

# Strategies for Success

*Beginning Your Journey: Laying the Foundation for Success in the Office  
on Violence Against Women's Disability Grant Program*

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# Workshop Objectives

- > Discuss lessons learned and strategies for success based upon previous grantees' experience.
- > Share your own experiences and promising practices with collaboration.
- > Answer your pressing questions about structuring your collaborative work.

# Working in Collaboration

Cooperation vs. Coordination vs. Collaboration  
Implications of Working in Collaboration  
Strategies for a Successful Collaboration

# Cooperation

- > Shorter-term informal relationship
- > No clearly defined vision or structure
- > Only share info on the topic at hand
- > No shared authority
- > Low intensity

# Coordination

- > More formal relationship
- > More of an understanding of a shared purpose and more structure
- > More open communication channels between organizations
- > No shared authority, but increased risk
- > Medium intensity

# Collaboration

- > Formal and sustained relationship
- > Shared vision, mission and values
- > Agreement around operating principles and structure
- > Well-defined communication channels at different levels of each organization
- > Shared authority
- > Higher risk and intensity as resources are shared

# Facilitated Discussion

Based on your previous experiences:

- > How is working in collaboration different from cooperating or coordinating?
- > What is needed for a collaboration to be successful?
- > What challenges can arise when working in collaboration, and how have you overcome them?

# Table Discussion

- > What best characterizes your history of working together: coordination, cooperation, or collaboration?
- > How will working in collaboration on this grant be different from how you have worked together in the past?
- > What lessons from your past experiences can you apply to your work with this collaboration?

# Implications of Working in Collaboration

- > You are creating something new using a group process, which requires:
  - > Active engagement of all collaboration members.
  - > Group agreement on all key issues and decisions.
  - > Agency-wide buy-in.
- > Working in collaboration takes more time.
  - > To explore agency and individual perspectives.
  - > To build off strengths and navigate differences.
  - > To create something new.
- > The results are often richer, more effective, and more likely to be sustained.

# Collaboration Composition: Who is at Your Collaboration Table?

Organizations  
Agency Representatives  
Project Director/Coordinator  
Consultants

# Organizations

- > Ideal collaboration size is between 2 – 5 partners.
- > The substantive focus of your work should parallel the mission and expertise of the agencies around your collaboration table.
- > Every partner agency and representative should be able to affect change in the lives of survivors in a similar way.
- > Every partner should be able to contribute to the work of the collaboration in similar and complementary ways.

# Organizations cont'd...

- > Key Considerations for Adding Partners
  - > Organizational Commitment & Fit
  - > Feasibility & Manageability
  - > Budget
  - > Timing
  
- > Key Consideration for Narrowing the Number of Partners
  - > Overall Balance
  - > Expertise & Fit
  - > Feasibility & Manageability

# Agency Representatives

- > Successful collaborations are made up of people who:
  - > Understand their organization's mission, values, programs, operations, and critical issues;
  - > Are steeped in their organizations area of expertise on the collaboration (i.e., domestic violence, disability, Deaf culture, etc.);
  - > Can make decisions for the organization and garner buy-in;
  - > Can commit time, energy, and resources to the collaboration; and;
  - > Are planners and doers.
  
- > And, they are structured so the right people are involved at the right time.

# Project S.A.F.E.

- > Suffolk County, NY
- > Collaborating Partners
  - > Victim Information Bureau of Suffolk (VIBS) Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center
  - > United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Suffolk County, Inc
- > Core Working Group
  - > Program Director-Level Staff
  - > Project Director
  - > Meets Bi-Weekly (more if needed)
- > Full Collaboration
  - > Includes Working Group Members and UCP Chief Operating Officer and VIBS Associate Director
  - > Meets Monthly

