

Building Successful Partnerships 2019 Transformation Transfer Initiative

When building a partnership, it is important to take the time to understand the partner organization and the individuals that it is comprised of. In doing so, you will take on the partner's perspective in relation to the goals of your Transformation Transfer Initiative (TTI). What is standing in the way of the potential partner helping you achieve your TTI goals? What could the partner organization gain by helping you achieve your TTI goals? The steps of building successful partnerships that are outlined below will help you think through these key questions and others in order to build successful and lasting partnerships.

Step 1: Determine your needs

Identify what you want from the partnership. Identify what specific needs the partnership could meet.

Key Questions:

- What initiative activities do you need the partner to fulfill?
- Where are you having difficulty reaching goals and objectives?
- What activities could be sustained, expanded, or improved through partnership?

Step 2: List the organizations you seek to partner with

Identify which organizations you must partner with in order for your TTI to be successful, and those that make the most sense to partner with. You might consider writing this list in order of priority. You should also consider whether this list needs to be reviewed and approved by state leadership.

Key Questions:

- Which partners could help you better achieve TTI goals?
- Do they understand and support your TTI priorities?
- Do you have good relations with them?

Step 3: Discuss potential partner organizations with agency and state leadership

In considering agency and state leadership as a key ally in your efforts, share your list of potential partners with them for vetting. Ensure that there are not existing relationships or conflicts that you are not aware of. If partnerships already exist, seek guidance on how to navigate building partnerships around your TTI.

Key Questions:

- Are agency and state leaders aware of your TTI?
- Who within your agency or state leadership should review your list of potential partners?
- If agency and state leaders are on board with the TTI goals, might they be bridges to potential partner organizations?
- Can you create a specific timeline for review of this list, in order to move forward with your partnership development efforts in a timely manner?

Step 4: Research the organizations

Learn as much as you can about the organizations and get familiar with what they do and how they do it. Seek to understand what the partners want and think about how your agency and your TTI could provide them support in acquiring it.

Key Questions:

- Has the organization been involved with a similar initiative in the past?
- Does the organization have key leaders, both formal and informal?
- What is the capacity of this organization?
- Does it have resources to contribute?

Step 5: Determine their needs

Identify what the partner organization wants from the partnership. What needs could your partnership meet for them?

Key Questions:

- How could your TTI be beneficial to your partner, both in the long term and short term?
- What activities of the partner organization could your initiative improve or expand?
- How could individuals within the partner organization benefit from your TTI?
- What resources can you provide to the partner?

Step 6: Identify contacts

Identify the most appropriate key contacts within each organization. These should be individuals who have particular influence over the success of your initiative and your target audience, whether formal or informal leaders.

Key Questions:

- Who influences the individuals who will be necessary to fulfilling your initiative's goals?
- Do you have a strong contact at the organization who would be willing to introduce your TTI to the organization's decision-makers?

Step 7: Begin your outreach

As part of the initial outreach, ensure the partnership is beneficial to both you and the potential organization. Determine what's in it for you and them.

Key Questions:

- Is the potential partner familiar with your initiative?
- Is it clear to the potential partner what the benefits are for them?

Step 8: Make a clear and specific “ask”

Your goal is to arrange a face-to-face meeting if possible, where you can state your case and secure the potential partner’s support. Focus on achieving realistic, mutually beneficial goals. Initially aim for small wins.

Key Questions:

- What needs does the partner have?
- How could the TTI potentially address those needs and benefit the organization?
- What resources can the partner contribute?

Step 9: Follow up

A week later, follow up with the partner to check the status of the potential partnership. Be prepared to give your pitch again. Be clear about what you want the partner to do for you. Be flexible and listen to what the partner may want.

Key Questions:

- How can I help the partner overcome barriers to helping us achieve our TTI goals?
- What is the benefit to the partner/organization of helping us achieve our TTI goals?
- How will your program create a mutually beneficial initiative?

Step 10: Come to an agreement and put it in writing

Come prepared with good information on benefits to their organization, strategies to overcome barriers, and other things the partner might want to know. Listen to what the partner wants in return. Decide how your initiative can create a mutually beneficial relationship.

Key Questions:

- What are the expectations of each partner?
- Have you established a timeline for the partnership?
- Are all roles of the partnership clearly defined?

Step 11: Maintain and nurture the partnership

Build trust between the partners. Trust is achieved by the follow-through of what has said will be done and what actually is done. Keep the lines of communication open. Respect boundaries and always value the time and resources of the partner. Express gratitude to the partner. Be prepared to compromise to assist the partner in overcoming barriers and to enhance benefits.

Key Questions:

- What is the preferred mode and frequency of communication?
- Are you continuing to build trust with your new partner?
- Are you keeping lines of communication open?