

Tips for Resource Sharing with Like-Minded Organizations

Like-minded organizations exist throughout the world. Larger organizations typically have valuable resources, including a website, email systems, phone systems, mail boxes, established communication strategies like a newsletter or brochure, and constituents that they may be willing to share with you. In addition, larger organizations have “brand power.” This means they have established name-recognition within the community. When you are just starting out as a team or organization, it can be very helpful to utilize the “brand power” of another like-minded organization to launch your own promotion.

This document offers some tips for sharing administrative resources, and/or communication or promotion resources with other like-minded organizations. While it is intended for new organizations or teams who may lack resources or funds of their own, resource-sharing can be an effective strategy for any team.

TIP #1: IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

- Use the “Developing Team or Organization Goals and Objectives” in the Community Development Toolkit to get your group started.
- Once established, analyze which goals you can achieve on your own, and which goals and objectives you may achieve more easily by sharing resources with another like-minded organization.

TIP #2: BRAINSTORM YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS.

- Brainstorm a list of the specific administrative functions or resources your team would like to have in place, including a phone line, website, email addresses, mail box, office space, etc. Next, link each of these functions/resources to the specific needs that would be met by having them available.
- Finally, check each function/resource that your group is unable to obtain on your own, either because of financial constraints, or volunteer skills.

TIP #3: RESEARCH OTHER AREA LIKE-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS.

- Using the internet, phone book and connections established by your volunteers, identify a few organizations that may have the administrative resources, brand power, and most importantly, similar values and mission as your group.
- Once you’ve identified one or two organizations that you believe are a good match, research them thoroughly. It’s important to clearly understand the function of the organization you wish to partner with, as well as any organizational problems the group may be experiencing. If any red flags come up during your research (such as financial or organizational troubles), you may decide to pursue another group.

TIP #4: MEET WITH THE ORGANIZATION TO BRAINSTORM OPTIONS.

- Contact the organization and schedule a meeting with the organizational leader, public affairs director, or other key staff. Explain to the individual the nature of the conversation you'd like to have – to discuss options for forming a strategic partnership with the organization that is mutually satisfying.
- When you meet with the organization, it's important to come prepared. Research the organization thoroughly, and come ready to share some key points about why you think your group and theirs have a very similar mission. In addition, come prepared to provide a clear description of your group. At a minimum, bring a fact sheet that outlines the mission, goals/objectives of your group, and outlines the services you provide to the community. Be prepared to leave a copy of this information with the person you meet.

TIP #5: ESTABLISH CLEAR REQUESTS.

- The nature of your requests may arise during the first meeting you have with the organization you wish to partner with. However, it would be very helpful if your group had a general idea of what requests you'll have for the organization. Consider writing up a general proposal that outlines your requests very clearly. For instance: "We request to have our organization name, phone number and email address listed on your website;" or "We request to house a mailbox in your main building, so we are able to accept mail."

Below is a list of possible requests you may have:

- A voicemail box / phone line that your team can answer remotely
- A mailbox housed in the organization's building
- Legal partnership, so your group can utilize the organization's 501(c)(3) nonprofit status (U.S.) when applying for grants
- A small, consistent space in the organization's printed or e-newsletter where you can share information about your group
- Use of office space, such as a single desk and phone for administrative functions
- Use of office space to house an NVC lending library
- Use of the organization's promotion mailing lists, including lists of customers and constituents