LIP LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

WEST DOWNTOWN TORONTO

PACKAGE ONE

Working Together: Sample Policy and Backgrounder

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Novita

Novita Interpares Limited

1110 Yonge Street, Suite 200
Toronto ON M4W 2L6

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1.0 OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES AND FRAMEWORK

The following framework provides a range of resources to support your organization's work in understanding, assessing and formalizing partnerships/collaborative working relationships.

The resources have been organized to start with the Governance documents and policy and then provide additional resources to inform discussion and the development of a Collaboration Culture in your organization including:

- Defining levels of working together
- Sample Checklist to Assess and Approve Potential Partnerships
- Sources and Additional Reading

2.0   GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

What They Say about Working with Other Organizations

Each organization needs to develop governance and organizational policies on collaborative activities and community partnerships that reflect the values, structure and culture of their organization.

The following sample governance policy statement is based on the understanding that Board of Directors of nonprofit and charitable organizations have eight responsibilities to ensure effective governance:

- Steering toward the mission and guiding strategic planning
- Being transparent including communicating to members, stakeholders and the public and making information available upon request
- Developing appropriate structures
- Ensuring the board understands its roles and avoids conflicts of interest
- Maintaining fiscal responsibility
- Ensuring an effective management team is in place and overseeing its activities (recognizing this varies by size and structure of each organization)
- Implementing assessment and control systems
- Planning for the succession and diversity of the board

(Source: The Broadbent Report, 1999)

Based on these responsibilities, the board of an organization will want to ensure it has a policy framework that guides partnerships and collaborative work within its governing framework and policies.

The Sample Checklist for assessing and approving potential partnerships provides a framework that allows the board to know there is a structured process within the organization: that a series of questions and issues, including risk identification, is reviewed prior to entering into a formal partnership, and that the appropriate authorization is sought (including the Board of Directors).

Tools and resources

The following has been provided to support your organization's development of policies and tools for assessing your collaborative activities and community partnerships:

- Sample Policy
- Schedule A – Levels of Working Together and Organizational/Decision Making Implications
- Schedule B – Working Together Inventory

Sample Policy

To Be Developed and Approved by The Board of Directors

NAME OF ORGANIZATION is committed to developing and fostering a Collaboration Culture. We often work through a range of collaborative activities or community partnerships to ensure that we are responding to the needs of our community in the most effective and comprehensive ways.

This policy is designed to support NAME OF ORGANIZATION in understanding existing relationships and collaborations, facilitating the exploration of new collaborations and defining for Board and Staff members when Board input and approval is required.

We have a range of informal and formal cooperative and collaborative activities and/or community partnership relationships that may include (See Schedule A – Levels of Working Together):

- Information Sharing or Networking (Level 1)
- Service Cooperation, including Referrals (Level 2)
- Collaborative Planning &/or Shared Resources (Level 3)
- Joint Program Delivery &/or Back Office Integration (Level 4)
- Mergers and Amalgamations (Level 5)

Recognizing that collaborative activities and community partnerships can sometimes involve risk, our organization has a process for assessing when it is appropriate for these arrangements to remain informal and organic, and when there is a need for more formal partnership agreements and documentation.   Time is given within the organization to support and facilitate our collaborative activities while being aware of and managing any risks that may be involved.

MONITORING AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

Example: The Board of Directors reviews the Organizational Working Together Inventory that has been prepared by the staff on at least an annual basis as part of its Board Meeting Agenda (See Schedule B – Working Together Inventory).

The Working Together Organizational Implications document provides senior management with a guide for determining when Board input and/or approval is required.

The organizational implications are looked at through the following 4 components:

