your organization’s needs/gaps/assets:

What do you need in a potential partner and what would your org add to the checklist?

Which of the qualities on the checklist would you prioritize? Which are your top three?
KNOW WHAT YOU BRING TO THE TABLE

Every organization has unique assets and resources to share with the community and with its partners.

○ Before you meet with a potential partner, know what sets your organization apart and what you are uniquely positioned to bring to a partnership.
WHAT PARTNER ORGS MAY BE LOOKING FOR

- Shared value
- High community impact
- Cost-sharing and efficiency
- Visibility, reach, and access to new and relevant audiences
- Credibility in an issue area or with a new community
- Opportunities to engage employees and/or community members
Objective: Reflect and craft a pitch to a potential partner. Being able to articulate your organization’s approach, the unique value you bring to your community, and what you’re looking for in a potential partner is essential when embarking on finding the right partner.
REFLECT AND ARTICULATE

Think about the questions below and jot down your responses

My organization’s overall mission is...

My organization is really good at...

What makes our approach unique...

Key needs in our community (in our space) that are not being sufficiently met are...

What are we currently doing/thinking about doing to address these needs?

What would your ideal partner bring to the table?
BREAKOUT ACTIVITY: UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

1. Individually, take 5 minutes to fill in the blanks on the Unique Value Proposition statement.

1. In your group, share your name, organization, and your Unique Value Proposition statement:
   a. If you’re struggling with any part of it, ask the group for input
   b. Have the group share what was compelling, what was confusing, and how you might sharpen your UVP statement.
Our organization works to __________________________ by __________________________. We are 
(mission/vision/goals)
equipped to make an impact in our community because of our __________________________ and our track 
(strengths and assets that are relevant to pitch to your partner)
record of __________________________. Some of the critical needs in our community that aren’t sufficiently 
(note concrete positive impacts of your community work)
being met are __________________________. To address the needs, we are currently ____________
________________________________________________________________________ and are interested in exploring __________________________________________________________________. A partnership with ____________ (note specific actions, campaigns or 
Initiatives you are driving to meet these needs)

would allow us to __________________________________________________________________ and we might be able to support you in __________________________________________________________________ (provide concrete examples of how a partnership with this 
organizations can amplify your impact)

________________________________________________________________________. Together we can amplify each other’s community impact and __________________________________________________________________ (be as specific as possible and describe how your 
can help forward the potential partner’s work) 

(note specific impacts you would like to have through partnership)
PREPARE YOURSELF

Take the time to understand a 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 educate you on their 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 and expectations of a partnership
- Define next steps and make a plan to stay in touch
Objective: Before you confirm an official partnership, it is essential to understand the many aspects of the potential partner’s work. In your first meeting, ask your partner about the following items in the checklist.

- 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 give and take, authentic sharing, listening, learning, and keeping the health of the partnership top of mind.

- 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
Foster collaboration through open communication

- **Set the tone**: Both parties have something to offer and something to gain
- **Document the partnership**: Have a document that outlines the basic terms of the agreement
- **Craft a shared vision**: Bring all relevant leaders to the table to create a clear shared vision for the partnership
- **Adapt and be flexible**: Remain open and flexible to adapt to circumstances and ensure maximum impact
- **Clearly assign roles and responsibilities**: Everyone should have a clear understanding of roles/any related expectations in the partnership
- **Share leadership and decision-making**: Consider viewpoints from all sides of the partnership; be clear about decision makers
- **Set a cadence for staying connected**: Ensure regular check-ins with consolidated points of contact
# Tips for Communication Success

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<td><strong>01</strong></td>
<td>Be proactive: don’t wait for misunderstandings to occur. Check in with your partner regularly to ensure potential challenges are addressed quickly</td>
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<td><strong>02</strong></td>
<td>Model open communication: be candid and honest and actively invite your partner’s feedback</td>
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<td><strong>03</strong></td>
<td>Red 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</td>
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EVALUATE AND EVOLVE
BUILD IN EVALUATION EARLY

It is much easier to build evaluation into your partnership while you are structuring it, than to try and retrofit metrics into something after it’s well underway.

- Determine how you will measure success
- Align on key milestones and regular reviews
- Evaluate your impact on an ongoing basis
- Work with key stakeholders
- Align on a cadence for reporting and what type of information each partner needs
- Build in informal points of evaluation
**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: prioritize
- Think about the questions you want to answer to evaluate program outcomes and impact
- A combination of quantitative and qualitative metrics will provide both data points and stories
REFLECTION QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE YOUR PARTNERSHIP

**Partner Questionnaire**

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

**Partner Infrastructure:**
- The goals are clear and measurable
- Each organization is clear on its role and responsibilities We understand how decisions are made

**Partner Relations:**
- We know our key point of contact
- Our key point of contact responds quickly
- Our partner organization openly communicates
- Our partner organization respects our point of view
- Both organizations have learned from each other

**Community Impact:**
- We can articulate the measurable impact
- We are satisfied with the positive impact
REFLECT AND EVOLVE

Data collected through surveys only benefits those who take the time to analyze the findings and reflect on how they can improve your partnership and its impact.

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

Based on your experience creating, managing or being involved in partnerships, what is something you’ve learned?
QUESTIONS?

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