

What Makes a Good Partnership?

Partnerships with community agencies are formal, long-term relationships founded on collaboration and the clear articulation of needs, capacities, responsibilities and expectations. Regular communication and evaluation and equal say in the design and implementation of projects are its defining features. Most campus service directors agree that partnerships with community agencies are more valuable (and labor intensive) than simple placement arrangements. Partnerships entail making a commitment to the agency, relinquishing control over aspects of the program and accepting new responsibilities.¹

Guiding Principles

- Partners agree on the mission, values, goals and measurable outcomes for the partnership.
- The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness and commitment.
- The partnership builds on identified strengths and assets, but also addresses areas that need improvement.
- The partnership balances power among partners and assures that resources among partners be shared.
- There is clear, open, regular and accessible communication between partners. Listening to each need, developing a common language, and validating/clarifying the meaning of terms are ongoing priorities.
- Roles, responsibilities, and procedures for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners.
- All stakeholders in the partnership provide regular feedback, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
- Partners share the credit for the partnership's accomplishments.
- Partnerships take time to develop and evolve.

¹ Kopek, Tamar. *Rethinking Tradition: Integrating Service with Academic Study on College Campuses*. Campus Compact. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 1993. p 113.