# The Equal Access to Safety Initiative

- > Hampden County, MA
- > Collaborating Partners
  - > YWCA of Western Massachusetts
  - > Goodwill Industries of Springfield/Hartford Area
- > Core Collaboration
  - > Vice President (1) & Directors (3)
  - > Project Manager
- > Strategic Engagement of Other Decision-Makers
  - > Inform Key Decision-Makers of Progress and Key Issues on On-Going Basis
  - > Convene Meetings with Board Members, Executive Directors, and Key Agency Staff at Beginning of Each Stage of Work
  - > Invite Executive Directors and Other Key Staff to Attend Core Group Meetings at Key Points

# H.O.P.E. Collaborative

- > Haywood County, North Carolina
- > Collaborating Partners
  - > The ARC of Haywood County
  - > Haywood County Department of Social Services
  - > Haywood Vocational Services
  - > R.E.A.C.H. of Haywood County
  - > Smoky Mountain Center
  - > 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Domestic Violence-Sexual Assault Alliance
- > Collaboration Members
  - > Executive Directors or Decision-Makers from Each Agency
  - > Project Co-Directors
- > Each Member is Responsible for Getting Buy-In from Other Agency Decision-Makers.

# Collaboration Structure Considerations

- > Agency size, structure, and decision-making authority
- > Knowledge, expertise, and interest of individual staff members
- > Availability of resources (financial, time, and other)
- > Type of work being done

## Collaboration Structure cont'd...

**Collaboration structures evolve as the work evolves.**

# Project Director/Coordinator

- > Serves as dedicated staff to the collaboration, but is employed by one agency of the collaboration.
- > Collaboration should agree upon key aspects of the position.
  - > Title
  - > Roles and responsibilities
  - > Supervision and management structure
  - > Support
- > But, recognize that the agency that employs Project Director position has unique and additional responsibilities.

# Project Director cont'd...

- > Main responsibilities include:
  - > Building and maintaining relationships,
  - > Leading the collaboration through the planning and development phase,
  - > Overseeing and managing the implementation phase,
  - > Drafting deliverables, and
  - > Serving as liaison to Vera and OVW.
  
- > Works best when the Project Director/Coordinator is not also serving as their agency representative on the collaboration.
  
- > Key qualities include:
  - > Excellent project management and facilitation skills,
  - > Skilled collaborator and communicator,
  - > Diplomatic,
  - > Loves to plan and coordinate, and
  - > Can balance the process and the outcome.

# Consultants

- > If your collaboration has plans to involve consultants, be sure to:
  - > Assess whether they are needed,
  - > Clearly define their scope of work and timetable, and
  - > Determine how you will keep them informed of your work progress.
  
- > The use of consultants have been most successful when consultants have worked on discrete pieces of work, like conducting focus groups or creating a website, and not those that are central to the development of the collaboration's goals and process.

# Strategies for Maintaining Engagement and Buy-In

Agency Representatives  
Organizations

# Key Strategies for Agency Representatives

- > Be aware of what motivates everyone around the table.
- > Play to the strengths of individuals around the table.
- > Celebrate your successes.
- > Remember the “why” behind each step in the process.
- > Recognize that building a strong foundation (i.e., relationship building and planning) takes time and has a big pay-off.
- > Avoid thinking that implementation is the only “real work.”

# Key Strategies for Organizations

- > Upon returning from your orientation have explicit conversations with key stakeholders about the requirements of the grant for your agency.
- > Convene meetings with key stakeholders as the implications of this work for them become clearer
  - > Senior management
  - > Key program personnel
  - > Fiscal
  - > Human resources
  - > Facilities

## Key Strategies for Organizations *continued*

- > Include project-related information in existing staff and board meetings
- > Convene meetings with key stakeholders at key milestones
  - > Charter
  - > Needs Assessment Report
  - > Strategic Plan

# Other Considerations for the Planning & Development Phase

Timeline  
Resource Allocation  
Budget  
Memorandum of Understanding or Contract

# Timeline

- > The amount of time spent in planning and development varies from collaboration to collaboration.
- > For local collaborations, it takes an average of 15 months.
- > For state-level collaborations, it takes 18 - 24 months.
- > Factors that influence timetable include:
  - > History of working together
  - > Familiarity of subject matter
  - > Number of partners
  - > Vision alignment among partners and with OVW
  - > Amount of time dedicated to the work
  - > Number of unforeseen diversions
  - > OVW approval

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## Timeline cont'd...

