

## CREATIVE IDEAS FOR CULTIVATING RESOURCES

### PURPOSES & BENEFITS

Resource cultivation can help to further the successful implementation of a collaborative group's strategic plan in order to effectively do the community organizing work in the plan. Resources don't just have to be about more money and more time. Being creative and thinking about resources in a broader sense can sometimes make the difference in whether or not community organizing work can be accomplished. This tool provides ideas for expanding thinking about how a collaborative group defines resources.

### HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The collaborative group can use this tool to identify possibilities for and expand thinking about cultivating resources that will positively benefit their community organizing efforts. It is intended that this tool be used in conjunction with the strategic plan developed, specifically the "Resources" component of the "Work Plan" section of the strategic plan (See the "Strategic Planning Overview, Process & Elements" document located in both the Step 3: Put Together an Informed Plan section of the toolkit, as well as the same section of the toolkit in which this tool is located.



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Having enough resources can be challenging, especially for grassroots collaborative groups; however, resources aren't so critical that they completely stop a group from doing successful community organizing work. If that were true, there wouldn't be so many inspiring examples of community change, sometimes profound, in places and among people where even basic resources are scarce. Even the significant progress made by the anti-sexual and domestic violence movement is a great example.

So what's the secret? You likely already know the answer as an advocate working to end sexual and domestic violence in a local community setting: It's thinking creatively about how we define resources. Though we know this, sometimes it's helpful to intentionally remind ourselves of this and have a conversation with our partners, grounding it within the context of the work we're trying to achieve. Often, we're either thinking out of context (e.g., writing a grant prior to developing a strategic plan, also known as the cart-before-the-horse syndrome), or we're scrambling to identify resources on short notice, after the fact. Both of these common circumstances can cause us to limit our thinking about resources and revert back to default thinking/simple solutions that we "just need more money and more time."

Here are some examples of important resources to cultivate beyond just money and time that can make a significant impact on the community organizing work of the collaborative group:

- **A sense of ownership in the collaborative group** – If you've set your collaborative group up for success, collaborative group members are likely to have a greater sense of ownership in the collaborative group's process and outcomes than they would otherwise. This translates to more resources of all sorts that are now at the disposal of the collaborative partners. Remember that process is product and this is a concrete example of what that can mean!
- **Relationships** – Relationships are critical to the success of any collaborative partnership's efforts. They include those within the group and the group's reach in the larger community. They also include building additional relationships you need to make the strategic plan a success. With new relationships come new possibilities, opportunities and resources. Also, because you planned with intention, inviting critical stakeholders to be involved in developing your community organizing strategic plan, you have people resources via those relationships that you might not have been able to access otherwise.
- **Power/influence/leadership** – Related to relationships, these resources can come from within or outside of the collaborative group. The power of facilitative leadership was highlighted in the "Facilitative Leadership" tool, which can be found in the "Universal Community Organizing Concepts" section of the toolkit. Use that power to cultivate resources. Use your connections via relationships either established or to be developed to access these resources.



- **Personnel/staff** – Related to relationships and a sense of ownership in the collaborative group listed above, these resources can follow. Having staff that are permitted to spend time supporting the collaborative group’s community organizing work can significantly impact the implementation of the community organizing strategic plan.
- **Best practices available to use as a guide** – Best practices can help to inform the group not just “what” work to do, but also provide clues as to “how” to accomplish the work, often providing examples from communities that achieved success. Even reaching out to those communities you know have information you need can help you save another important resource, which is time spent “reinventing the wheel.”
- **Supportive policies** – Policies that support the collaborative group’s success can be a great resource. One example of this is policies from collaborative partners’ organizations that allow for staff time to participate in the collaborative group, and other resources those partner organizations have access to that can extend to the collaborative partnership when otherwise the collaborative group might have to find funding in order to access them.
- **Structures/mechanisms in place** – Along with supportive policies, structures and mechanisms that support the collaborative group’s success can come in many forms, through some of the other resources outlined here, including relationships, power, etc. Think about structures and mechanisms that help to “pave the way,” making the strategic plan implementation road easier to travel. These structures and mechanisms can be found both within and external to the collaborative partnership.

The great thing about all of the resources above is that you also have resources to contribute to others outside of the collaborative group that you can extend in a spirit of “I’ll scratch your back and you scratch mine” or mutual benefit. Think about these opportunities as you plan accessing resources. Anytime your vision or efforts overlap with other places in the community, you have an opportunity for resource sharing that will benefit everyone and result in outcomes that wouldn’t otherwise be achieved.

A note about more money and more time: Now that you have a community organizing strategic plan developed, you have a clear blueprint from which to seek funds to support the plan’s implementation, which can also provide more staff and more time resources to your collaborative group’s plan implementation efforts. In other words, now you have your horse and your cart in the right order! Also, because you have a strategic plan, people and time resources are more clearly defined, optimizing the use of those resources more effectively and efficiently. You also likely have more people resources at the table to help support the plan’s implementation than you did before; these people aren’t necessarily all new collaborative group members, but people who’ve agreed to help with specific plan implementation components.

The above resource ideas are not an exhaustive list, and you and your collaborative partners are experts in making great change with few resources. Gather your “experts” and get creative, thinking specifically, now that you have the context laid out in the form of your strategic plan, about the resources you need to make your community organizing strategic plan a success.