- Vision and relationships

- Structure, responsibility and communication

- Authority and accountability

- Resources and rewards

SCHEDULE A: Levels of Working Together

WORKING TOGETHER – SCOPE AND TYPES				
LOWER INTENSITY (risk, time needed, opportunity) ⟵————————⟶				**HIGHER INTENSITY**
LEVEL 1 **Information Sharing or Networking**	**LEVEL 2** **Service Cooperation, including Referrals**	**LEVEL 3** **Collaborative Planning &/or Shared Resources**	**LEVEL 4** **Joint Program Delivery &/or Back Office Integration**	**LEVEL 5** **Mergers and Amalgamations**
• Informal relationships that exist without any commonly defined mission, structure or planning effort • Communications and information sharing (e.g. Networks) • Community development • Consultative – Expert advice given from one professional to another	• Service cooperation (e.g. referral relationship, networks that hold service events, training, informal itinerant services, donated service space, minimal sharing of resources) • Share information regarding a Client • Organizations voluntarily take on needed roles but function relatively independently of each other • Some project-specific planning	• More formal relationships and understanding of compatible mission • Collaborative planning/decision making (e.g. participate in planning, make and implement decisions about program delivery, evaluate services) • Organizations formally agree to take on needed roles and function collaboratively (e.g., formal itinerant services) • Lead for collaborative funding proposals/projects (e.g. receive and account for funds, distribute funds, engage staff) • Partners pool and/or jointly secure resources and share the results, risks, and rewards	• Joint program delivery (e.g. frontline service delivery, such as the Parkdale Youth Space Collaborative) • Service integration • Back office integration (behind the scenes services – e.g. payroll, HR management, information technology, development) • Donor/funder partnerships • Public/private collaborations • Must have formal partnership arrangements	• Mergers and amalgamations – the most integrated form of cooperation
		Systems change (multi-sectoral, mandate is targeted system-wide)	A more durable relationship – brings participants into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission	

NOTE: Collaborative activities or projects can involve more than one level at the same time.
Decision-making or approvals should be based on the highest level of collaboration involved in the activity
or project.

SCHEDULE B: Working Together Inventory

WORKING TOGETHER INVENTORY – [*ORGANIZATION'S NAME*]		
DATE: (could speak to review period – e.g. anniversary)		
LEVEL	**Our work in these various areas:**	**Organizational questions/issues/implications to review (discuss with Board in annual review)**
LEVEL 1 Information Sharing or Networking		
LEVEL 2 Service Cooperation, including Referrals		
LEVEL 3 Collaborative Planning &/or Shared Resources		
LEVEL 4 Joint Program Delivery &/or Back Office Integration		
LEVEL 5 Mergers and Amalgamations		

3.0 COMMON WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT WORKING TOGETHER

There are different options for organizations to work together. Some options provide for greater autonomy while others lead to greater integration.

Working together can be everything from informal networking to participation in membership organizations to the creation of umbrella groups or coalitions. It can mean even closer arrangements such as sharing premises and facilities by buying product or services together as well as joint ventures, joint research, joint training, joint programming, and joint fundraising.

And sometimes charities and nonprofit groups will look at the most integrated form of working together – amalgamation, merger, or consolidation.

(Based on an article by Mark Blumberg for The Philanthropist – Vol.22/No. 1 – Mergers and Amalgamations in the Canadian Nonprofit and Charitable Sector)

The following provides a series of frameworks to guide your organization's work in understanding the type of partnership you are involved in.

This will allow you to determine the approach to the working relationship and whether an agreement is required.

STEPS IN THE PROCESS

The following steps are put forward as a way to think through and monitor ways that the organization works together:

- At the Board and staff levels, review and discuss the charts that provide an overview of the range of ways that organizations can work together (Schedule A and Table #1)
- Review, develop and approve the Board Policy template – this should include how often this policy is reviewed and monitored (e.g. annual review of partnerships and organizational implications)
- Use the template (Schedule B) to complete an inventory of the range of ways your organization currently works in partnership
- As you move forward in thinking about ways of working together, use the sample checklist/worksheet (Table #2) to guide discussion and assessment within your organization

TABLE #1: Levels of Working Together and Organizational/Decision Making Implications