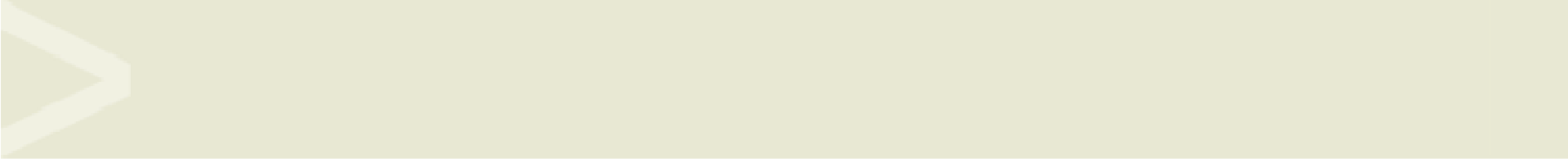
Be flexible with your timeline. It should mirror your work process and what is required to create a strong foundation for developing relationships and instituting changes within your organizations, which is hard to anticipate.

## Timeline cont'd...

- > You are not in a race.
- > The amount of time you spend in a given component of the work should be reflective of the time that was needed to successfully complete it.
- > Only be concerned about the timing of your work if it is being drawn out or delayed by lack of contributions among your team members or inefficient work process.

## Table Discussion: Your Timeline

- > How does the average timeline for past collaborations differ from your expectations around your timeline?
- > What are the benefits and challenges of having a longer than anticipated timeline?
- > What are the benefits and challenges of having flexibility around your timeline?
- > What strategies can you employ to keep the work moving while being responsive to the needs of the work?



The amount of time and resources each agency contributes is difficult to estimate and varies.

# Resource Allocation

- > Attendance at In-Person Collaboration Meetings
  - > Purpose of meetings varies depending on where your collaboration is at in the process
  - > Meeting schedules vary (weekly for 2 hours, twice a month for 4 hours, etc.)
  - > *An average of 8 hours a month*
- > Non-Meeting Related Contributions
  - > Work on assignments from meeting
  - > Reviewing materials and providing comment
  - > Informing key stakeholders in agency of collaborations work
  - > Getting agency buy-in
  - > *An average of 4 hours a month*

# Resource Allocation cont'd...

## > Retreats

- > Time away from the office to focus on a specific area of your work together
  - > Project Kick-Off
  - > Collaboration Charter
  - > Needs Assessment Plan & Tools
  - > Strategic Plan
- > *2 days per retreat*

## > Technical Assistance Engagements

- > 2 in-person meetings/trainings per year
- > *2 days per meeting*

## Resource Allocation cont'd...

Activity	Average Number of Days/Year
Collaboration Meetings	12
Work In-Between Meetings	6
Collaboration Retreats	6 - 8
All-Site Meetings/Trainings	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28 - 30</b>

# Budget

- > Each agency should be paid fairly and equitably for their contributions to the collaboration.
- > Payment structures for project partners vary and should be outlined in MOU.
  - > Monthly or quarterly payments in exchange for agreed-upon contributions are most common.
  - > Agreed-upon contributions tend to be qualitative and not quantified in hours.
  - > Successful collaborations build in a process for checking in about the budget.
- > Collaborations submit a budget modification along with their strategic plan at the end of the planning and development phase that details the budget for implementation.
- > The amount of money agencies receive during the implementation phase may vary from the planning and development phase.

# M.O.U or Contract

- > Many collaborations have found it useful to revise their Memorandum of Understanding or agency contracts at two points in the process.
  - > Start of Planning & Development Phase
  - > Start of Implementation
- > These agreements typically outline:
  - > Scope of Work: the agency's contributions and commitments to the collaboration, including work process.
  - > Payment: how much money the agency will receive in exchange for their work, when and how payments will be distributed.

# Questions and Reflections