

Building Partnerships to Support Inclusive National Service Activities

The National Service Inclusion Project can help your organization to expand your partnerships and leverage the support of the disability community to promote inclusive national service and volunteer opportunities. It's a win-win relationship! Your national service and volunteer projects can enhance the diversity of your program's service members and volunteers. At the same time, individuals with disabilities are offered a valuable option to contribute to their communities, earn a living allowance, obtain an education award and gain skills for future employment.

This guide is adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Build Partnerships to Support Immunization Activities"

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/planning.html#build> and broken down in to the following components:

- Identifying the Right Partners
- Establishing Partnerships
- Working with Partners
- Assessing and Strengthening your Partnership

Identifying the Right Partners

There are many options for the types of groups that you can partner and collaborate with to plan and implement your inclusive national service activities. These groups might include:

- ~ independent living centers
- ~ university centers for excellence in disability
- ~ family groups
- ~ consumer self-advocacy groups
- ~ ethnic- and faith-based organizations
- ~ vocational rehabilitation
- ~ commissions for blind and deaf/hard of hearing

Before you start choosing partners, consider the following questions to help you clarify your goals for partnership and criteria for selecting partners:

1. What shared goals can you work toward?
2. Can there be a mutual benefit?
3. What additional resources will help you achieve your objectives?
4. What types of partners can provide these resources?
5. How much time and resources can you allocate to managing partnerships?
6. What resources can you provide or share with partners?
7. What do you want in a partner?
8. What do you NOT want?

Here are two worksheets that can help you think through these questions:

1. Selection Criteria Worksheet
2. Identifying Partners Worksheet

Establishing Partnerships

Once you have identified a few potential partners, it is important to consider the following questions. The answers will help you to clarify the scope of collaboration, identify the benefits of the partnership, and help you decide whether pursuing the partnership is the best course of action.

For each potential partner:

- a) In what ways is their mission compatible with ours?
- b) In what ways will this partnership help us reach our inclusion objectives?
- c) In what way will this partnership help us reach our long-term vision ?
- d) What specific activities can we collaborate on? What would the role of partners be?
- e) What are potential barriers to partnership? How do we plan to overcome those barriers?
- f) What risks might this partnership involve? How do we mitigate those risks?

If your organization has decided to pursue potential partners, it will be useful to develop a plan for approaching each partner and gaining their commitment to work with you. This requires connecting with the right people, understanding their goals and needs, and fostering interest in collaboration.

Some things to include in this plan

- a) Contact information for Potential Partner
- b) Proposed scope of the partnership
- c) Any questions you might have for the potential partner about their mission, goals, activities, resources, past partnerships, etc.
- d) Background information on your department, organization or coalition
- e) Background information on your specific organization and/or project

Working with Partners

Once you have agreed to collaborate with a partner, it will be critical to have a clear understanding of what you plan to do and how you plan to do it.

Many states have a state based inclusion team which can serve as a forum for the disability community and the national service community to come together to work toward shared goals of inclusion. Inclusion teams provide a venue for the disability and national service communities to break down silos, identify common goals and then create a strategic plan to work toward those goals collaboratively. These type of partnerships set up elements that result in success including a structure for regular communication and information sharing;

agreement on shared goals for the partnership and; development of a work plan that details the tasks required to reach goals, who will complete them, and when they will be completed. This work plan should be regularly updated to serve as a tracking tool for the partnership.

Please see:

3. Sample Work Plan Template

Some partnerships involve administrative and financial coordination (for example, you may decide to plan events or administer programs together). In these cases, we recommend that you develop a Partnership Agreement that details goals of the partnership, roles of each partner, and how you will work together. (See 4. Partnership Agreement Template to help you).

Tips for Effective Partnerships

- ┆ Think creatively about how to work with non-national service and non-volunteer groups
- ┆ Establish commitment at the senior level
- ┆ Be clear about goals, roles, and how you will work together
- ┆ Foster trust and respect among key players
- ┆ Maintain regular and open communications
- ┆ Manage expectations – do not promise anything you cannot deliver
- ┆ Understand and respect differences in organizational culture
- ┆ Deal with conflict openly, honestly, and in a timely manner
- ┆ Celebrate and acknowledge joint accomplishments

Assessing and Strengthening Your Partnership

Successful partnerships require regular assessment of the partnership to identify barriers to progress and areas for improvement – as well as to celebrate achievements.

There are four basic questions your coalition and its partners should ask themselves:

1. How is the partnership working?
2. What can we do to strengthen the partnership?
3. Are we meeting our partnership and project goals?
4. What (else) do we need to do to meet our goals?

Also see:

5. Assessing Partnership Process: Checking your Progress and 6. Check Your Progress: Meeting Partnership Outcomes to help you think through the various aspects of working together and achieving shared goals.

