

# 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

Coach

Financial  
Services Sector

Parent

Corporate  
Philanthropy

Independent  
Consultant

Trainer

Experience  
Across  
Nonprofit,  
Public and  
Private Sectors

Cross-Sector  
Partnerships

Advisor

Strategic  
Planning

Pro-Bono

Volunteer &  
Community  
Engagement

Volunteer

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

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**NYC Service**

[nyc.gov/service](https://nyc.gov/service)



**Personal and  
Community Networks**



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



**Current Funders and Partners**

# TOOL: POTENTIAL PARTNER CHECKLIST

**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

# REFLECT: POTENTIAL PARTNER QUALITIES

*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

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**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**

TOOL:  
**YOUR ORGANIZATION'S  
UNIQUE VALUE  
PROPOSITION**

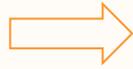
**Objective:** Reflect and craft a pitch to a potential partner. Being able to articulate your organization's approach, the unique value you bring to your community, and what you're looking for in a potential partner is essential when embarking on finding the right partner.



# REFLECT AND ARTICULATE

*Think about the questions below and jot down your responses*

**My organization's  
overall mission is...**

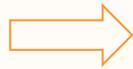


**My organization is  
really good at...**



**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.



# BREAKOUT ACTIVITY: *UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION*

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) (note specific actions or tactics that could amplify your impact)

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 its 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

# FIRST MEETING CHECKLIST

**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

# SUSTAIN AND MAINTAIN STRONG PARTNERSHIPS



**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



Türöffner



***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

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# 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

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

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

# 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



TIPS  
AND  
TRICKS

## GROUP SHARE

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

# THANK YOU



## QUESTIONS?

Amita Nagaraja  
Nonprofit & Foundation Consultant  
[amitanagaraja@gmail.com](mailto:amitanagaraja@gmail.com)

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