Steps to Build Sustainable Partnerships to Serve Veteran and Military Communities

This tool can be used to identify commonalities between potential partners to align goals, fill gaps (*in services, populations served, strategic awareness*) and develop an actionable implementation plan.

The activities are designed for organizations to complete either independently or collaboratively with potential partners to explore new partnership opportunities. They can be used to help guide effective conversations among potential partners to determine the best role for both organizations.

Partnerships can be a relationship, exchange of skills or active project to improve programs. For more information and resources for establishing sustainable partnerships visit:
https://cdcfoundation.org/programs/building-community-support-veteran-suicide-prevention

General Tips for Improved Partnerships:

Partnerships should be collaborative and play to the strengths of both parties while filling gaps.

Determining goals and priorities up front is key to building a beneficial partnership.

One partnership alone may not lead to your goal, but multiple small partnerships or collaborations may be better suited for your organization.

ORGANIZATION:

LEAD CONTACT: DATE: *M/D/YY*

PARTICIPANTS:

Steps to Build Sustainable Partnerships to Serve Veteran and Military Communities:

**If you are completing this form digitally, be sure to save it so you do not lose information.

Step 1: Determine Gaps and Opportunities for Learning:

Why or how can your organization benefit from building partnerships?

> Use these questions to guide an internal inventory of where your organization's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities fall and how partners may be able to fill those gaps and provide a sustainable solution for growth.

What is the mission of your organization or program?

What are your organization's strengths?

What are your organization's weaknesses?

How could a partner organization fill an organizational or programmatic gap to help meet your organization's mission?

Rank the gaps or challenges you have in achieving your mission?

MAJOR →

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

MINOR

12

Where do you traditionally find partner organizations? What are new avenues for identifying partner organizations doing work that could supplement your organization's mission?

**If you are completing this form digitally, be sure to save it so you do not lose information.

Step 2: Align Priorities, Strengths and Project Goals:

What do you hope to gain from your partnership and what do you hope to offer other organizations?

When possible, the following activity should be completed with your intended partner organization. You can use the middle column to align commonalities between your answers for each question. Identify which answers align and which do not but also which areas are necessary to align to move forward with a sustainable relationship for both parties.

ENTER ORGANIZATION A	Organizational Overlap:	ENTER ORGANIZATION B
Record aspects that deal with your organization before a partnership.	Record aspects that overlap between your two organizations that deal with the partnership of the two organizations.	Record aspects that deal with the potential partner organization.

What are three values or qualities you value in a partner organization?

1

2

3

What skills, resources or tools can you offer your partner organization?

What skills, resources or tools can your partner organization offer you?

Where do your values, qualities and goals overlap?

Are there potential conflicts of interest that may prevent working with this partner?

What we contribute to the partnership:

What we gain from the partnership:

What are three values or qualities you value in a partner organization?

1

2

3

What skills, resources or tools can you offer your partner organization?

What skills, resources or tools can your partner organization offer you?

Once each organization has filled out this section (in-person or virtually), review your answers and frankly discuss whether there is sufficient overlap in mission, values and resources to drive a productive partnership. Even if your needs don't align at this juncture, both organizations have gained a connection that could be revisited in the future or can be used to connect with other organizations. Improving partnerships can be about catalyzing partners for your partners too.

**If you are completing this form digitally, be sure to save it so you do not lose information.

CDC Foundation
Together our impact is greater

Step 3: Define Partnership

What do you want this partnership to entail? How does this partnership contribute to the broader community? What are the steps to move forward?

These guiding questions can help build the type of partnership that will be most useful in filling a need or gap.

What type of partnership do you plan to implement together, with a list of options (relationship, project, skill exchange, etc.)?

What solution does this partnership offer? What is the solution or capacity built by this partnership?

Does this project offer a long-term solution or build capacity among our organizations?

Does this project or partnership already exist within our community? If so, can we harness the existing project or partnership to expand capacity?

What Are the Goals of this Partnership?

Short-term goals (6 months–1 year)	Intermediate goals (2–3 years)	Long-term goals (3+ years)

**If you are completing this form digitally, be sure to save it so you do not lose information.

Step 4: Identify Sustainability and Capacity:

How will this partnership be sustainable and build capacity for your organization?

In developing the partnership, it is important to think about how this partnership will be sustained over time along with the impact it will have on your missions and communities. Partnerships should be mutually beneficial and offer organizations a growing capacity for programming and development.

Can this partnership or project be sustained without specific funding? What funding or administrative activities are required to move this partnership forward?

Are there project activities or commitments that could interrupt this partnership in the future?

What does success look like for this partnership? Give an example.

Actionable Steps

What tasks/milestones are required to complete the partnership?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9

What are the immediate next steps and engagement strategies in moving this project along?

SHORT TERM

1
2
3

INTERMEDIATE

4
5
6

LONG TERM

7
8
9

**If you are completing this form digitally, be sure to save it so you do not lose information.