Adapted from documents found on the CDC website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/>

1. Inclusion Team Partnership Selection Criteria Examples

Self-Assessment Questions	Criteria	Indicator	Rationale
What do we want in a partner?	Directly supports individuals with disabilities in our communities	Organization/Program location Description of beneficiaries/clients	By partnering with this type of organization, our group/coalition will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - expand its reach to engage individuals with disabilities - gain access, credibility, and the trust of the disability community - learn about their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward national service - collaborate to address identified barriers and challenges to individuals with disabilities engaging in national service
What do we not want in a partner?	Values, mission and activities that do not support our values and philosophy	Segregated programs and activities that involve only people with disabilities	This type of partner would not complement our stated mission of full inclusion.
Do we have money to support partnership activities? If so, how much and what are the requirements for the partners?	Active onsite involvement and participation	Attendance in at least one annual team retreat	Onsite annual meeting needed for team review of and potential modification of strategic plan
Other:			

This document is adapted from Partnership Selection Criteria Worksheet can be found on the CDC website at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niw/>

1. Inclusion Team Partnership Selection Criteria Worksheet

Self-Assessment Questions	Criteria *	Indicator *	Rationale *
What do we want in a partner?			-
What do we not want in a partner?			
Do we have money to allocate towards these partners? If so, how much and what are the requirements for the partners?			
Other:			

This document is adapted from Partnership Selection Criteria Worksheet can be found on the CDC website at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niw/>

2. Identifying Partners Worksheet with Examples

Types of resources or benefits to be gained from partners	What do you need to achieve your Objective? (For each category that applies, be specific. Examples in italics.)	Who might be able to provide this?	On-going partner or Short Term Request?
Services	Accessibility program assessments	Independent Living Centers	
Information	Alternative format materials	Commission for Blind	
Funding/in-kind	Assistive tech library as source to try accommodations	Tech Act Agency/Easter Seals	
Volunteers	Sighted guides at our state conferences and fairs	Boys and Girls Club	
Facilities	Accessible Meeting and conference rooms	Conference/mtg space at UCEDDs	
Access/Reach in specific communities	Ties with developmental disabilities community and Vietnamese families	ARC and Vietnamese Family Support Group with disabilities	
Visibility	Outreach to disability community	Alum with disability from Independent Living Center	
Experts	Disability specialists, PTSD, TBI to provide training	State affiliate, Brain Injury Association of America	
Influence	Champions/influence among disability community	Vocational rehab commissioner/ NSIP national partner directors	
Other (e.g. share staff)			

Identifying Partners Worksheet is adapted from documents found on the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niw/>

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3. Implementing Your Plan Template

Main Focus Area:			
Objective:			
Task	Due Date	Person/ Subcommittee Responsible	Status Notes

This sample is adapted from Work Plan Template on the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niw/>

D. Resources

We will each provide the following resources: [for example, amount of funds, staff time, printed materials]

Lead Partner: _____ Partner: _____

Additionally, we will jointly pursue the following funding opportunities: [for example, foundation grants, government awards, corporate sponsorships]

E. Monitoring Plan

We will review the partnership every [number] months in the following ways: [list ways in which progress will be monitored]

We will make adjustments to this partnership, including revising this agreement, as necessary based on these reviews.

F. Communications

1. Internal

In recognition of the importance of maintaining open communications among the partners, we agree to the following protocol: [i.e. monthly meetings, weekly conference calls, regular e-mail communication]

2. External

In recognition of the need to appropriately represent the partnership, we agree to the following protocol: [outline who will serve as media contacts, process for sharing partnership information, etc.]

Signed

Representative for
Lead Partner

Representative for Partner

Title

Title

Date

Date

Adapted from Partnership Agreement Template found on the CDC website at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/>

5. Check Your Progress

Assessing the Partnership Process Worksheet

Questions to Consider	If not, what are some barriers to achieving this?	How can we address these barriers?
<p>1. Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a partnership agreement? Do all partners understand and respect this agreement? • Is there a clear plan for achieving shared goals? 		
<p>2. Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there senior level commitment to the partnership? • Is it clear who is responsible for the progress of the partnership? 		
<p>3. Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there regular systems of communications in place? • Is information passed on to all partners in a timely and transparent manner? • Is there a protocol for representing the partnership to the wider community? 		
<p>4. Decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a decision-making process in place? Do all partners follow this process? • Are decisions made openly and in a timely manner? • Are there significant conflicts between partners? Are they managed effectively? 		

Questions to Consider	If not, what are some barriers to achieving this?	How can we address these barriers?
<p>5. Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do partners participate equally in leadership and decision-making? • Do partners attend meetings and co-sponsored activities regularly? 		
<p>6. Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all partners contributing the resources agreed upon in the partnership agreement? • Are resources being used efficiently? • Are there resources still needed to achieve partnership goals? 		
<p>7. Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are meetings and activities being implemented according to plan? Are they effective? • Are there clear lines of accountability for implementing partnership activities? • Do partners participate equally in implementation of activities? 		
<p>8. Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there clear outcomes for the partnership outlined in the partnership agreement? • Is there regular monitoring of the partnership and its activities? 		

