

STARTING A PARTNERSHIP

A defined relationship between two or more organizations with mutually-agreed upon goals and outcomes can be established as one of several different models. Whichever model is determined as meeting the needs of the partners, there are some critical steps that should be followed in establishing a partnership.

- Determine a goal that would be easier to achieve through a collaborative effort.
- Identify potential partners that may have an interest in working together.
- Engage partners in discussion about common goals and outcomes.
- Agree on ground rules for participation, including attendance and contributions.
- Respect individual perspectives, as well as the collective view.
- Design a structure that encourages participation, meets the group's needs, and is not overly burdensome.
- Choose a suitable decision-making process ranging from formal voting to building consensus.
- Establish comfort levels for risk and intensity of engagement.
- Communicate openly and regularly with all participants.
- Beware of power struggles, and acknowledge internal and external competition.
- Assess progress along the way.
- Evaluate results.
- Celebrate success!