



Prevention Collaboration in Action

Identifying Needs and
Opportunities for Collaboration

Taking a Health Equity Approach to Identifying New Partners

Community partners are key to the success of prevention efforts: they bring specialized knowledge, access to critical resources, insight into the priorities and values of priority populations, as well as knowledge of the health challenges these groups may face.

When deciding which organizations, agencies, or individuals to cultivate as partners, we tend to weigh most heavily the technical and fiscal resources new partners can bring to the table.

Partnership identification through a health equity “lens” requires us to think more broadly about the knowledge, experiences, and resources we seek in new partners, and to focus more intently on those attributes and experiences that will allow us to most effectively meet the needs of populations most at risk for substance misuse and related behavioral health problems. It means rethinking what we hope to “gain” from our partnerships. And it means ensuring that the voice of these populations is present in our decision-making, and that our organizations and coalitions reflect the diversity of our communities.

This worksheet is designed to help you identify and recruit new partners through a health equity lens.

STEP 1: ASSESS CURRENT NEEDS

Consider these questions:

- **How are you defining “capacity”?** Broadening our definition of capacity helps us see and appreciate the contributions of people with skills and experiences that are different from our own. Consider your current definition. What capacities are you prioritizing? Now re-define capacity through a health equity lens. What new capacities are important?
- **Where are your gaps?** Consider your current partnerships. Which of the “new” capacities that you’ve identified do these partners possess?

- **What new capacities might new partners bring?** Will they provide you with better representation? Insight into the cultural values of a specific population, or substance-related norms? Do they have lived experience? Can they help you leverage opportunities to engage members of your focus population(s)? Think creatively about how your partnerships can facilitate the meaningful engagement, participation, and leadership of diverse individuals and groups in your community.
- **Are there resources you need to make your prevention efforts more equitable?** For example, would coalition members benefit from training on addressing health disparities or developing cultural humility? Could a new partner collaborate with you to develop and provide those opportunities?

STEP 2: COMPLETE THE CHART

Using your responses from Step 1, follow these steps to complete the chart on the next page:

- First, **record** the prevention resource gaps you need to fill.
- Next, **list** potential partners who might fill those gaps.
- **Describe** additional prevention resources each partner might also provide.
- Outline the **benefits** each partner may experience by joining the collaboration. This will help to ensure that all partners receive some benefit in exchange for their efforts. Work to ensure that each partner “gets” as much as they give.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY WHICH PARTNERS TO CONTACT FIRST

Once completed, use your chart to prioritize which partners to contact first. This strategic approach will maximize the effectiveness of your outreach efforts and ensure that your time and energy are invested wisely.

When prioritizing, think about what you know about the partner’s level of readiness to collaborate. Try to avoid making assumptions. Consider having a preliminary conversation with potential partners to gauge their readiness to engage, and to learn about any barriers that might stand in the way.

Potential Partner	Capacity Gap Filled	Other Value Added (to You)	Value Added (to Partner)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			