This document is adapted from Assessing the Partnership Process:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/>

National Resources



National Service Inclusion Project

www.serviceandinclusion.org

1 888 491 0326

nsip@umb.edu

The National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP) is a Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) training and technical assistance provider. Through comprehensive training, technical assistance, and product dissemination, NSIP strives to ensure meaningful service experiences for all Americans, regardless of their abilities. NSIP is a source for a wide variety of information related to disability inclusion. You can contact NSIP by phone or email with questions. Some of the services we provide to the field include:

Training – we provide both face-to-face and web-based trainings to help build the capacity of commissions and national service programs to be fully inclusive of members and volunteers with disabilities. To learn more about NSIP’s training offerings, see: <http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php?page=events>

Technical Assistance – NSIP provides TA to the field on a wide variety of disability inclusion related topics. You can ask questions via email, by phone or in person at any of our events. Many Disability Coordinators regularly contact us with questions or to seek advice. We’re always happy to provide you with resources and information!

National Events- Typically, NSIP conducts two national events a year, one in the winter and a pre-conference during the annual Conference on Volunteering and Service.

Resources on Service and Inclusion – you can find a wide variety of resources, including training resources on our website www.serviceandinclusion.org <<http://www.serviceandinclusion.org>> If you are looking for a resource on a specific topic, please contact us and we can send it your way.

You can also access resources produced by NSIP available on the internet and via our events including:

- NSIP has produced a variety of online courses that cover topics such as “Communicating with People with Disabilities”, “Physical and Programmatic Access”, and “Effective Communication, Alternative Formats and Web

Accessibility”. NSIP’s online courses can be found here:

<http://nationalserviceresources.org/online-courses>

- The Train the Trainer curriculum was developed to increase your capacity to capture and share promising practices, resources, and disability inclusion materials to actively engage individuals with disabilities in national service programs. The Companion Training Manual is designed to accompany the CNCS publication “Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs”.

The Inclusion Handbook is available online at

www.serviceandinclusion.org/ttt

- NSIP periodically hosts webinars and teleconferences that cover topics related to disability inclusion in national and community service. You can find an archive of webinars here:

http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php?page=conf_archive

- Inclusion Weeklies are briefs that address topics related to disability inclusion. You can receive the Inclusion Weekly and other email related to disability inclusion and national service by joining the CNCS Disability Listserv. To join, use this link:

http://lists.etr.org/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=disabilitylist



Corporation for National and Community Service

www.nationalservice.gov

The Corporation for National and Community Service publishes their Civil Rights / Equal Opportunity Requirements, policies and guidelines for all programs and projects funded or receiving service members under the 2009 Serve America Act.

- Grant Program Civil Rights Policy
- Non-Harassment Guidelines
- Acceptable Interview Questions
- Disability Law
- Accessibility Guidelines
- Non-Discrimination Guidelines
- Legal Responsibilities Presentation
- Part 1203 – Non-discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs
- Part 1232 – Non-discrimination on Basis of Handicap in Programs Receiving Federal Financial Assistance

These can be found on:

http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/funding/eo_requirements.asp



The Job Accommodation Network

www.askjan.org

800 526 7234

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a source of free, confidential guidance on accommodations and disability employment. JAN is a service provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

- JAN's toll free number (listed above) is a great resource when determining reasonable accommodation. You can call and talk to an expert who will help you through the accommodation process.
- When working with an individual to determine what accommodation is appropriate, JAN's "A-Z of Disabilities and Accommodations" can be very helpful: <http://askjan.org/links/atoz.htm>



Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

www.eeoc.gov

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws related to discrimination and employment. The EEOC provides guidance and educational materials to help you understand legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

- For general information on disability discrimination see: <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability.cfm>
- "Facts About the Americans with Disabilities Act", a user-friendly guide to the ADA, can be found here: <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/fs-ada.cfm>
- The EEOC's policy documents on disability discrimination can often provide guidance on issues related to disability and service. You can find those documents here: http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability_guidance.cfm



The U.S. Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has a website where you can learn about Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

SSA provides Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA) to assist people with disabilities navigate their benefits. To find your local WIPA and other SSA Service Providers, you can visit the SSA Service Provider Directory:

<https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/oesp/providers.nsf/bystate>

The following link will provide you with the guidance given by the Social Security Administration on how to consider, or in this case disregard, AmeriCorps and NCCC payments. <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0500830537>

For SSA guidance on how VISTA or Senior Corps benefits should be considered, or disregarded see:

<https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0501130687>



Association of University Centers on Disabilities

www.aucd.org

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) is a network of interdisciplinary centers working to advance policy and practice for and with individuals with developmental disabilities. AUCD is the umbrella organization for University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) found across the nation.

- To locate your local UCEDD visit:
<http://www.aucd.org/directory/directory.cfm?program=UCEDD>
- Visit the AUCD NSIP page:
<http://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=23>