Advocacy & Communication SOLUTIONS

Partnership Assessment Rubric

What's in a Partnership?

A partnership is an agreement to cooperate, share responsibility, and manage risks for mutual benefit. Partnerships play a critical role in helping organizations achieve their mission, expand their reach, and strengthen their impact.

This rubric can be used at any stage of a partnership—during initial consideration or planning, throughout implementation, or as part of a periodic review to reassess alignment with evolving priorities. Over time, organizations can refine the rubric to better meet their specific needs by adjusting criteria, assigning weights, or incorporating new considerations.

Partnerships are successful when both parties benefit, co-discover capabilities and opportunities, and collaborate across institutions, sectors, and affinity groups. By using the rubric below, you can foster meaningful conversations in your organization to determine if your current or potential partnerships are aligned, effective, and sustainable.

Directions:

Based on the statements in the first column, rank the current or potential partnership on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being least confident in achieving the stated goal and 5 being most confident/certain in achieving the statement. A "perfect" partnership would result in a total score of 40. If the score is less than 30, consider what it would take to strengthen the partnership. It might be time to consider exiting, overhauling, or declining the partnership if the score totals less than 20.

To assign weights, first identify the areas most critical to your partnerships based on your organization's goals, values, and the partnership's objectives. For example, if communication is a key success factor, you might assign it a higher weight than other criteria like resource sharing or flexibility. Weights are typically expressed as percentages, ensuring the total adds up to 100%.

After assigning the weights, each criterion is evaluated according to its importance. Multiply the assigned weight percentage by the score (1–5) to calculate the weighted score.

This process helps prioritize the most impactful aspects, ensuring that the evaluation reflects the organization's specific needs and strategic priorities. By adjusting the weights, organizations can create a more customized assessment that aligns with their unique context and goals. Follow the same hierarchy when evaluating existing or potential partnerships with the weighted system: a "perfect" partnership would result in a total score of 100%, while a partnership could use some strengthening in certain areas if the score is less than 75%. If the score totals 50% or less, it may be time to move on.

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NAME OF POTENTIAL OR CURRENT PARTNER: Partnership Criterion	Weight out of 100%	Score (1–5)	Weighted Score	Context Questions	Context Answers
General Alignment					
This partnership has measurable outcomes.				What key success measures are or will be tracked?	
This partnership aligns with our long-term strategic goals.				How does this partnership support our long-term mission and priorities?	
Impact on Target Population(s)					
This partnership positively affects the target population.				How does this partnership contribute to positive outcomes for our beneficiaries?	
Resources & Sustainability					
This partnership brings sustainable financial or in-kind resources.				What funding or resource contributions does the partnership offer?	
The partnership supports long-term organizational growth.				In what ways does this partnership contribute to our organization's sustainability and capacity building?	
Visibility & Reputation					
This partnership enhances our visibility and reputation.				How does this partnership impact our public perception and credibility?	
The visibility of this partnership is tracked and measured.				What metrics are used to track media exposure and public awareness?	
This partnership fosters goodwill and community betterment.				Will this partnership have a positive effect on our community or on other relationships? In what ways?	
TOTAL: ***(Out of 40 total possible points)***	100%				

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Scoring Guide:

Score Range	30–40 points OR 75–100%	20–29 points OR 50–74%	0–19 points OR Below 50%
Category	High Impact Partnership	Needs Strengthening/Potential for Improvement	Time to Reassess
Description	Strong alignment with strategic goals, measurable impact, and sustainable resources.	Some alignment, but areas may require additional effort, resources, or restructuring to maximize impact	Limited alignment with goals; consider restructuring, phasing out, or declining the partnership.

For a deep dive into assessing the internal processes and structures of your collaborations, visit the "Assess Your Collaboration" tool to evaluate key components of any collaborative effort, such as leadership, communication, partner expectations, and progress tracking.

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