

Identify Synergy with Partner Priorities

Obtaining “inside information” about a partner may seem daunting, but there are several ways to gain insight into a partner’s perspective. Consider the informal resources you can access to understand a partner’s goals (e.g., a local conference or a friend who works in the department you want to engage). Alternatively, think about the formal resources you may be able to access (e.g., strategic plans and mission statements). However you go about it, gathering as much information as you can about your partner’s work, constraints, and priorities is a critical first step to effective engagement.

The information in this chart will help you prepare for initial collaboration conversations with your potential partners by summarizing their priorities and perspectives, and identifying how they overlap with your priorities. It may make sense to prioritize engaging partners whose priorities significantly overlap with yours.

Potential Partner(s)	Formal Sources <i>What are some of the potential partner’s priorities that I’ve found through formal sources?</i>	Informal Sources <i>What are some of the potential partner’s priorities that I’ve found through informal sources?</i>	Overlapping Priorities <i>Which of my priorities overlap with my partner’s priorities?</i>	Next Steps <i>What steps could I take to collaborate with this partner?</i>
Example: State Department of Children & Families – Juvenile Justice Division	<u>Source:</u> Juvenile Justice Task Force Annual Report - Preventing self-injury by promoting life skills among justice-involved youth - Promoting more frequent mental health and suicidality screenings	<u>Source:</u> A meeting with an old college friend who works with justice-involved youth. - Juvenile Justice Division is under pressure to up its prevention efforts after several attempts by youth at two juvenile detention centers.	1. One of the Office of Suicide Prevention’s major priorities involves improved screening and assessment of system-involved youth. 2. The Office of Suicide Prevention is interested in promoting life skills and other protective factors for systems-involved youth.	1. Offer skill-building workshops designed to teach justice-involved youth how to address common stressors with healthy coping mechanisms. 2. Introduce the Juvenile Justice Division to the various screening and staff training options available to screen at-risk youth.

Potential Partner(s)	Formal Sources <i>What are some of the potential partner's priorities that I've found through formal sources?</i>	Informal Sources <i>What are some of the potential partner's priorities that I've found through informal sources?</i>	Overlapping Priorities <i>Which of my priorities overlap with my partner's priorities?</i>	Next Steps <i>What steps could I take to collaborate with this partner?</i>