

What is Collaboration?

Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.

Collaboration connotes a more durable and pervasive relationship than does either cooperation or coordination. Collaborations bring previously separated organizations into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. Such relationships require comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating on many levels. Authority is determined by the collaborative structure. Risk is much greater because each member of the collaboration contributes its own resources and reputation. Resources are pooled or jointly secured, and the products are shared.

Collaboration Success Factors

Successful collaboration requires consideration of our Environment

- History of collaboration or cooperation in the community
- Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community
- Favorable political and social climate

Successful collaboration requires attention to Membership Characteristics

- Mutual respect, understanding and trust
- Appropriate cross section of members
- Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
- Ability to compromise

Successful collaboration requires consideration of our Process and Structure

- Members share a stake in both process and outcome
- Multiple layers of participation
- Flexibility
- Development of clear roles and policy guidelines
- Adaptability
- Appropriate pace of development

Successful collaboration requires attention to Communication

- Open and frequent communication
- Established information relationships and communication links

Successful collaboration requires definition of Purpose

Concrete, attainable goals and objectives

Shared vision

Unique purpose

Successful collaboration requires Resources

Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time

Skilled leadership

Participant Guidelines

We will focus on our aspirations and goals for the community

Everyone has wisdom – we need everyone’s wisdom for the best results

Everyone will hear and be heard

There are no wrong answers -- all ideas have value

We will keep our minds open to others’ opinions, ideas and perspectives

We will participate fully with those in the room, and not worry about those not in the room

We will always welcome others who wish to join

We will honour the spirit of trust and sharing outside the walls of this room

We will commit to act upon agreed actions, individually and collectively, and even when it means changes within our respective organizations

We will speak and behave in a manner that is respectful of all individuals and groups