THINKING ABOUT WORKING TOGETHER – ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS					
	→				
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS	LEVEL 1 Information Sharing and/or Networking	LEVEL 2 Service Cooperation, including Referrals	LEVEL 3 Collaborative Planning and/or Shared Resources	LEVEL 4 Joint Program Delivery and/or Back Office Integration	LEVEL 5 Mergers and Amalgamations
	ADVISING BOARD →		BOARD APPROVAL AND AUTHORIZATION →		
Vision and Relationships	• Basis for cooperation is usually between individuals but may be mandated by a third party • Organizational missions and goals are not taken into account • Interaction is on an as needed basis, may last indefinitely		• Individual relationships are supported by the organizations they represent • Missions and goals of the individual organizations are reviewed for compatibility • Interaction is usually around one specific project or task of definable length • Commitment of the organizations and their leaders is fully behind their representatives • Common, new mission and goals are created • One or more projects are undertaken for longer-term results		
Structure, Responsibilities and Communication	• Relationships are informal; each organization functions separately • No joint planning is required • Information is conveyed as needed • Organizations involved voluntarily take on needed roles, but function relatively independently of each other		• Organizations involved formally agree to take on needed roles, and function collaboratively • Some project-specific planning is required • Communication roles are established and definite channels are created for interaction	• New organizational structure and/or clearly defined and interrelated roles that constitute a formal division of labour are created • More comprehensive planning is required that includes developing joint strategies and measuring success in terms of impact on the needs of those served • Beyond communication roles and channels for interaction, many "levels" of communication are created as clear information is a keystone of success	

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS	LEVEL 1 Information Sharing and/or Networking	LEVEL 2 Service Cooperation, including Referrals	LEVEL 3 Collaborative Planning and/or Shared Resources	LEVEL 4 Joint Program Delivery and/or Back Office Integration	LEVEL 5 Mergers and Amalgamations
Authority and Accountability	• Authority rests solely with individual organizations • Leadership is unilateral and control is central • All authority and accountability rests with the individual organization which acts independently		• Authority rests with the individual organizations, but there is coordination among participants • Some sharing of leadership and control • There is some shared risk, but most of the authority and accountability falls to the individual organizations	• Authority is determined by the collaboration to balance ownership by the individual organizations with expediency to accomplish purpose • Leadership is dispersed, and control is shared and mutual • Equal risk is shared by all organizations in the collaboration	
Resources and Rewards	• Resources (staff time, dollars, and capabilities) are separate, serving the organization's needs	• Resources are acknowledged and can be made available to others for a specific project • Rewards are mutually acknowledged		• Resources are pooled or jointly secured for a longer-term effort that is managed by the collaborative structure • Organizations share in the products; more is accomplished jointly than could have been individually	
DEGREE/TYPE OF FORMALIZATION AND APPROVALS					
	• Usually between individual organizations • Work is on an as-needed basis • No formal agreement • Staff facilitates this with relevant managers	• May have Terms of reference or letter of understanding that guides work & commitments • Staff develop in consultation with supervisor or supervisor-led NOTE: will vary based on delegation of financial and signing authority	• Terms of reference, letter of agreement or joint proposal that speaks to commitments (e.g. purchase of service, lease/space agreement, etc.) • Supervisor developed in consultation with management or management-led • May include legal review in limited circumstances	• Joint working/formal agreements and commitments • Legal counsel may be involved (varies by scope of work and partners involved) • Led by and/or developed with senior management	• Formal agreements • Legal counsel involved • Board approval of exploration (e.g. principle) and negotiations • May involve organizational/ general membership (dependent on by-laws)

NOTE: Funder involvement and role will vary by issue/scope of undertaking

TABLE #2: Sample Checklist to Assess & Approve Potential Partnerships

Overview

The following checklist (or worksheet) can be used as a formal assessment tool to be completed in writing and/or as a guide for discussions within your organization.

Some things to consider:

- The questions are intended to allow organizations to assess the ways that they are working with other organizations, level of complexity and whether and what type of written documentation is required (e.g. as you move into Levels 3-5).

- Partnerships vary in terms of levels of complexity. For more in-depth partnerships, there are more steps/questions to address.

- **For the Board of Directors**, it is important to know that staff has a formal process they use to assess potential partnerships and the implications and opportunities for the organization.

- Based on the assessment and policy framework of the organization, senior leadership will know when they need to seek the input, direction and/or approval of the Board of Directors (e.g. organizational and/or cost implications)

- **Need for Agreement -** the following questions will assist staff/senior leadership in determining the need for and nature of an agreement (Please see Package 2).

- Customize the document to reflect your specific organization and decision-making structures and processes.

- After reviewing and discussing the range of questions to be considered, partnerships can identify the terms and conditions needed to guide the work (Working with the Agreement Template).

