# Community Partnership and Collaboration Guide

Build relationships and develop partnerships with other agencies in the community to augment library services and programs for those impacted by the economic downturn**.**

## Advantages of Collaboration

This list can be adapted and used as talking points when you reach out to potential partners.

- ☐ Avoid unnecessary duplication of effort or activity and conserve resources, expand services and programs; share training or meeting spaces, technology skills and costs.

- ☐ Make library services more visible and valued; ask collaborators to partner in marketing and promotions.

- ☐ Increase staff job satisfaction and a better understanding of roles in a broader perspective.

- ☐ Foster cooperation among multiple community partners; act as facilitator for regular meet-ups with other agencies.

- ☐ Disseminate local expertise and information through online sharing using blogs, discussion groups or other social networks.

- ☐ Foster political alliances.

- ☐ Work with local and state agencies to provide business development workshops and research.

- ☐ Leverage library's recognized brand and reputation: The library's enduring standards of inclusiveness and accessibility are valued by other partners. Businesses and organizations want to support specific causes and be public with their support to give their companies identifiable personalities, showing that they support the community and the people in it. Libraries can help them connect to customers, investors, employees and the community.

## Collaboration Strategies

- ☐ Start the conversation.

- ☐ Conduct a Community Leader Interview. Community interviews are a very effective technique for learning about the needs of your community and for developing relationships with other service providers. The technique is personal and informative and begins the process of building trust that is essential for successful collaboration. A useful guide was created as part of the Spanish Language Outreach Program: http://www.webjunction.org/materials/webjunction/Community_Leader_Interview_Guide.html

- ☐ Be ready to Tell the Library Story: http://www.webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/Marketing_Your_Library_to_Job_Seekers.html (Part of the Marketing Toolkit for Library Outreach to Job Seekers)

- ☐ Look locally for partners who will help make an impact. Collaborative efforts should center on finding an answer, making a difference or taking charge of a community issue.

☐ Focus on the cause and the people — whether it concerns literacy, economy, unemployment, etc. Be careful to not get caught up in focusing on how the individual organizations could benefit, but on what you can accomplish together to serve your community members.

☐ Specify shared goals and rewards that your partnerships will foster.

☐ Use open communication; share timetables and have periodic meetings to share information with your partners.

☐ Clearly define roles and responsibilities in any collaboration.

☐ Ensure the ability to make necessary decisions for situations that arise.

## Potential Partners for Collaboration

Start with this list but think outside the box to identify opportunities for new or renewed partnerships.

☐ Businesses/ Chambers of Commerce/Visitor's Bureaus (major employers, minority business owners, small business owners, human resource officers; city, county and ethnic chambers)

☐ Community Services Organizations/Associations/Clubs (AARP, AAUW, American Red Cross, Kiwanis, Lions, Literacy Organizations, Rotary, Soroptimists, United Way, VITA)

☐ Economic Development Organizations (economic development councils, real estate brokers, homebuyers agency, renters association, Service Corps Of Retired Executives (SCORE))

☐ Educational Organizations (community colleges, multilingual programs, PTA/PTO, school board, other libraries, private schools, home school organizations, higher education institutions/organizations, state/county extension office)

☐ Ethnic Organizations (Asian Resources Center, Hispanic centers, Inter-tribal Council, Urban League)

☐ Family Services Organizations (Social Services Department, Family Service Agency, Jewish  Family Service)

☐ Financial Representatives (banks, credit unions, financial planners, stockbrokers, consumer credit counseling services, certified public accountants, insurance agents)

☐ Government/Political Representatives (mayor, city council, county supervisors, city/county fiscal office, law enforcement eg. for understanding scams and ID theft,  treasury department, department of commerce, social security administration)

☐ Health Organizations (American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, hospitals, public health nurses, early intervention programs, public health clinics)

☐ Job/Workforce Service Agencies (OneStop, Department of Labor, Workforce center)

☐ Legal Organizations (ACLU, bar association, legal aid, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, fair housing)

☐ Media Representatives (newspaper, radio, TV, ethnic media, local magazines and newsletters)

☐ Miscellaneous Organizations (arts and cultural groups, athletic groups, censorship groups, historic preservation groups, local neighborhood groups, men's groups, veterans' groups, women's groups)

☐ Organizations fighting discrimination (Anti-Defamation League, human rights groups, NAACP)

☐ Organizations of/for People with Disabilities (center on deafness, council of the blind, health and

human services agencies, Easter Seals, Goodwill, independent living centers, United Cerebral Palsy)

☐ Organizations serving ex-offenders (Department of Corrections, Friends Outside)

☐ Organizations serving the homeless (food closet, homeless assistance program, Salvation Army)

☐ Refugee/Immigrant Centers/Services (Catholic Social Services, refugee rights association)

☐ Religious Organizations (church organizations, ministerial association)

☐ Senior Centers/Service Organizations (Area Agency on Aging, elder abuse/care agencies, RSVP)

☐ Technology Experts (computer clubs, consultants, community colleges, Internet providers, universities)

☐ Women's Centers/Service Organizations (battered women' shelters, YWCA, NOW)

☐ Youth Service Organizations (Big Brother/Sister, Boy Scouts, child abuse agencies, recreation programs, Girl Scouts, Jr. Achievement, Head Start, Even Start, child care associations, Association for the Education of Young Children, school age care and enrichment programs)

Excerpts from *Planning for Success Cookbook*, TechSoup for Libraries

# Potential Partners Worksheet

Use this worksheet to evaluate each potential partner.

| Partner #1 | |
|---|---|
| **Partner #2** | |

| Factors | Partner 1 | Partner 2 |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| **1.  Environment** | | |
| a.  A history of cooperation in the community | | |
| b.  The group is seen as a legitimate leader | | |
| c.  A favorable political and social climate | | |
| | | |
| **2.   Membership Characteristics** | | |
| a.  Mutual respect, understanding and trust | | |
| b.  Appropriate cross section of members | | |
| c.  Members recognize the benefit of the collaboration | | |
| d.  Members are able to compromise | | |
| | | |
| **3. Process and Structure** | | |
| a.  Members share a stake in both process and outcome | | |
| b.  Multiple layers of participation | | |
| c.  Flexibility | | |
| d.  Development of clear roles | | |
| e.  Adaptability | | |
| f.  Appropriate pace of development | | |
| | | |
| **4.   Communication** | | |
| a.  Open and frequent communication | | |
| b.  Established informal relationships and links | | |
| | | |
| **5.   Purpose** | | |
| a.  Concrete, attainable goals and objectives | | |
| b.  Shared vision | | |
| c.  Unique purpose | | |
| | | |
| **6. Resources** | | |
| a.  Sufficient funds, staff, materials and time | | |
| b.  Skilled leadership | | |

Collaboration: What Makes It Work, 2nd Edition, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation