

HANGING TOGETHER: CAPACITY BUILDING AND COLLABORATION IN TOUGH TIMES

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What Science Says About Sustaining Community Collaborations

- 1 - Encourage the collaboration to evolve, responding to the changing community environment.
- 2 - Look at costs and benefits of collaborating over the long haul, including evaluation when appropriate (qualitative evaluation - using interviews, focus groups, case studies and critical incidents - can provide much useful input at less cost than empirical evaluations).
- 3 - Plan ahead for sustainability - a three-year sustainability plan can be of great value.
- 4 - Look at new collaboration members in terms of positive and negative energies they bring - for instance, people come to any new collaboration burdened by any negative experiences they've had with them in the past.
- 5 - Be realistic about "collaboration fatigue" - people complain about spending half their lives in various collaboration meetings; honest discussion and adjustments can help.

Resources

- Backer, T.E. (Ed.) (2003). *Evaluating community collaborations*. New York: Springer.
- Backer, T.E. & Norman, A.J. (2000). Partnerships and community change. *California Politics and Policy*, 39-44. (Copies available through www.humaninteract.org)
- Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith, M. & Somerville, I. (Eds.) (1999). *Leading beyond the walls: How high-performing organizations collaborate for shared success*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Linden, R. (2002). *Working across boundaries: Making collaboration work in government and nonprofit organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mattessich, P.W. & Monsey, B.R. (1992). *Collaboration: What makes it work*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.
- Ray, K. (2002). *The nimble collaboration: Fine-tuning your collaboration for lasting success*. Minneapolis: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.
- Winer, M. & Ray, K. (1994). *Collaboration handbook: Creating, sustaining and enjoying the journey*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

Individual Donors - New Approaches to Fundraising in Tough Times

Increasingly, in today's tight-resources environment, nonprofits are turning to individual donors to support them. Individual donors may be identified through:

- the nonprofit's board members (sometimes a board member may be a donor also)
- database search for both past and present donors, to identify contacts where there might be some special interest in a particular aspects of the nonprofit's mission (in this case, a donor interested in community collaborations and community-wide work)
- approach to donor advisors (private bankers, wealth managers, trust attorneys, etc.), to engage them in approaching donors on behalf of the nonprofit. This may be done, for instance, by asking the nonprofit's own bank relationship manager to make an introduction to the private banking side of the institution).

Resources

Backer, T.E. (2008). *Donor advisors and philanthropic strategy*. Encino, CA: Human Interaction Research Institute. (Free copies available by e-mailing hirila@aol.com)

Foundation Support for Capacity Building

Among the local foundations that have funded capacity building for nonprofits, and may respond positively to a well-framed proposal for specific capacity building activities or for operating support, are:

- * The California Endowment
- * The California Wellness Foundation
- * California Community Foundation
- * Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation
- * Weingart Foundation

More information on these and other foundations supporting capacity building are in the *Resource Directory for Nonprofit Capacity Building in Los Angeles County*.

Resources

Resource Directory for Nonprofit Capacity Building in Los Angeles County. 2008 Edition. A free copy may be downloaded from Valley Nonprofit Resources, www.valleynonprofitresources.org.