SAMPLE CHECKLIST TO ASSESS AND APPROVE POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS	
FRAMING QUESTIONS	**NOTES**
First questions you need to ask and consider:	
• What are you hoping to achieve by partnering with another organization/s? • Are you sure collaborative working is the best way to achieve your goals? • Does the Board of Directors and/or Senior Leadership team support the idea? • Does it fit within your organization's charitable objects and purpose?	
Will collaboration add value?	
• Will it add value – which justifies the time, effort, funds expended? • Does the partnership align with our organization's goals, vision and strategic directions? • Will there be measurable benefits? • Will the structure of your organization be affected – need to change, and if so how will you deal with the needed changes? • Will there be cost savings for your organization? • Will collaboration affect your current funding and finances? • Will collaboration change your existing relationships?	
Who to involve?	
This will vary with the type of project and partnership – determine: • Who needs to be involved at each stage of decision-making • Who will lead and manage the process for your organization • Will you require external expertise/resources?	
Potential partners?	
Whether you know the potential partner or not it is still worth asking key questions to assume your understanding of the organization are correct. • Working relationship and history • Compatibility • Organizational culture	
Risk assessment and due diligence?	
Due diligence and risk assessment (sometimes referred to as full disclosure) is a process by which potential partner organizations disclose relevant information – e.g. legal, financial, operational liabilities. • Determine the level of disclosure based on the size and nature of the partnership • Determine the professional expertise required (e.g. legal)	

Also need to consider: • Intellectual property rights and copyright • Compliance regarding data collection • Possible relocation of work/activities • Staff changes	
Financing your collaboration Working collaboratively takes time and resources • What are the financial implications for the partnership? If yes, does it fall into delegated authority? What will the financial contribution be assigned to? • Are there resources to support the work and planning? How will funding/finances related to the partnership going to be managed – is there a lead organization? What is the accountability to funder/s?	
Organizational impact?	
Need to think about the impact of collaboration on your organization – quality, efficiency, and effectiveness • Opportunity costs • Risk management • Regular review, monitoring, evaluation	
Public relations Need to manage your public profile/brand/reputation	
Staffing Need to clarify roles and responsibilities of all parties (e.g. staff, volunteers) How you will deal with conflict Potential training, new procedures and systems	

Level of formalization
• The agreement should reflect the nature and context of the partnership, and strive to mitigate potential risk/liability issues for the organization.
  • The agreement should be proportionate to the level of risk in your collaboration and the resources you will invest – the greater the risk, the more formal your agreement needs to be
• What level of sign off is required for this agreement based on your organizational structure – use following chart to develop
  • Does your organization or the partner organization require an agreement (or not) for this type of partnership?
• Do legal advisors need to be involved in reviewing the agreement?	

Note: For a fuller discussion of the issues to consider in mergers and amalgamations, see the following article available on line: Mergers and Amalgamations in the Canadian Nonprofit and Charitable Sector *Mark Blumberg, Blumberg Segal LLP, Toronto, Ontario* *The Philanthropist/Vol 22./No.1* www.thephilanthropist.ca *(downloadable for free)* Note P. 6 regarding Merger Issues and Steps and P. 18 regarding tips.	

NEXT STEPS:

SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL READING

West Downtown Local Immigration Partnership – Partnerships and Collaborations
Final Report, July 2011
Public Interest Strategy and Communications Inc.

Collaborative Working: Partnership between voluntary organizations
NCVO

Joint Working Agreements: Developing agreements between voluntary or community organizations
NCVO

Collaborative Agreements
Ontario Trillium Foundation (www.trilliumfoundation.org)

Strengthening Collaboration in Ontario's Not-for-Profit Sector
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Ontario Nonprofit Network Research Team, July 2010

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory - Assessing Your Collaboration's Strengths and Weaknesses
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, US, 2001

St. Stephen's Community House Partnership Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding
V.4 and Partnership Definitions
October 2008, Toronto

Mount Sinai Hospital Checklist for Partnership Agreements and Community Partnership Policy Worksheet
Sourced from West Downtown Local Immigration Partnership Partnerships and Collaboration Final Report, July 2011, Appendix B

Mergers and Amalgamations in the Canadian Nonprofit and Charitable Sector
Mark Blumberg, Blumberg Segal LLP, Toronto, Ontario
The Philanthropist/Vol. 22/No 3
www.thephilanthropist.ca

Integration: A Range of Possibilities
The Health Planner's Toolkit
Health System Intelligence Project
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2007

Strengthening the Back Office: A report on back office collaboration among community mental health and addiction service providers in Ontario
Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario, July 2009