



Collaboration Pathways to Adult Success Toolkit

RECOMMENDATION 3: COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

The process of assessing needs and strengths and selecting focus areas will bring awareness of collaborative efforts that must be strengthened or developed in order to achieve the goals envisioned. These collaborations will usually include both information sharing and working together practically to support young people. Developing organizational collaborations is an organic process that requires time and effort, and usually encounters bumps along the way.

THE FOUNDATION

For collaboration to thrive and remain effective over time, it is important to clarify objectives, expectations, roles, and responsibilities, and to document these agreements in appropriate ways. This is also crucial considering the likelihood that key personnel changes may occur during the lifetime of the collaboration. How the respective organizations will share, use, and safeguard data is of particular importance. Stakeholders must share data transparently, discuss it frequently, look for strengths and weak points, and devise strategies for improvement and incentives for success for everyone.

ESTABLISH STRUCTURES

Work with partners to establish appropriate structures for collaboration and communication.

- Articulate the common goals, objectives, and purpose of the collaboration.
- Develop protocols and MOUs as needed to clarify roles and responsibilities of each organization.
- Determine communication norms (e.g., frequency of reports and meetings; individual as well as organizational expectations and responsibilities).
- Establish a consensus on how to measure progress toward mutual goals, and what indicators are most relevant to the focus areas selected.



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SHARE DATA

Prioritize data-sharing agreements (DSAs) that enhance each organization's capacity to work effectively.

- Data-sharing is essential to carrying out effective cycles of inquiry: monitoring and analysis of outcomes to improve planning and subsequent interventions.
- Data-sharing with higher education and employment partners helps schools understand students' current outcomes and improve the preparation provided in middle and high school. Data-sharing also helps partners understand how to support incoming students' and employees' chances for postsecondary success.
- Data-sharing with service and health/wellness organizations helps both schools and partners understand the life situation and academic challenges that students face, and the kinds of supports they need to succeed.
- Make sure you know, understand, and fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Many organizations have standard DSA templates. These provide a good starting point, but should be reviewed by legal counsel for each of the organizations involved.