

TOOL

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WHAT WORK CAN WE DO TOGETHER?

Determining partnership focus areas

What kinds of programs can you create with a partner? Lots, because community organizations are active in many different sectors and provide many different services. This tool lists the wide range of focus areas these organizations have expertise in. With it, you can make decisions about what you want your partnerships to focus on.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

After using this tool, you should be able to identify:

A

The topical focus of your programs and partnerships

B

Any gaps between desired areas of community impact and current programs / partnerships

C

Any areas where the library should seek to expand or grow partnerships

Partnership Focus Areas

“Together, we focus on . . .”

INSTRUCTIONS: Check the boxes corresponding to your priorities. Remember that these areas overlap and you may not check all the boxes in each grouping.

Inclusion

Equity / Diversity / Access /

Belonging: Includes partners who work to promote inclusivity. Many partners integrate this focus into their work on other topics, but for some it may be their primary focus.



Bilingual / Multilingual Outreach: Includes partners serving bilingual or multilingual populations. Many partners integrate this focus into their work on other topics, but for some it may be their primary focus.

Engaged Communities

Information Literacy: Includes partners whose work aims to increase people’s skills in locating, evaluating and effectively using information, both digitally and non-digitally.

Civic Participation / Governance: Includes partners who work to increase community participation in decision-making processes, such as engaged citizenry and community justice organizations.



Financial Topics and Training

Workforce Readiness: Includes partners that provide programs, training, and other services to individuals and groups attempting to enter or re-enter the workforce.

Financial Capability: Includes partners who provide instruction and/or training in personal finance, business development, tax preparation, and other financial services.



Academic Success

Education: Includes partners who work in both classroom-based or out-of-school-time education, which may include education nonprofits, school districts, colleges/universities, and local or state Departments of Education.

STEM: Includes partners who focus on or work in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics.

Reading Skills: Includes partners who focus on improving literacy and developing reading capabilities.



Access to Services



- **Legal Services:** Includes partners with specialized expertise in law and legal services, including law firms, legal nonprofits, and providers of free legal services.
- **Health Services / Wellness:** Includes partners with formal expertise in health and health services, including hospitals, health care systems, and local or state health agencies, or other community-level health promoters. Also includes partners whose work seeks to improve community wellbeing, such as nutrition organizations or wellness education nonprofits.
- **Housing Services:** Includes partners that provide programs and services to combat or prevent the interrelated issues of poverty and homelessness. These may include public agencies and nonprofits who provide stable housing to unhoused or precariously housed individuals or offer services to help low-income individuals and families navigate the housing market.

Personal Enrichment & Lifelong Learning



- **Media/Entertainment:** Includes partners who work in any type of media industries, such as local TV stations, radio stations, film studios, publishers, news/social media outlets, etc., as well as those who work to improve media literacy, build digital skills or combat mis- or disinformation.
- **Culture / Arts / History / Humanities:** Includes partners doing work related to culture, arts, history, or humanities, such as museums, historical societies, and artist collectives.
- **Religion / Spirituality:** Includes partners whose work is geared toward religious groups or who provide programs and/or services in religion or spirituality.

Capacity-Building



- **Public Works:** Includes partners who work to build physical infrastructure like highways and parks or non-physical infrastructure like systems and protocols for disaster preparedness and recovery. Partners who work in this area may include local, state, or federal government agencies, fire departments, police departments, Parks & Recreation, the Red Cross or FEMA.
- **Environment / Sustainability:** Includes partners working toward increased sustainability and environmental protection, such as local parks, environmental agencies, or nonprofits.
- **Library Services:** Includes partners working in the library and information science fields, primarily other libraries or library systems.



CREATING A NEW PARTNERSHIP?

Some questions to consider:

What topics best reflect our community's needs, and are our current programs and partnerships addressing these?

What topics does the partner focus on, and are these reflective of community needs?

How might a partnership focusing on any of these topics help us deepen or expand the community impacts we're aiming for?



ASSESSING OR STRENGTHENING AN EXISTING PARTNERSHIP?

Think about the following questions.

You can discuss these questions in the context of your overall partnership strategy, or you can review individual partnerships. If you find that the topics your partners focus on are not very closely aligned with the impacts you're trying to have, this could also be a time for brainstorming around other community organizations you might more effectively collaborate with in order to achieve your goals.

Which of these topics does the partnership focus on?

Do these topics correspond with our community's needs? With programming strengths or gaps?

How are we making use of the partner's expertise in ways that align with our goals and desired community impacts?



PLANNING FOR YOUR LIBRARY'S FUTURE?

Ask yourself:

What topics does the partnership focus on?

What topics are community members most interested in?

If there are gaps between our current programs and what our community members want or need, how could a partnership help us fill these gaps?